

## Phonological Awareness

Before being able to read written letters and words, children learn to hear the individual sounds in spoken words. For example, beginning readers with phonemic awareness are able to hear and recognize that the word “cat” is made up of the sounds /c/ /a/ /t/. They can also combine or blend the separate sounds of a spoken word to say the word (“/d/ /o/ /g/ → dog”). Phonological Awareness activities provide practice in segmenting individual sounds in spoken words and blending sounds to say the word.

Use these activities to reinforce and practice phonological awareness skills with your child.

Title	Suggested Grade(s)	Target Skill(s)	Activity
Find Specific Sounds	K–2	Isolate Beginning and Ending Sound	Have your child and other family members listen for words with a specific sound in family conversation or on television and radio programs, such as words that start with the <i>s</i> sound or that end with the <i>k</i> sound. Have your family members share their heard words and list them on a piece of paper.
Match the First Sound	K–2	Isolate Beginning Sound	Help your child identify the beginning sounds in words. Sort and match pictures and words according to beginning sound. Ask your child to figure out which picture or word doesn’t belong because it has a different beginning sound. (Example: <i>bag, nine, beach, and bike</i> ). Sing the television jingle, “One of these things is not like the others.” Have your child sort snack foods by their beginning sounds. (Example: raisins on one plate, carrots on another, etc.)
Mystery Game	K–2	Isolate Beginning Sound	Play a mystery game in which you are calling your child’s name or looking for an object around the house. For example, say, “I’m thinking of someone whose name begins with (say the sound for the letter <i>t</i> ),” or “I’m looking for an item that begins with (say the sound for the letter <i>g</i> ).”

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Word Race	K–2	Isolate Beginning Sound	Help your child pick out the first sound in words, an important step in learning to read. Give your child one minute to name as many objects, people, foods, etc that start with a given sound, such as <i>sss</i> . When the minute is up, have them try to beat their score with another sound, such as <i>rrr</i> . It's important to say the sound the letter makes rather than the letter's name. For instance, say <i>mmm</i> rather than <i>em</i> .
Count the Sounds	K–2	Segment Sounds in Words, Counting Sounds in Words	Help your child count the number of sounds in words. Have your child find pictures of two- and three-sound words. Put the same number of markers (coins, blocks, etc.) representing the sounds under the picture. Have your child touch a different marker as he or she says each sound. Some ideas for pictures are: fish (3 sounds), lip (3 sounds), shoe (2 sounds), and the number five (3 sounds).
Sounds on a Walk	K–2	Segment Sounds in Words, Counting Sounds in Words	Help your child take spoken words apart. Have your child listen for syllables in words. You can play this game while you are walking. Have your child clap the number of syllables in the name of each object you see. Next, have your child separate the sounds in words, listening for beginning, middle, and ending sounds; for example, if your child sees a bird, he or she would say <i>b-ir-d</i> .
Break the Words Apart	K–2	Segment Sounds in Words, Isolate Beg/Mid/End Sounds in Words, Blending Sounds	Help your child take spoken words apart and put them together. Have your child separate the sounds in simple three-letter words, listening for beginning, middle, and ending sounds. For example, pronounce <i>mom</i> as follows: <i>mm-o-mm</i> . Next, ask your child to blend sounds together to make a word. Say words one sound at a time; for example, you say <i>sh-ee-p</i> and your child says <i>sheep</i> .

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Shopping For Sounds	K-2	Segment Sounds in Words, Isolate Beg/Mid/End Sounds in Words, Blending Sounds	As you and your child shop, have your child separate the sounds in the name of each item you put in your shopping basket, listening for beginning, middle, and ending sounds; for example, for a bag, your child would say <i>b-a-g</i> . Next, ask your child to blend sounds together to make a word. Say words one sound at a time; for example, you say <i>m-i-l-k</i> and your child says <i>milk</i> ; you say <i>c-a-n</i> and your child says <i>can</i> .
Count the Words	K-2	Word Counting	Have your child count the number of words in a spoken sentence. Say a sentence. (Example: "Let's go to the park.") Have your child tell you the number of words in the sentence. Switch roles, allowing your child to give you a sentence and have you say the number of words it contains.