

INTRODUCTION



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonological Awareness lessons. **Phonological awareness** allows children to recognise and work with the sounds of language. These activities are sometimes called ear exercises because the focus is on hearing the parts or sounds in words. Your child will not be seeing these words in print during phonological awareness instruction. Towards the second half of the year, your student will be working on primarily **phonemic awareness**, a subset a phonological awareness focused specifically on hearing individual sounds in words.

Why is Phonological Awareness Important?

Phonological awareness is a strong predictor of reading success. It is especially important at the earliest stages of reading development and is a foundation for reading.

How Can You Support Phonological Awareness at Home?

Throughout the school year, you will receive newsletters sharing ideas of games or “ear exercises” you can play with your child. Phonological awareness is simple to support at home - all you need is language! Help your child understand that the words they hear in speech are made up of parts and sounds.

You can begin building phonological awareness in your child by:

- ★ Reciting nursery rhymes
- ★ Reading books with rhyming words
- ★ Playing with alliteration (words that begin with the same sound)
 - Example: Seven silly sisters said surprise!
- ★ Reciting tongue twisters with a focus on individual sounds in words.
 - Example: How much wood would a woodchuck chuck, if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

We look forward to supporting you and your child in building foundational literacy skills this school year! In addition to the newsletters you will receive, you can find more support and information on our website and social media pages.

Visit our website: <https://www.heggerty.org>

View lesson demonstrations: <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqsyZIEkrFNqKexKvY83a6i3F8tz7c4TE>

WEEKS 1 - 4: COMPOUND WORDS



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonological Awareness lessons. Over the next 4 weeks, your child will be hearing **compound words**. A **compound word** is a word that is made up of two small words. Your child will learn to blend and segment with compound words. Blending is a skill that our learners can apply when they want to read words, and segmenting is a skill that helps children hear the parts in a word so they can begin to write and spell.

One of the reasons for teaching these skills is because, "The lack of phonemic awareness is the most powerful determinant of the failure to read." (Marilyn Adams, 1990).

When having conversations with your child, consider using some of these activities with words and language that are familiar to them.

- ★ Ask your child to listen for the sound they hear at the beginning of a word you say aloud.
 - What is the first sound we hear in the word room? Answer: /r/
 - What is the first sound we hear in the names of friends, pets, or family members?

- ★ Can you blend (put together) these small words to make one big word (a compound word)?

after - noon, afternoon sun - shine, sunshine rain - bow, rainbow

- ★ Say to your child, *when two words rhyme, they have the same middle and final sounds. Repeat after me!* Say the following word pairs and have your child repeat them back. Add more word pairs if you wish!

red, bed hot, not did, kid bike, like

- ★ Can you segment (separate) this compound word into two smaller words?

classroom, class - room rainbow, rain - bow flashlight, flash - light

- ★ Books to enjoy together: Look for these books at the library and listen for the rhyming words!

- *Rhyming Dust Bunnies* by Jan Thomas
- *Dog on a Frog?* By Kes Gray
- *Sheep in a Jeep* by Nancy Shaw

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WEEKS 5 - 8: SYLLABLES

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonological Awareness lessons. Over the next 4 weeks, your child will be working with **syllables**. A **syllable** is a part of a word with a vowel sound in it. For example, the word *pencil* has 2 syllables: *pen - cil*. Each part has one vowel sound. Your child will learn to blend and segment with syllables, and these two skills will help students as they learn to read and write words.

Daily phonemic awareness instruction is critical to becoming a successful reader. "Phonemic awareness is central to learning to read and spell." (L. Ehri, 1984). The phonemic awareness activities below are oral and auditory language play, and none of the words would be written out or shown in print to the students.

When having conversations with your child, consider using some of these activities with words and language they are familiar with:

- ★ Name Game: Choose a sound and ask your child to name people, places or things that begin with that sound. For example, say "can you name some things that begin with the sound /m/?"
- ★ Categories: Think of a category (animals, sports, things at school). Ask your child to blend (put together) the syllables to make the word. For example, say "I am thinking of some pets, can you tell me what they are?"
 - ham-ster, hamster pup - y , puppy kitt - en, kitten
- Say, when words rhyme, we hear the same middle and final sounds. Repeat after me! You can say some pairs of rhyming words and have them repeat. To help them further understand rhyming, you can point out why they rhyme (ex: goat, boat, they both have the rhyming part /oat/).
 - goat, boat sun, fun hat, cat
- ★ Be a Ninja: Say a word and have your child act like a ninja by "chopping" words into syllables. For example, say "Be a *ninja!* Chop 'frozen' into syllables!" (*fro-zen*). See below for more words to practice.
 - elbow (el - bow) candle (can - dle) recess (re - cess)
- ★ Books to enjoy together: Listen for the rhyming words!
 - *Little Red Rhyming Hood* by Sue Fliess
 - *Mary Had a Little Jam and Other Silly Rhymes* by Bruce Lansky
 - *Rhyme Crime* by Jon Burgerman

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WEEKS 9-12: ONSET-RIME



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonological Awareness lessons. Over the next 4 weeks, your child will be working with **onset-rime**. **Onset** is the first sound in the word and **rime** is the vowel and everything after. For example, in the word *mop*, the onset is /m/ and the rime is /op/. Your child will learn to blend (put together) and segment (separate) onset-rime, and this will help students as they learn to read and write words.

Continued practice with phonological awareness is so important for your child's growth in reading. "Phonemic awareness has been shown to be a very powerful predictor of later reading success. In fact, [phonemic awareness] is a better predictor than more global measures such as IQ or general language proficiency" (Griffith and Olson, 1992). The phonological awareness activities below are oral and auditory language play to continue practicing rhyming, hearing sounds in words, as well as blending and segmenting onset-rime.

When having conversations with your child, consider using some of these activities with words and language they are familiar with:

- ★ Say, when words rhyme, we hear the same middle and final sounds. Repeat after me! You can say some pairs of rhyming words and have them repeat:

car, far

pat, mat

dog, hog

- ★ Ask your child to listen for the sound they hear at the end of a word you say aloud.
 - What is the last sound we hear in the word dog? Answer: /g/
 - What is the last sound we hear in the names of friends, pets, or family members?
- ★ I spy! Say to your child "I spy something around the room. See if you can guess it!" and then give them a word broken into the first sound (*onset*) and the rest of the word (*rime*). Have them blend the word together to find what you spy!
 - c - ar → car p - en → pen b - all → ball m - um → mum
- ★ Word chop! Say, can you chop these words apart into the first sound and rest of the word?
 - buzz → b - uzz miss → m - iss fun → f - un pool → p - ool
- ★ Songs to enjoy together - listen for rhyming words! (Check out <https://mothergooseclub.com/> for more fun nursery rhymes to listen to and enjoy!)
 - Down by the Bay
 - Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear
 - Hey Diddle, Diddle

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WEEKS 13-18: REVIEW OF COMPOUND WORDS, SYLLABLES, ONSET-RIME



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonological Awareness lessons. Over the next 6 weeks, your child will be reviewing and practicing all of the skills they've learned so far this year! They will continue to work on blending (putting together) and segmenting (separating) **compound words**, **syllables**, and **onset-rimes**. They will also start learning to listen for the medial sounds (vowel sounds) they hear in words. This review and practice will lay the foundation for your child to start working on blending and segmenting individual sounds in words starting in week 19.

"Phonological awareness is critical for learning to read any alphabetic writing system" (Ehri, 2004). Below are some activities you can do with your child to continue practicing phonological awareness skills! Remember, these skills are auditory, so children should not be looking at print while they do these.

When having conversations with your child, consider using some of these activities with words and language they are familiar with:

- ★ Be a Ninja: Say a word and have your child act like a ninja by "chopping" words into...
 - Two smaller words: (Examples: cupcake → cup - cake)
 - Syllables: (Example: monkey → mon - key)
 - Onset-Rime: (Example: cap → c - ap)

- ★ Middle Sound Roller Coaster: Have your child make a roller coaster motion with their hands as they say the sounds in a word. Then have them repeat the middle sound they heard at the top of the rollercoaster (for an example of this, visit the "Middle Sound Hand Motion for Heggerty Phonemic Awareness" video on our youtube channel)
 - Example words: **rAt** **hIm** **bUs** **gEt** **hOp**

- ★ I spy! Say to your child "I spy something around the room...see if you can guess it!" and then give them words broken into different parts. Have them blend the word together to find what you spy!
 - Broken into compound words: (examples: pop - corn → popcorn)
 - Broken into syllables: (example: pump - kin → pumpkin)
 - Broken into onset-rime: (example: m - ug → mug)

- ★ Jump or Slump - say two words and then have your child jump if those two words begin with the same first sound or slump (sink down towards the ground)) if they don't begin with the same first sound.
 - Example word pairs: down, duck fun, less tick, top live, feet zero, zip

- ★ Books to enjoy together and listen for rhymes!
 - *Llama Llama Red Pajama* by Anne Dewdney
 - *Remarkably You* by Pat Zietlow Miller
 - *Little Blue Truck* by Alice Schertle

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WEEKS 19-27: PHONEMES (in 2 sound words)



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. Over the next 9 weeks, your child will be diving into blending (putting together) and segmenting (separating) individual sounds in words. We call these individual sounds **phonemes**.

Your child practices these skills daily, because “one of the most robust findings of modern reading research is that proficient reading is strongly associated with the ability to identify, remember, and sequence phonemes” (Moats, 2014).

When having conversations with your child, consider using some of these activities with words and language they are familiar with:

- ★ Sound Search - Choose a word/familiar name and say to your child:
 - Tell me the first sound you hear in ___?
 - Tell me the last sound you hear in ___?
 - Tell me the medial/vowel sound you hear in ___?
 - Example words you can use: *hot tub lip dog mad pet*

- ★ Hop the sounds! Make two boxes on the floor with tape or chalk.

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Have your child jump to a new box for each new sound they hear in the word. For example, for the word *up*, students would jump in the first square as they say /u/ sound and the second square as they say the /p/ sound. Some examples of words you can use are:

 - at → ā - t on → ö - n by → b - ī low → l - ō may → m - ā

- ★ Blending Blocks - You can use legos or blocks or anything around that house that has two parts that can be put together. Say two sounds as you show your child two blocks. Have them put the blocks together as they say the word by blending the two sounds together. Use the words below as examples:
 - g - ō → go m - ē → me p - ī → pie h - ā → hay s - ē → see

- ★ Say to your child, “Tell me a word that begins like ___?”
 - Example: Tell me a word that begins like pick (*pig, pumpkin, pine, pay*)

- ★ Books to enjoy together and look for rhymes!
 - *Commotion in the Ocean* by Nayasha Williams
 - *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae
 - *Senorita Mariposa* by Ben Gundersheimer
 - *I Like Myself* by Karen Beaumont

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WEEKS 27-35 PHONEMES (in 3 sound words)



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. Over the next 9 weeks, your child will continue practicing blending (putting together) and segmenting (separating) individual sounds, or **phonemes**, in words. Whereas before they were working with two sound words, they will now begin blending and segmenting the sounds they hear in three sound words.

We know this practice is crucial, as “phonemic awareness is the most potent predictor of success in learning how to read” (Stanovich, 1994). There are many things you can do with your child at home to promote strong phonemic awareness.

When having conversations with your child, consider using some of these activities with words and language they are familiar with:

- ★ Ask your child, which word begins like ____? And then give two options for them to choose from.
 - Example: Which word begins like mom? mail or couch
- ★ Be a Ninja: Say a word and have your child act like a ninja by “chopping” words into their individual sounds. Use words like the ones below:
 - rip → r - ĩ - p mad → m - ä - d hum → h - ũ - m jet → j - ě - t
- ★ I spy! Say to your child “I spy something around the room...see if you can guess it!”. Tell them a word broken into its three sounds and have them blend it together to find what you spy! Below are some example words:
 - c - ä - t → cat m - ö - p → mop k - ĩ - d → kid p - ě - t → pet
- ★ Middle Sound Roller Coaster: Have your child make a roller coaster motion with their hands as they say the sounds in a word. Then have them repeat the middle sound they heard at the top of the rollercoaster (for an example of this, visit the [Medial Sounds Hand Motion for Heggerty Phonemic Awareness](#) video on our youtube channel)
 - Example words: t**A**p s**I**t h**U**m m**E**t r**O**ck
- ★ Songs to sing together and listen for rhymes!
 - Five Little Ducks
 - Twinkle Twinkle Little Star
 - Baby Beluga by Raffi
 - **Many kids songs have rhymes in them. Play your family’s favorite songs and see if you can find words that rhyme :)*

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