



Phonemic Awareness

For success at the beginning stages of reading the child must perceive the individual phoneme sounds of the language, and he must learn to discriminate each language sound that represents a letter shape from other sounds. Such abilities are essential for decoding written language.

Strategies for Early Reading Success

- Help your child think of a number of words that start with the /m/ or /ch/ sound, or other beginning sounds.
- Make up silly sentences with words that begin with the same sound, such as "Nobody was nice to Nancy's neighbor".
- Play simple rhyming or blending games with your child, such as taking turns coming up with words that rhyme (*go – no*) or blending simple words (/d/, /o/, /g/ = *dog*).
- Read books with rhymes. Teach your child rhymes, short poems, and songs.
- Practice the alphabet by pointing out letters wherever you see them and by reading alphabet books.
- Consider using computer software that focuses on developing phonological and phonemic awareness skills. Many of these programs use colorful graphics and animation that keep young children engaged and motivated.
- Create word families. Use refrigerator magnets to spell a word ending (*-ap*). Have your child put other letters in front of the word ending to create rhyming words (*tap, cap, map, lap*).
- Fill in the blank. Read children's poems aloud and leave off the final word, having your child fill in the missing rhyming word:
"Run, run, as fast as you *can*,

You can't catch me, I'm the gingerbread ____."
- Write a swap poem. You write one line of a poem, and have your child write the next line, matching the rhythm, and rhyming the last word. (*Hint: Use words that are easy to rhyme!*)
- Create a rhyming dictionary. Have a page for *-op* words, and *-end* words, and *-ing* words, and *-oat* words, and then move on to more complex letter patterns like *-ouble* (*trouble, double*).
- **Initial consonants:** Have the child tell which word begins like *milk*. Say three words like "astronaut, mountain, bicycle."
- Ask the child to think of words that begin like *Tom*.
- Find pictures of words that begin like *Tom*, or find pictures of words in magazines that begin with the letter *T*. Find the word that is different at the beginning: "*paper, pear, table, past.*"
For a quick assessment to see if your child has mastered this skill go to: <http://www.readinga-z.com/assessments/phonological-awareness-assessment/>
Other resources and information on phonological awareness can be found at: <http://www.readinga-z.com/phonological-awareness/>