

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS  
IN THE  
EARLY CHILDHOOD  
CLASSROOM



A Read to Succeed Workshop  
UNITED WAY OF GREATER NASHVILLE

## References:

“Phonological Awareness: What You Need to Know” [https://www.understood.org/en/learning-thinking-differences/child-learning-disabilities/reading-issues/phonological-awareness-what-it-is-and-how-it-works?utm\\_source=google&utm\\_medium=paid&utm\\_campaign=evrgrn-may20-fm&gclid=CjwKCAjwydP5BRBREiwA-qrCGnl8qp5KZza-tqyeU084Vu-1Y7n\\_CgWGMfcvYS7G2WvurFpbWdkLQhoCTHAQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.understood.org/en/learning-thinking-differences/child-learning-disabilities/reading-issues/phonological-awareness-what-it-is-and-how-it-works?utm_source=google&utm_medium=paid&utm_campaign=evrgrn-may20-fm&gclid=CjwKCAjwydP5BRBREiwA-qrCGnl8qp5KZza-tqyeU084Vu-1Y7n_CgWGMfcvYS7G2WvurFpbWdkLQhoCTHAQAvD_BwE)

“Phonological and Phonemic Awareness”

<https://www.readingrockets.org/helping/target/phonologicalphonemic>

“Phonological and Phonemic Awareness: An Introduction”

<https://www.readingrockets.org/teaching/reading101-course/modules/phonological-and-phonemic-awareness-introduction>

## Connect with me:

Elandriel Lewis

Manager, Early Learning and Training

United Way of Greater Nashville

[elandriel.lewis@unitedwaygn.org](mailto:elandriel.lewis@unitedwaygn.org)

# What is Phonological Awareness and Why is it Important?

## Phonological Awareness is:

- Understanding how the sounds of spoken language can be combined, segmented (broken apart), and manipulated (includes phonemic awareness).
- A listening and speaking skill (does not involve print).
- Essential to learning how to read
- Predicts how well a child will be able to read and spell.

---

*“Without phoneme awareness (a phonological awareness skill), students may be mystified by the print system and how it represents the spoken word.*

*Students who lack phoneme awareness may not even know what is meant by the term sound. They can usually hear well and may even name the alphabet letters, but they have little or no idea what letters represent. If asked to give the first sound in the word **dog**, they are likely to say “Woof-woof!” Students must be able to identify /d/ in the words **dog**, **dish**, and **mad** and separate the phoneme from others before they can understand what the letter **d** represents in those words.”*

*“Why Phonological Awareness Is Important for Reading and Spelling.” Moats and Tolman.*

**Phonological Awareness**  
(Spoken Word)



**Phonics**  
(Written Word)



# Phonological Awareness Skills Must Be Intentionally Supported in the Classroom.

## Group Activity:

Match the student activity with the PA skill it supports

### Phonological Awareness Skill Bank

Rhyming

Sentence Segmentation

Compound Words

Alliteration

Syllable Segmentation

- \_\_\_\_\_ Playing, "The Syllable Band."
- \_\_\_\_\_ Compound Word Cards
- \_\_\_\_\_ Playing, "Sloth Sentences."
- \_\_\_\_\_ Singing, "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star."
- \_\_\_\_\_ Singing, "What's the Sound that Starts these Words?"

## Group Activity:

Brainstorm other activities to intentionally support Phonological Awareness Skills.

Rhyme \_\_\_\_\_

Alliteration \_\_\_\_\_

Sentence Segmentation \_\_\_\_\_

Syllable Segmentation \_\_\_\_\_

Compound Words \_\_\_\_\_

## More Activities to Intentionally Support Phonological Awareness Skills

### Rhyme Activities

1. **Bean Bag Rhyme Game** - The teacher begins the game by holding the bean bag and saying a word (e.g., “pat”), explaining that whoever she gives the bean bag to must say another word that rhymes. The bean bag is passed around the circle of children as they produce rhyming words.
2. **End-of-the-Line Rhyme** - The teacher recites a familiar nursery rhyme to ensure that children know the rhyme. Next, the teacher recites the nursery rhyme omitting the final rhyming word and asks the children to provide it. (E.g., Mary had a little lamb, its fleece was white as snow. Everywhere that Mary went, the lamb was sure to \_\_\_\_\_ (go). Then, the teacher asks the children to provide other words that rhyme with “snow” and “go”.
3. **“Did You Ever See?”**  
(to the tune of “If You’re Happy and You Know It”)  
*Did you ever see a (bear) in a (chair)?*  
*Did you ever see a (bear) in a (chair)?*  
*No, I never, no, I never, no, I never, no, I never,*  
*No, I never saw a (bear) in a (chair).*

### Alliteration Activities

1. **“What’s the Sound that Starts these Words?”**  
(to the tune of “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”)  
*What’s the sound that starts these words?*  
*Turtle, time, and teeth.*  
*/T/ is the sound that starts these words*  
*Turtle, time, and teeth.*  
*With a /t/ /t/ here, and a /t/ /t/ there,*  
*Here a /t/, there a /t/,*  
*Everywhere a /t/ /t/*  
*/T/ is the sound that starts these words*  
*Can you tell me more?*
2. **Alliteration Concentration** – Played like a traditional game of concentration, but students match pictures that start with the same sound instead of the same picture.
3. **I Spy** – Teacher says, “I spy with my little eye something that starts with (sound)” Students look around the room to find the object.

### Sentence Segmentation Activities

1. **Sloth Sentences** – Students move slowly (like a sloth) as they repeat a short sentence said by the teacher. Student take one step per word of the sentence.
2. **Sentence Segmentation Scramble** – Teacher puts the numbers 2 – 5 in different spots in the room. Teacher says short sentences of 2 – 5 words out loud. Teacher repeats the sentence as students clap out the number of words. Students then scramble to go stand on or near the correct number.

### Syllable Segmentation Activities

1. **The Syllable Band** – The teacher says a word with 1 – 3 syllables, the students repeat the word clapping out each syllable. This activity is really fun using musical instruments to sound out the syllables. Be sure to give students time to play with the instruments before you start the activity.
2. **Syllable Scramble** – See instructions for Sentence Segmentation Scramble but play with syllables instead.

### Compound Word Activities

1. **Compound Word Cards** – Show students the front 2 pictures and have them say the words together to get the middle picture.
2. **Compound Word Meet-up** – Give students in groups of 3 one of the pictures on a compound word card (ex. Student 1 – Star picture, student 2 – fish picture, student 3 – starfish picture). Have students work together to find their partner pictures. Easier level – give student 1 and 2 their cards as a team to find student 3.

## A Note about Transition Times

Phonological awareness skills make great transition time activities. Ask students to give you a word that rhymes with your word to go to a center. Students can sloth walk sentences to line up, identify a compound word to sit down for snack. The more that phonological awareness skills are integrated into the classroom schedule, the easier it will be for your students to master these skills.