

Phonemic Awareness: The ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in spoken words, and the understanding that spoken words are made up of sequences of speech sounds.

Phonemic awareness instruction typically spans two years, kindergarten and first grade. Oral activities in kindergarten focus on simple tasks such as rhyming, matching words with beginning sounds, and blending sounds into words. In first grade, phonemic awareness tasks are more advanced, focusing on blending and segmenting.

Phonemic Awareness Skills:

1. Sound and Word Discrimination

- Tells whether words or sounds are the same or different (cat/cat = same; cat/car=different).
- Identifies which word is different (ex: sun, fun, sun).
- Tells the difference between single speech sounds (ex: Which one is different? s, s, k).

2. Rhyming

- Identifies whether words rhyme (ex: cat/mat; ring/sing).
- Produces a word that rhymes with another (ex: "A word that rhymes with **rose** is **nose**. Tell me another word that rhymes with **rose**.)

3. Blending

- Orally blends syllables (mon-key) or onset-rimes (m-ilk) into a whole word. "M" is the onset, and "ilk" is the rime.
- Orally blends 2-3 separately spoken phonemes into one-syllable words (ex: m-e, me; u-p, up; f-u-n, fun).

4. Segmentation

- Claps or counts the words in a 3-5 word sentence (ex: Sue can jump far = four claps).
- Claps or counts the syllables in 1-, 2-, and 3-syllable words.
- Says each syllable in two and three syllable words (di-no-saur).
- Identifies the first sound in a one-syllable word (ex: /m/ in man).
- Segments individual sounds in two and three phonemes (the smallest sound made by a letter/letters heard) using one syllable words (ex: run, /r/ /u/ /n/; feet, /f/ /ee/ /t/).

Ways to work on these skills:

1. Read to your child, especially rhyming books and nursery rhymes.
2. Play word games like "I see something that begins with the /s/ sound.
3. Sing with your child and clap to the rhythm/beat.

