

Phonological Awareness is a broad concept that not only includes phonemic awareness (hearing the sounds in words), hearing when one word stops and another begins, hearing which sounds rhyme, distinguishing the syllables in a word and recognizing beginning and end sounds in words.

Phonological Awareness is an early skill required for successful reading and spelling – it is an aural skill which will then be mapped onto recognising letters and the sounds they make.

To support your child in developing these skills you need to talk with them and use games and books which help you highlight the sounds in words. Rhyming is a great way to introduce and compare sounds. Nursery rhymes and singing songs will help with this. Please speak to your child's teacher to find out the specific areas of phonological awareness your child is having trouble with.

Other activities which might help include:

- First show them how to rhyme. Demonstrate this to them yourself. Then ask them to come up with words that rhyme with a given word e.g., "How many words can you think of that rhyme with cat?"
- Get them to slow their words down as in "slow motion" or like a robot e.g., s-i-t. Make this fun and ham it up a bit – act like you are running slowly or are a robot.
- Demonstrate and then ask them to help you make new words by changing parts of words. Start with simple words e.g., "sit" – take away the "s" or "cats" – take away the "s".
- Chin Bumps- demonstrate syllables to your child. Make a fist with your hand and rest your elbow on the palm of the other hand. Touch the fist lightly under your chin. Say the target word aloud and see how many times your chin bumps your fist. Each time the chin touches the fist it is counted as one syllable. As a general rule, every syllable must have a vowel – your chin drops down when it says a vowel. So if the word is "arrow", your chin will drop down twice, once for the "a" and once for the "ow". Get your child to use this strategy as you ask him/her a selection of words.

For further ideas, you might find these websites helpful.

<http://aability.com/styled-3/styled-6/index.html>

<http://www.readingrockets.org/article/377>

http://www.decd.sa.gov.au/northernadelaide/files/links/Phonological_Awareness_Bo.pdf

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/virginia_tiered_system_supports/resources/ideas_activities_develop_phonological.pdf