

# Phonology 101: Basic Principles for Enhancing Phonological Awareness

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## What is Phonological Awareness?

- Phonological awareness is a term describing a group of oral language skills that reflect an explicit awareness of the sound structure of spoken language and the ability to manipulate that structure
- These oral language skills include rhyming, alliterating, blending, counting, isolating, segmenting, deleting, substituting, and reversing sound structure, though the 3 major areas are rhyming, blending, and segmenting
- Typically developing children between the ages of 2 and 4 are capable of rhyming and alliteration; children between 4 and 6 years of age can blend, count, isolate, and segment; older children can delete, substitute, and reverse
- *Phonemic* awareness, the knowledge that words are comprised of individual sounds and the ability to manipulate these sounds, is most directly related to literacy

## **Why is Phonological Awareness Important to Literacy Achievement?**

- **Children who perform well on such tasks usually are (or become) good readers, whereas children who perform poorly on them struggle (or will struggle) with word recognition and spelling**
- **Phonological awareness performance in kindergarten is the best predictor of reading and spelling achievement in first and second grade**
- **Children who are phonemically aware can grasp the alphabetic principle, the concept that letters more or less correspond to sounds in spoken words**
- **Children's early decoding and spelling experiences further develop their phonemic awareness**
- **About 20% of children, especially those with disabilities, those from low income households, and those from homes in which English is not a native language, do not acquire phonological awareness without explicit instruction**

- **Explicit instruction in phonological awareness for children both with and without disabilities often is beneficial in promoting not only their meta-phonological competence, but also their graphophonemic knowledge, decoding ability, and spelling proficiency**

### **WEB RESOURCE**

## **How Does Phonological Awareness Typically Develop?**

- Reciting finger plays (e.g., Itsy-Bitsy Spider) and nursery rhymes (e.g., Hey Diddle-Didle)
- Singing songs and chants with rhyming or alliterative schemes
- Joint book reading with older children and adults
- Viewing educational television programming such as *Shining Time Station* and *Between the Lions*
- Exposure to environmental print (e.g., street signs, restaurant logos)
- Interaction with various forms of print (e.g., menus, recipes, shopping lists, phone books, viewing guides)

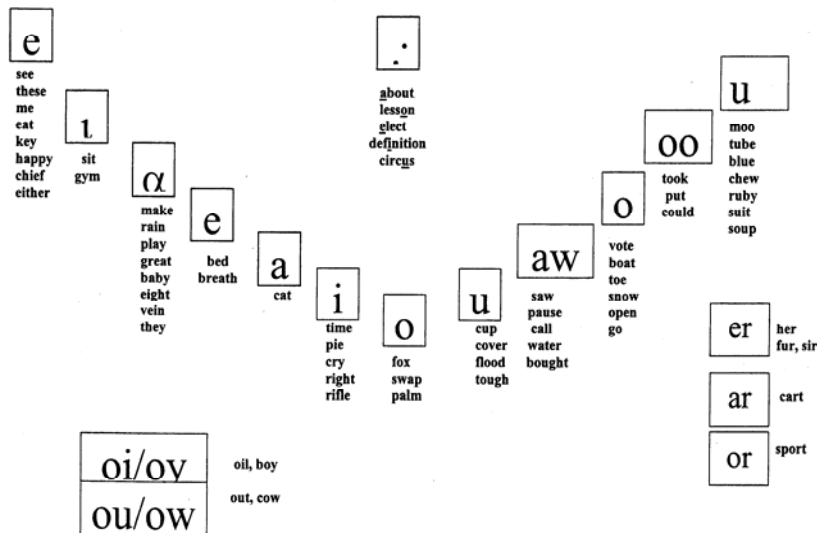
## **How to Teach Phonological Awareness**

- **Control Multiple Task Dimensions That Influence Performance**
  - Explicitness of awareness
  - Size of sound unit, or depth of phonological detail (i.e., word, syllable, intrasyllabic [onset, rime, coda, mora], phoneme)
  - Number of units
  - Position of unit
  - Phoneme characteristics
  - Word frequency/familiarity

### Consonant Phonemes by Place and Manner of Articulation

	lips	teeth/ lips	tongue/ teeth	ridge/ teeth	roof mouth	Back of throat	glottis
stops unvoiced voiced	/p/ /b/			/t/ /d/		/k/ /g/	
nasals	/m/			/n/		/ŋ/	
fricatives unvoiced voiced		/f/ /v/	/θ/ /ð/	/s/ /z/	/ʃ/ /ʒ/		
affricates unvoiced voiced					/tʃ/ /dʒ/		
glides unvoiced voiced					/y/ /w/	/wh/ /w/	/h/
liquids				/l/ /r/			

### Vowels, by Order of Articulation, with Spelling Examples



- **Identify Types of Instructional Tasks That Match Student Needs**
  - **Matching Recognition**
  - **Elimination/Oddity Recognition**
  - **Judgment Recognition**
  - **Simple Production (a task that requires a response with a segment or a task that requires a complete segmentation or blending of units)**
  - **Counting**
  - **Compound Production (two-step tasks that involve deletion, substitution, or reversal)**

- **Use Instructional Scaffolds to Promote Success**
  - **Make sounds more perceptually salient through exaggerated pronunciation of continuants and iteration (i.e., bouncing) of non-continuants**
  - **Use manipulatives whenever possible**
  - **Use visual cues such as pictures whenever possible**
  - **Bombard students with target unit examples**
  - **Model extensively**
  - **Provide immediate corrective feedback**
  - **Train to mastery criterion (e.g., 80% accuracy)**
  - **For ELL students, provide phonological awareness instruction in their first language if possible, or at least use units/phonemes that are shared between first language and English during instruction**

- **Important Considerations and Caveats**
  - Spontaneous transfer between recognition and production, as well as between skills, is not common
  - Blending training by itself has little concurrent impact on reading achievement unless children already know how to segment
  - Phonemic awareness training must be coupled and linked with instruction in the alphabetic principle to have the most impact on literacy (either sequentially or concurrently)
  - Exemplary phonics instruction may make separate phonological awareness instruction unnecessary, but most early reading instruction is *not* exemplary
  - Growing evidence suggests that even *preschoolers* at risk for RD can be taught to rhyme, blend, and segment sounds
  - Phoneme preservation scoring appears to be more sensitive to growth
  - In some cases, up to 30% of children in treatment samples who receive intensive instruction in phonological awareness do not make substantial gains
  - Treatment effects may dissipate in as few as 18 months
  - Small group instruction (as opposed to whole class or even individual) seems to be most effective
  - Recent evidence suggests adding articulatory features to instruction (e.g., LiPS, Linguistic Remedies) may boost effectiveness of training