

Reading Matters

What is...Phonological and Phonemic Awareness?

Phonological awareness is a broad skill that includes identifying and manipulating units of oral language. Children who have phonological awareness are able to identify and make oral rhymes, can clap out the number of syllables in a word, and can recognize words with the same initial sounds like 'money' and 'mother.'

Phonemic awareness refers to the specific ability to focus on and manipulate individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. For example, the word 'mat' has three phonemes: /m/ /a/ /t/. Phonemic awareness is the foundation for spelling and word recognition skills. Phonemic awareness is one of the best predictors of how well children will learn to read during the first two years of school instruction.

What a phonemic awareness problem looks like:

A kid's perspective - What this feels like to me:

- I don't know any words that rhyme with *cat*.
- I'm not sure how many syllables are in my name.
- I don't know what sounds are the same in *bit* and *hit*.

Here are some clues for parents that a child may have problems with phonological or phonemic awareness:

- He/she has difficulty thinking of rhyming words for a simple word like *cat* (such as *rat* or *bat*).
- He/she doesn't show interest in language play, word games, or rhyming.

How to help:

What parents can do at home:

- Do activities to help your child build sound skills (make sure they are short and fun):
 - 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.

Important Dates:

Tuesday, February 26 and
Thursday, February 28:
Parent/Teacher Conferences!

Book Recommendations

From Valley Elementary Students!

**K/1: Bunny Slopes by
Claudia Rueda**

**2/3: Mercy Watson to the
Rescue by Kate DiCamillo**

**4/5: Mr. Popper's
Penguins by Richard and
Florence Atwater**

Check out the Title 1 webpage at...

nfvreadingmatters.weebly.com

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