



Highland Square
Village Schools

The good news about Phonemic awareness

- It can be taught and learned.
- Instruction helps children learn to read.
- Instruction helps children learn to spell.
- Instruction is most effective when children are taught to manipulate phonemes by using the letters of the alphabet.



Parent Guide

Phonemic Awareness

Understanding the Sound of Language and the Beginning of Success in Reading



Highland Square
Village Schools

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Resources on the Web

- <http://www.readingrockets.org/helping/target/phonologicalphonemic>

Reading Rockets is the place to start looking for great ways to help your child. You'll read about how to target any problems your child may have and how you can help.

Included on this page are:

- Ideas for helpful home-based, fun activities
- Videos from PBS shows dealing with reading
- Links to other online activities and info

Phonemic Awareness: Understanding the Sound of Language

BRIDGING THE GAP BETWEEN SPOKEN WORDS AND READING

In the early stages of their development, children will eventually come to realize that the vocal sounds they hear around them have a pattern. They aren't completely sure of what's going on but they start to understand that what they're hearing is coming from family members, radio and television, and from other people in public spaces like supermarkets. This speech, they determine, is made up of individual sounds that seem to fit together in specific ways. These words, as we call them, have other bits and pieces for young people to discover.

Children figure out that words have smaller units and each of these smaller units have beginning sounds and ending sounds. Teachers will eventually help them make a connection to their own discoveries of language and help them practice these smaller units called syllables in the hope that they can see how many of these building blocks of language are shared. Doing so will make it easier for to bridge the gap between spoken and written language and the all-important skills of reading and reading comprehension.



Phonemic awareness

is the best predictor of reading success. (Adams, 1991)

Your child is excited to be learning but may be a little afraid as well. Below are just a couple ways you can help your child practice what is being learned at school. These activities aren't meant to feel like homework at all. It's your opportunity to help guide your child's naturally developing explorations of language. It may seem like a small thing to do but in reality you are helping build the foundation of great learning to come.

READ TO YOUR CHILD EVERY DAY

Your child is beginning to understand that speech sounds have meaning and that each word spoken has a beginning and an ending sound. When you read, don't worry so much about letter names. Yes, your child needs to know them, but focus on the sounds of the words. Stretch out certain sounds of words so that you can call attention to the sound. When you read, "Regards to the Man on the Moon" and the *Imagination 1* lifts off the ground, have fun saying B-A-A-R-R-O-O-O-M-M-M! When Susie and Louie meet up with some friends in space, say Ziggie's name with fast repetitions of the letter Z: Z-Z-Z-Z-Ziggie!

READ THE STORY WITH GUSTO

There are monsters in space and you have to treat them with respect! Your child will catch on

to the way you are playing with the word sounds and begin to do the same thing. This is a very important step because manipulating sounds is an indicator that your child is picking up the skills needed to later build connections between sounds and written words.

PRACTICE THIS DISCOVERY

Use words that sound alike in at the beginning of the word: trip, train; rain, roll; bowl, bat; hat, hippopotamus. Or words that rhyme at the end of the word: train, rain; roll, bowl; bat, hat. Your child will begin to recognize beginning and ending sounds that are the same and use that experience to later "decode" written words. If they know that "tr" sounds like the

beginning of "train" they can use that knowledge when sounding out other words like "tree".



Inch by Inch

Leo Lionni, author

A favorite since 1960, use this book to practice stretching simple words into their sound units called phonemes. Use simple words like /m/ /e/ /t/ (met) and /s/ /e/ /d/ (said). How would you do "toucan"?



Good-bye Tonsils!

Craig & Juliana Hatkoff, authors, Marilyn Mets, illustrator

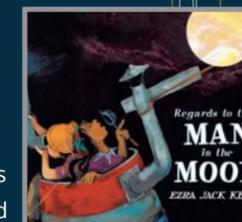
Use a spoken word hunt to find different sounds like M (mommy, magic mask, tomorrow) or combinations like /ch/, /sh/, /th/ (this and thing), /wh/, /ng/, and /nk/.



Regards to the Man in the Moon

Ezra Jack Keats, author

Use your imagination just for the fun of it! While reading this book with your child, try sound substitutions. Read a word like "junk" and ask them to take off the /j/ sound and substitute a /d/ sound. Silly words are just as good – see what happens!



Rikki-Tikki-Tavi

Rudyard Kipling, author Lambert Davis, illustrator

Another classic book over 100 years old! The story is full of opportunities to count individual sounds in words. Pick a word and have your child tap for every sound heard. At first, keep it simple with words like "pink" and "run" and save our hero's name for when your child needs a challenge!



The Dinosaurs Of Waterhouse Hawkins

Barbara Kerley, author Brian Selznick, illustrator

There was really a time when nobody knew about dinosaurs! Make cards with groups of words that have the same first sound. Show two cards that match and one that doesn't. Your child will find the oddball in the sound match!

