Tips for parents

The following tips will encourage the development of your child’s phonological awareness skills:

- Read aloud to your child and involve him/her in the story reading experience
  - Follow the text with your finger while reading to demonstrate the left to right direction
  - Show your child the cover of the book and ask them what they think the story will be about
- Introduce the alphabet
- Help your child understand that letters are things we see and sounds are things we hear (e.g. What letter does your name start with? What sound does your name start with?)
- Practice making rhyming words with your child (e.g. donna/bonna, hay/day)
- Clapping the number of syllables in words and joining together syllables to make words (e.g. ho-li-day)
- Count the number of sounds in words (e.g. How many sounds are in the word “ship” = “sh”-“i”-“p” has three sounds)
- Identify the first and last sounds in real and non-real words (e.g. “b”at and le“p”)

Suggested resources

Books

- Nursery rhyme books
- Each Peach Pear Plum by Janet and Alan Ahlberg
- The Hairy MacLary series by Lynley Dodd
- There was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly
- The Dr Seuss Series by Dr Seuss
- Shoes from Grandpa by Mem Fox

Alphabet and Phonics posters
Alphabet and Phonics flashcards

Games

- Recite rhyming chants and ask your child to change the words (e.g. “Creeping through the jungle, what did I see? I saw a hungry/sleepy tiger looking at me”)
- Play “I Spy” with your child, to develop knowledge of what sounds word begin with
- Clap hands, tap the desk or march in place to the syllables in a word.

Websites

Please talk to your Speech Pathology student about great websites and resources to access for further information.

Phone: 07 3365 2232
Email: healthclinics@uq.edu.au
Web: www.uq.edu.au/healthclinics
Literacy development

The development of literacy skills refers to a child's growing abilities to read and write.

- **Phonological awareness skills** are the basic building blocks for the development of reading and spelling and are **essential for the development of literacy**
- Phonological awareness refers to a child's ability to develop an awareness that words can rhyme and are composed of syllables and sounds.

Thinking about words

From birth, exposure to both spoken language and printed language such as books provides the foundation of early literacy.

- Reading and spelling are learned skills, which require an environment rich in language and exposure to written words
- The more exposure a child has to language and print, the more likely he/she is to move easily into using these skills to read and spell.

The development of phonological awareness skills

Children often develop their reading, writing and spelling skills at different rates. However, there is a general pattern to a child's phonological awareness development.

By kindergarten

- Counting the number of words in a sequence
- Developing the ability to identify and use rhyming words
- Recognising different sounds (e.g. "t" and "d" make different sounds).

By preschool/prep

- Counting and clapping the syllables in words
  - *Example*: "pen-cil" = two syllables; "bu-ter-fly" = three syllables
- Identifying the sounds that the alphabet letters make
  - *Example*: "The letter b makes the sound "b"; "The letter T makes the sound t"
- Identifying the first and last sounds in words
  - *Example*: "What is the first sound in 'tub'?" answer ("t"); "What is the last sound in 'roof'?" answer ("f").

By Year One

- Joining together sounds from simple words
  - *Example*: "What word am I saying? 'c'-"a"-'t" (cat)
- Separating all of the sounds in simple words
  - *Example*: "What are all the sounds in the word 'cap'?” (‘c’-'a'-'p').

For older children

If your child has mastered the skills above, you could also try the following:

- Deleting sounds from words to make a new word
  - *Example*: "Say 'seat' without the 's' ("eat")
- Adding sounds to words to make new words
  - *Example*: "Add 's' to the beginning of 'top' ("stop")
- Substituting sounds to make new words
  - *Example*: "Say 'hard'" then change the 'd' sound to a 't' ("hart")
- Swapping around sounds to make a new word
  - *Example*: "tap" to "pat".

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