

10 Ways to Help Your Child with Phonemic Awareness

Parents, adjust according to your child's age and ability level.

1. Present books with rhyme, repetition, and rhythm. Mother Goose books, Dr. Seuss books, Shel Silverstein, Jack Prelutsky, *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin, and the alphabet books by Edward Lear are favorites.
2. Take field trips. Talk with your child about what you see.
3. Rhyming Games – “I am thinking of an animal that rhymes with *hat*. What is the animal?” Answer: *cat*.
4. Isolation – While petting a dog, or playing with a dog, ask something like, “Oh, a dog. What sound does *dog* begin with?” Answer: /d/.
5. Segmentation – Pass your child a cup and ask: “What are the three sounds you hear in the word *cup*?”, and at the same time, if necessary, extend the sounds while pronouncing the word. Answer: /k/ – /u/ – /p/.
6. Deletion – When your child smiles at you, say something like: “What a beautiful smile. What is the word *smile* without the beginning /s/ sound?” Answer: *mile*.
7. Substitution – Point to a bug or similar object and say something like: “A bug. Change the /g/ to /n/. You have something you like to eat. What is it?” Answer: *bun*.
8. Blending – Whenever you're talking with your child and using some simple words, like *big*, stop and say: “Here are the sounds of a word. Guess what the word is.” Then follow with the sounds /b/, /i/, and /g/. Answer: *big*.
9. Reinforcing phonemic awareness skills needn't be too elaborate or time consuming. Focus on one specific skill at a time. Five simple minutes, three times a day, will go a long way toward reinforcing that skill.
10. There is no need to fret if your child doesn't get this right away. It may take a lot of examples, a lot of repeated attempts, and a lot of practice for success.

