



Let's Talk: Early Literacy Development



Excerpt: Phonological Awareness





Early Literacy Development

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“Young children who are engaged in meaningful, knowledge-building experiences with print gain the foundational skills for becoming skilled readers and writers.”



-Tanya S. Wright & Susan B. Neuman. (2009). *American Educator*, p. 35.

Quote from: Wright, T.S. & Neuman, S.B. (2009). Purposeful, playful pre-k: Building on children's natural proclivity to learn language, literacy, mathematics, and science. *American Educator*, Spring 2009, p. 35.



Early Literacy Development: Overview

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Key Concepts

- Print and Book Awareness
- Alphabetic Principle:
 - ☑ **Phonological Awareness**
- Letter Knowledge and Early Word Recognition
- Written Expression

You Will Learn

- Ways to build book and print awareness
- How to enhance children's phonological awareness skills
- Activities that build letter recognition and letter-sound knowledge
- Ideas to promote children's writing development



Early Literacy Development

-a definition

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- Children begin to develop skills related to early literacy beginning at birth.
- In these early years, they are not just getting ready to learn to read: they are **LEARNING TO READ**



Children begin learning to read long before they enter school.

These early years were once believed to be a “readiness period” when children begin to acquire certain concepts and skills in preparation for learning to read in kindergarten and first grade.

In fact, children’s success in kindergarten and first grade is actually a continuation of a long process of literacy development that begins with their earliest literacy experiences.



Early Literacy Development

Children enter preschool with a great diversity of literacy-related experiences and abilities

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Some children enter school with extensive knowledge about and appreciation of literacy concepts and skills.

Other children enter school with relatively few literacy-related concepts and skills.

In any pre-K, it is typical to find children with a broad range of literacy-related concepts and skills. This variation is most often due to differences in children's experiences with books and print at home and in early care settings.

Teachers have an important role in these early years to build a foundation of early literacy concepts and skills that will prepare young children for school.

+ Fostering Early Literacy Development

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- Children need meaningful knowledge-building experiences and instruction to support early literacy development. These include:
 - Activities that engage children in rich investigations which use language to make meaning
 - Positive relationships with adults who model reading and writing behaviors
 - Print-rich environments



In the course of helping children to develop meaningful, knowledge rich experiences you can build many opportunities to enrich children's language and literacy development.

Positive relationships with the important adults in their lives support literacy development. Adults can offer support by engaging children in responsive conversations, modeling reading and writing behavior, and fostering interest in and enjoyment of reading and writing.

Print-rich environments with opportunities to see and use written language for a variety of important purposes help children understand how and why literacy is used. Point out environmental print and discuss it with the children. Look for signs at school or in the neighborhood; read them together and discuss their purpose. Discuss how people in the community use reading and writing.

+ Fostering Early Literacy Development

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- Opportunities to talk about what is reading
- Experiences that develop phonological awareness
- Opportunities to engage in play that incorporates written language and writing tools
- First-hand experiences that expand children's vocabulary and concepts and builds background knowledge



Children learn through active engagement. Early literacy development develops when you provide opportunities for children to experience the joys of learning something new.

Integrated activities with literacy learning help children understand how reading and writing enhances their understandings.



Phonological Awareness

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- Involves understanding how the sounds of spoken language can be segmented, combined, and manipulated
- Phonological awareness is an auditory skill that need not involve print
- It is a strong predictor of children's later reading success

Recent evidence from a number of important consensus reports (The National Reading Panel; the National Early Literacy Panel; Preventing Reading Difficulties) indicate that phonological awareness is strongly related to reading success. It helps children become attuned to our language, as they learn to distinguish sounds in increasingly smaller segments.

But do not confuse phonological awareness with phonics. Phonological awareness is an auditory skill; phonics involves the mapping of letters to sounds.



Phonological Awareness

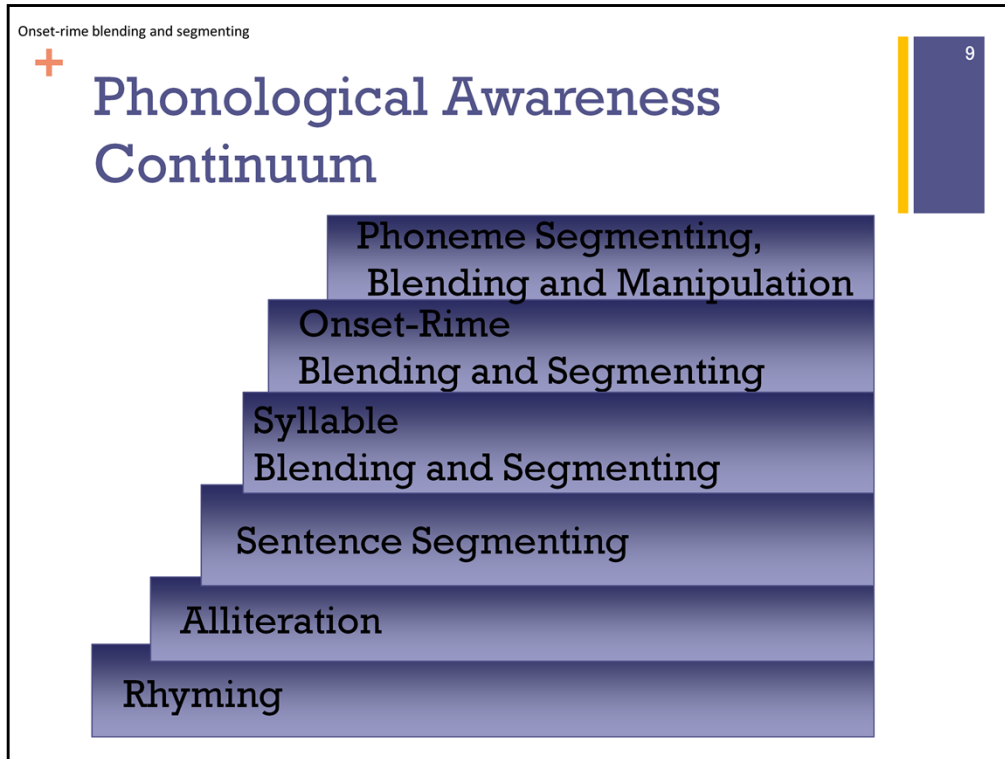
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Phonological awareness is a crucial step towards understanding the alphabetic principle



The understanding that the sequence of letters in written words represents the sequence of sounds in spoken words

This is a critical understanding for reading in both English and Spanish.



Handout #6: Phonological Development

- Rhyming—matching the ending sounds of words
- Alliteration—recognizing or saying words with common initial sounds
- Sentence segmenting—segmenting sentences into spoken words
- Syllable blending and segmenting—blending syllables to say words or segmenting spoken words into syllables
- Onset-rime blending and segmenting—blending/segmenting the initial consonant or consonant cluster (onset) with or from the vowel and consonant sounds spoken after it (rime)
- Phoneme segmenting, blending and manipulation—blending phonemes into words, segmenting words into individual phonemes, and manipulating phonemes in spoken words



Phonemic Awareness

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- Focuses on the individual sounds (or phonemes) in spoken words

Phonemes are the smallest units of sounds in spoken words.

■ /d/ /o/ /g/ Dog



■ /s/ /o/ /l/ Sun (in Spanish)



Phonemic awareness is the most sophisticated and the most important level of phonological awareness. It involves the blending, segmenting, and manipulating of individual sounds in spoken words called phonemes.

Phonological awareness and phonemic awareness are often used interchangeably. However, phonological awareness is the 'umbrella' term and more often refers to larger units of sound; phonemic awareness to the smallest sound units.



Remember!

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Phonological awareness is NOT phonics



Once again, phonological awareness and phonics are two related but different aspects of an early literacy program. Phonological awareness provides the basis for understanding the alphabetic principle. It lays the foundation for the systematic instruction in letter-sound correspondence that children will receive in kindergarten and first grade.

Phonics is an instructional approach that focuses on how the sounds of spoken language are represented by letters and spellings. For example, the letter “m” represents the phoneme /m/. Phonics involves print.



Activity.....

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Activity: Pair up so that one person is the teacher, and the other the parent. As if you were at a parent-teacher conference, have the teacher explain the differences between phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, and phonics to a parent. Be sure to use lots of examples to illustrate your points.

Activity #4: Parent-Teacher Conference



Developing Phonological Awareness Skills

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■ Goals for the preschool years

■ The child:

- Becomes sensitive to the sounds of spoken words
- Begins to identify rhymes and rhyming sounds in familiar words
- Participates in rhyming games, rhyming songs, and poems
- Begins to break words into syllables
- Creates and invents words, substituting one sound for another

Discuss these outcomes and encourage teachers to give examples of evidence indicating that the child has achieved these goals.



Phonological Skills in Pre-K

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- Preschool children begin to develop phonological awareness through language play and exposure to:
 - Poems, songs, and nursery rhymes
 - Language awareness games
 - Rhythmic activities
 - Phonological games and activities
 - Patterned and predictable texts



Phonological Awareness Activity

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- What kind of phonological awareness activity is this?
 - Goldilocks glues globs of glitter?



Alliteration is the skill that requires children to identify similar beginning sounds.



Phonological Awareness Continuum

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■ Rhyming

- Rhyming chants, songs, and fingerplays
- Nursery rhymes and other poems
- Stories with rhyming text
- Use of word deletions during repeated readings

Many well-loved pre-K activities lend themselves to developing children's rhyming skills through play. They include:

- Singing or reciting rhyming chants, songs, and fingerplays...Ask participants for examples
- Choral reading of nursery rhymes and other poems
- Reading stories with rhyming texts...Ask participants for examples
- Use of word deletions during repeated readings of rhyming stories and poems.

Demonstrate use of word deletions: "Three little kittens, lost their?" (mittens); "I do not like green eggs and ham. I do not like them"(Sam I am).

Have teachers share their favorites.



Phonological Awareness Continuum

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■ Alliteration

- Recite poems, chants nursery rhymes and songs with repeating initial sounds
- Read alliterative texts
- Group objects by beginning sounds
- Play beginning sound name games
- Call attention to words with similar beginning sounds

To develop children's awareness of alliteration:

- Recite poems, chants, etc...Ask participants for an example of alliteration (e.g. "trip trap, trop" went the three Billy Goats Gruff; "peas porridge in the pot," "Peter, Peter pumpkin eater.")
- Read alliterative texts...Ask participants for examples
- Group objects by beginning sounds
- Suggest one letter of the alphabet and ask the participants to think of all the objects in their classroom that begin with that sound; for example the letter "b" (blocks, books, baby dolls, etc.)... or the letter "M" in Spanish (mesas, mariposas, marcadoras, mascaras).
- Play beginning sound name games
- Model an example, perhaps a tongue twister like "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers" or a nursery rhyme with a repetitive beginning sound, such as "Miss Mary Mack Mack Mack."
- Call attention to words with similar beginning sounds...Ask participants to follow the pattern in "A my name is Alice and my husband's name is Alex. We come from Alaska and we sell ants."



Phonological Awareness Continuum

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■ Sentence Segmenting

- Select meaningful sentences from children's speech or favorite books
- Have children clap/count each word in a sentence
- Shuffle and reorder words in familiar sentences
- Make silly phrases by deleting words from sentences

Take a favorite chant and slow it down – “Five...little...monkeys...jumping...on...the...bed.”

Or you can bounce a ball for every word said, emphasizing the individual spaces between words.



Phonological Awareness Continuum

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■ Syllable Segmenting

- Have children clap or tap out the syllables of their names and other favorite words



Have your participants practice—it will also be a fun way of getting to know everyone's name. Start by saying your name in syllables...then, go around to others.



Phonological Awareness Continuum

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■ Onsets and Rimes

- Sort words into families by rimes:
- C...at, b...at, m...at, etc..
- (Spanish) c...asa, p...asa, m...asa



Sometimes 'rimes' are called word families and common word families include: _at, _og, _it, etc. Young children can enjoy exploring the sounds of word families together. New words can be introduced through playfully using words with word families in the classroom.



Phonological Awareness Continuum

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■ Phoneme Segmenting, Blending and Manipulation

- Sing songs that involve phoneme replacement e.g. “Apples and Bananas,” “The Name Game,” “Mappy Mirthday Moo, moo!”



This should be a fun and silly activity, but many of our pre-K children will not be able to manipulate words at the phoneme level. Just expose them at this stage, and they will have an easier time learning this skill later on.