PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS & PHONEMIC AWARENESS
DEFINITIONS

• **Phonology**
  • the study of speech sounds

• **Phonological awareness**
  • the knowledge that words have separate parts (syllables, onsets and rimes, phonemes).
  • It also includes the ability to separate sentences into individual words.
PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS SKILLS SEQUENCE

• Concept of spoken word
  • The ability to distinguish words in a sentence.

• Rhyme
  • The ability to recognize rhyme, complete rhyme, and produce rhyme.

• Syllables
  • The ability to blend, segment, and delete syllables.

• Phonemes
  • The ability to recognize initial and final sounds in words
  • The ability to blend onset and rime
  • The ability to blend, segment, and delete phonemes

• Phoneme Manipulation
  • The ability to add and/or substitute phonemes
Sounds in words can be distinguished in three ways:

- By syllables as book
- By onset sets and rimes as b+ook
- By phonemes b+oo+k
Phonemic Awareness
It is an oral ability.
One part of phonological awareness
The awareness that spoken words are made up of speech sounds or phonemes.
DEFINITIONS -- CONTINUED

• Phoneme
  • The smallest unit of sound in speech.
  • ‘b’ in book contrasts with ‘t’ in took
    • /c/ /a/ /t/ = three phonemes
    • /h/ /ou/ /s/ = three phonemes
There are two major processes involved in phonemic awareness:

- segmenting
- blending
SEGMENTING AND BLENDING

- **Segmenting** is the process of hearing a spoken word and being able to identify its phonemes.

- **Blending** is the process of hearing the phonemes and being able to put them together (blend) to tell what the word is.

- Children can perform segmenting and blending tasks without being able to name the letters.
“Phonemic awareness is a prerequisite to successfully learning phonics.”

--- J. David Cooper
Phonemic awareness is important because there is a high correlation between a student’s level of phonemic awareness and success in beginning reading.

(Ehri & Nunes, 2002).
Without direct instructional support, phonemic awareness eludes roughly 25 per cent of middle class first graders and even more of those who come from less literacy-rich backgrounds (Adams, 1990).
NURTURED PHONEMIC AWARENESS

- Phonemic awareness is more nurtured than taught.

- Children learn it in daily activity using the sounds of language.
Teachers nurture it through rhymes, chants and songs within the classroom:

- Nursery rhymes
- Jump rope chants
- Children’s poetry
- Songs
- Tongue-twisters—Peter Piper picked a peck....
- Raps
- Hinky Pinkies
USING PHONEMIC AWARENESS

• When students attempt to write words using their understanding of language sounds and corresponding letters:
  o They are segmenting sounds in words
  o Ordering and blending the sounds
  o Creating a real word

• Often referred to as “inventive spelling” or more correctly “developmental spelling”.
For children who have not developed an adequate level of phonemic awareness in the primary levels, specific instruction is needed and should be provided.
EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION

- These leveled activities arranged in order from easier to more complex order can be used to develop phonemic awareness:
  - Sound matching
  - Sound isolation
  - Sound blending
  - Sound substitution
  - Sound segmenting
SOUND MATCHING

• **Sound matching** requires the student to match a word to a particular sound.

• The student may be given the sound /t/ and be asked to match words that have that same initial sound.

• Sound matching progresses from initial sounds to medial vowel sounds.
SOUND ISOLATION

• **Sound isolation** requires the student to determine the beginning, middle or ending sounds in a word.

  • For example, the student would identify /c/ as the initial sound in cat.
  • Or /t/ as the ending sound in cart.
In sound blending, the student must pull individual sounds together to make a word. This is the knowledge needed when decoding words using phonics.
SOUND BLENDING ACTIVITIES

• One activity is to play a game such as: “I’m thinking of a pet and here are the sounds in its name: /c/ /a/ /t/. What is it?
  - As students gain proficiency, they can create their own questions and segment the sounds for one another.
Sound substitution requires the student to subtract, add, or substitute sounds in presented words.

For example, “What word do you get when you take the /r/ off of rat?”
• Sound substitutions require the student to segment sounds from the word and then re-blend the sounds using the remaining sounds.
• After the student has mastered adding and subtracting sounds from given words, they can try substituting sounds.

• For example: “This is Luke. If we substitute the first sound in his name with /d/ his name would be Duke.”
• Substituting of individual sounds can be done with middle and ending sounds as well.
• For example: “This is cat. If we substitute the middle sound /a/ in the word cat with /u/ the word would be cut.”
• **Sound segmentation** requires the student to progress from isolating one sound to isolating all the sounds within the word.

• For example, clap would be segmented as: */c/ /l/ /a/ /p/*
SOUND SEGMENTATION INSTRUCTION

• Start with short, two sound words initially and move to more complex words.
ELKONIN BOXES

- Elktonin boxes make segmenting more concrete for students.

- An Elktonin box is simply a series of boxes drawn on a sheet of paper, one box for each phoneme (sound) in a given word.
USE OF THE ELKONIN BOXES

• The teacher says the word.

• The student listens for the discrete sounds.

• The student pushes the markers into the boxes, one marker for each sound.
THE NEXT STEPS

• Once students become skilled at hearing the sounds and pushing chips for the sounds, they can push letter cards into the boxes.

• Later on, they can begin to write individual letters or letter combinations that represent individual sounds in the words.

• This is moving into phonics instruction.
Hears individual phonemes in words

Hears onset and rimes in spoken words

Hears syllables in spoken words

Hears words in spoken sentences

Hears oral rhyme and alliteration
INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT OF CHUNKS

**Rimes** are “chunks” of words, a part of the word you can say.

- A chunk always looks the same and sounds the same.

**Rhymes** sound the same, but may look different at the end.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rhyme</th>
<th>Rime</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>make</td>
<td>make</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>break</td>
<td>brake</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ASSESSMENTS

• Phonological Awareness Skills Test (PAST)
• The Phonological Awareness Test 2
• Yopp-Singer Test of Phonemic Segmentation
WHEN SKILLS ARE TYPICALLY MASTERED

- Children develop their phonological awareness skills at different rates.

- The following is a suggested timeline.
• Concept of spoken word
• Rhyme recognition
• Rhyme completion
• Rhyme production
• Syllable blending
• Syllable segmentation
• Syllable deletion
• Phoneme isolation of initial sound
• Phoneme isolation final sound
• Phoneme blending (onset & rime)  
• Phoneme blending (all phonemes)  
• Phoneme segmentation  
• Phoneme deletion – initial sound  
• Phoneme deletion – final sound  
• Phoneme deletion of first sound in consonant blend  
• Phoneme substitution  

1\textsuperscript{st} grade
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1\textsuperscript{st} grade
1\textsuperscript{st} grade
2\textsuperscript{nd} grade
1\textsuperscript{st} & 2\textsuperscript{nd}
CONCLUSIONS

• Phonemic awareness is a needed foundation to ensure success with phonics and reading in general.

• Writing is also impacted by phonemic awareness.
CONCLUSIONS

If you have a student who struggles with phonics and word recognition, check their level of phonemic awareness.
CONCLUSIONS

• Keep phonemic awareness instruction in perspective.
  • It is a small component of the whole instructional program.
  • Not all students need to go through an extensive phonemic awareness instructional program.
• Remember: assess and know your students’ needs.