

INTRODUCTION

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

This summer your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonological Awareness lessons. **Phonological awareness** allows children to recognize 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. During summer school instruction, your child will begin working on phonological awareness by focusing on larger parts within words such as identifying **Syllables**, (*a part of a word with a vowel sound in it. For example, the word pencil has 2 syllables: pen - cil*) and **Onset-rime** (*breaking a syllable apart into its **onset**, the first sound in the word and **rime** the vowel and everything after. For example, in the word mop, the **onset is /m/** and the **rime is /op/***). Then your child will shift to working specifically on hearing individual sounds within words. This instruction is a subset of phonological awareness known as **phonemic awareness**. A **phoneme** is an individual sound within a word.

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 skill for reading and writing.

How Can You Support Phonological Awareness at Home?

Here are some 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 sounds.

You can begin building phonological awareness in your child by:

- ★ Reciting nursery rhymes. Make it more interactive by leaving out some of the rhyming words to see if your child can produce the rhyming word. For example, Hickory dickory **do**ck, the mouse ran up the ____ (**clock**).
- ★ 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

- *Challenge: If your child is able to do this work with syllables, try breaking words into onset-rime and then the individual sounds and see if your child can blend them together.*

- Example: Onset-rime → b-at, bat g-ame, game r-un, run
- Example: Phonemes → g-o, go w-e, we m - a - t, mat

Tip: When working with individual sounds start with 2 sounds and move to 3 sounds if they can do 2.

We look forward to supporting you and your child in continuing to build foundational literacy skills this summer! You can find more support and information on our website and social media pages.

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

View lesson demonstrations: [Heggerty Phonemic Awareness - YouTube](#)