**Phonological Awareness Activities - Parent Friendly**

Building underlying awareness of how sounds combine to make words will help with reading.  There is an instructional sequence to these skills, but they don’t all have to be mastered before moving on.

**Word Segmentation**:  Count words in sentences.  Have your child think of a short sentence to describe a recent event.  (“I went to the beach yesterday.”)  Clap the words and count them.  Make the sentence longer and count again.  (“I went to the beach yesterday and it was really windy.”) **Rhyme Recognition and Production**:  Play rhyming “I Spy.”  You say, “I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with … [grable].”  The student looks around and sees a “table.”

**Syllable Blending and Segmentation:**  Count syllables in words.  As you’re unloading groceries, clap the syllables in the items.  “How many times did we clap?”  Some new exotic additions to the grocery list may spice this up a little (“arugula!”).  You could vary this by listing just things you like or dislike, or choosing a category of thing (animals, cars) your child is interested in.   **Syllable Deletion:**  Using compound words, ask what’s left when you take away a word.  This is the kind of thing that might work on a car ride.  “If you start out with a [starfish, football] and you take away the [star, foot], what’s left?”  Work on first and last parts of the words. **Phoneme Manipulation**: Identify sounds in words, first sound first, then last sound, then middle sound.  You can do this as a spy game.  Set up a bridge and have animals cross the bridge: The student has to give the first (last, middle) sound as the secret pass-code to have the animal cross. **Phoneme Blending:**  Try a Simon Says game.  Warm up with “Simon says touch your [wrist, etc.]  Then play it with the words broken into their sound parts: “Simon says touch your /l/-/e/-/g/.  Touch your /l/-/i/-/p/-/s/.”  Use one-syllable body-part names like toe, heel, foot, knee, thigh, chest, back, ear, etc. **Phoneme Segmentation:**Collect or draw pictures of one-syllable things on note cards and draw 3 boxes under each. (Examples: cat; dog; can; cup; pan; fan. Don’t include consonant blends like “stem,” or “spot.”)  ****

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[This is /c/-/a/-/t/.]

Explain that there are three boxes because there are 3 sounds in each word.  There may be fewer boxes than letters, but there are only 3 sounds (like “coat” or “peach”).  Put a marker (or a star or other treat) in each box as you and the student identify the sounds in order.

## 1. Listen up.

Good phonological awareness starts with kids picking up on sounds, syllables and rhymes in the words they hear. Read aloud to your child frequently. Choose books that rhyme or repeat the same sound. Draw your child’s attention to rhymes: “Fox, socks, box! Those words all rhyme. Do you hear how they almost sound the same?”

It also helps to point out repeated sounds. For example, if you’re reading *One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish*, ask your child to listen to the /f/ sound in *fish*. Outside of story time, try pointing out other words that start with the /f/ sound, just like in the book.

## 2. Focus on rhyming.

Ask your child to pick out the rhyming words in books by himself. Ask, “Did you hear a word that rhymes with *fox*?” Teach your child nursery rhymes and practice saying them together. Or say four short words, like *log*, *cat*, *hog*, *frog*. See if your child can pick out the word that doesn’t rhyme.

## 3. Follow the beat.

Teach your child about syllables by clapping the “beats” he hears in words. Let’s say you choose the word *elephant*. Pause as you say each syllable—e-le-phant—and clap out each syllable together. You can also get your child up and moving by having him stomp or jump with each syllable.

## 4. Get into guesswork.

Guessing games such as “I spy” can be used to work on almost any phonological skill. Want to practice noticing what sounds word begin with? Try “I spy something red that starts with /s/.” Want to work on rhymes? “I’m wearing something warm that rhymes with *boat*.”

## 5. Carry a tune.

Singing in general is a great way to get kids rhyming. There are also good songs teachers use to focus on other kinds of phonological and phonemic awareness skills. “Apples and Bananas” is a fun one. You can search online for more songs about phonemic awareness or ask your child’s teacher for recommendations.

## 6. Connect the sounds.

Sound blending is an important skill for early readers. They need to put sound units—phonemes—together to be able to read a word smoothly. You can help your child start working on this by putting together the sounds he hears. Ask him to connect the beginning sound with the rest of a word. For example, tell him, “Start with /p/ and add /ig/. What do word do you hear if you put them together?”

## 7. Break apart words.

Have your child work on hearing a word and taking it apart. Start by using compound words such as *cowboy*, *baseball* or *firefly*. Tell him, “Say the word *cowboy*. Now take away *boy*. What word is left?”

You can also use Lego bricks to make this point. Give your child two attached Lego bricks to represent parts of the word. Then have him physically take the Lego pieces apart as he removes part of the word.

## 8. Get creative with crafts.

Kids respond to hands-on learning. Try making a collage of items that start with the same sound using pictures from magazines. Sock puppets can be another fun way to work on these skills. Make one that likes to munch on words that start with a certain sound. Let your child have fun “feeding” his puppet different objects or pictures that start with that sound.

## 9. Search online.

There are many resources and ideas online to work on phonological and phonemic awareness skills. Check out YouTube for teaching videos, Pinterest for phonology games and crafts, or the app store for nursery rhymes, sound games and songs.