Professional Learning Community

EMERGENT LITERACY

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Module 2: Phonological Awareness (Sessions 4–6)

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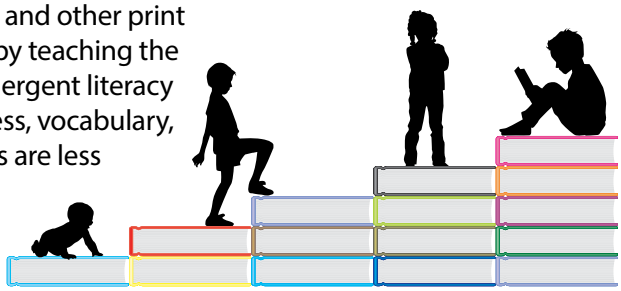
Introduction

Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy was developed to support preschool teachers through collaborative learning experiences in a literacy professional learning community (PLC). PLCs are a form of professional development in which small groups of educators with shared interests work together with the goals of expanding their knowledge and refining their craft. PLC members often share the goal of improving student achievement by enhancing their own teaching practice.

PLCs typically meet regularly to learn new topics, share ideas, and solve problems. Teams determine the topics they want to learn and the methods they want to use to gain the knowledge. PLC members might read and discuss articles or books, attend trainings or conferences on an area of interest, or ask an expert to speak to the group. A facilitator or team leader might guide PLC members in learning a new topic, perhaps with professional development materials designed to walk them through the content.

Children entering kindergarten and grade 1 vary greatly in their emergent literacy skills. Children with strong literacy skills in early elementary school are likely to become good readers, while children with weak literacy skills are likely to remain poor readers.[1] Families provide children with their first literacy experiences using interactions, conversations, books, and other print materials. Preschool teachers continue that learning by teaching the foundations of literacy, or emergent literacy skills. Emergent literacy skills include print knowledge, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and oral language. Preschoolers who learn these skills are less likely to develop future reading problems and more likely to read with ease, understand what they read, and succeed in school.[2]



The *Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy* materials can be downloaded for free at https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/edlabs/regions/southeast/elplc.

Purpose of This Guide

This guide was developed for preschool teachers to participate in the *Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy*, which helps preschool teachers in collaborative learning experiences apply evidence-based strategies in their instruction. In turn, preschool teachers can provide 3- to 5-year-old children with evidence-based language and literacy instruction. Through this collaborative learning experience, preschool teachers expand their knowledge base as they read, discuss, share, and apply evidence-based key ideas and strategies.

1 Duncan et al., 2007; Juel, 1988; Wagner, Torgesen, & Rashotte, 1994; Wagner et al., 1997.
2 Kaplan & Walpole, 2005; Sparks, Patton, & Murdoch, 2014.

Overview of Modules and Sessions

The *Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy* comprises four modules: Print Knowledge, Phonological Awareness, Vocabulary, and Oral Language (table 1). Each module includes 3 sessions, for a total of 12 sessions. The first two sessions of each module take about 90 minutes to complete, and the last session of each module takes about 60 minutes. The topics of the sessions are the emergent literacy skills that preschoolers need in order to become successful readers. The accompanying Facilitator Guide includes a structured plan for a facilitator to lead participants through each session.

It is recommended that the sessions be completed in sequential order. The timeline for completing them is flexible; they can serve as a year's worth or more of professional learning. If the recommended time for each session is not available, complete what you can with the time you have and then pick up where you left off the next time you meet.

Table 1: Overview of Session Topics and Timing by Module

Module	Session and Topic	Minutes
1 Print Knowledge	1. What Print Knowledge Is, Why It Is Important, How to Teach It Effectively	90
	2. Teaching Print Knowledge and Using Small-Group Explicit Instruction	90
	3. Teaching Print Knowledge Using Print Referencing During Read-Alouds, Considerations for English Learner Students and Students With Disabilities, and Additional Resources	60
2 Phonological Awareness	4. What Phonological Awareness Is, When It Develops, and Why It Is Important	90
	5. Levels of Phonological Awareness and Features and Examples of Effective Phonological Awareness Instruction	90
	6. Phonological Awareness Instruction In Action, Considerations for English Learner Students and Students With Disabilities, and Additional Resources	60
3 Vocabulary	7. Background on Vocabulary	90
	8. How Do Children Learn New Words, Which Words Do I Teach, and How Do I Use Dialogic Reading to Teach Vocabulary?	90
	9. More Ways to Teach Vocabulary, Considerations for English Learner Students and Students With Disabilities, and Additional Resources	60
4 Oral Language	10. What is Oral Language, Why Is It Important, How Do Children Develop Syntax, and How Do I Teach Syntax?	90
	11. Teaching Oral Language Through Conversations and Supporting Peer-to-Peer Language Interactions	90
	12. Oral Language and Listening Comprehension, Considerations for English Learner Students and Students With Disabilities, and Additional Resources	60

Five-Step Process for Each PLC Session

Each session follows a five-step process for collaborative learning (table 2). The process was adapted from Wald and Castleberry's (2000) five stages of work for teams engaging in a collaborative learning cycle.

Table 2: Five-Step Process for Each Session

Step	Description
STEP 1	**Debrief** Participants discuss their experiences with and reflections on an instructional practice that they have planned and implemented since the previous session.
STEP 2	**Define and Discuss Session Goals and Content** Facilitator gives brief statements about previous session goals and the current session's goals: "where we've been and where we're going." Facilitator shares foundational and background information while engaging participants in discussions or activities that support prior reading.
STEP 3	**Learn and Confirm** Participants explore new practices and compare them to current practices. Participants access and build their background knowledge and experiences related to the session's topic. Participants are explicitly taught the session's content through, for example, models, videos, and discussions.
STEP 4	**Collaborate and Practice** Participants collaborate in pairs or small groups to practice applying strategies and activities.
STEP 5	**Reflect, Plan, and Implement** Participants reflect on what they learned during the session, plan how the activities and strategies will be implemented in their classroom before the next session, and then implement their plan in their classroom. All participants will be prepared at the start of the next session to share their experiences.

Organization of this Guide

For each module, the Participant Guide includes a self-study reading assignment to be completed before each session and a set of activities to be completed during and after each session. The guide also includes a copy of the presentation slides used during each session (with room for notes), a set of reproducible materials that can be used in the classroom, a glossary of terms used throughout the module, and a list of resources that participants can explore for additional information.

Self-Study Reading

Before each session, you will complete a self-study reading that provides evidence-based content on the topic of that session. The reading includes the what, why, and how for each instructional practice as well as classroom scenarios that demonstrate effective instruction. During each session, you will have the opportunity to discuss, view examples of practice, and process the information. Participating in the sessions will help you develop a deeper understanding of the self-study reading content.
The last section of the self-study reading in the third session of each module provides a list of free additional resources related to the module's topic, including articles, websites, and children's activities.

Activities

The first activity in each module is to answer a set of frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the module topic based on your background knowledge and experience. The FAQs are based on education leaders' submissions that were compiled during the development of *Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy*. At the end of each module, you will revisit the FAQs and reflect on how your understanding changed over the course of the module.

During each session you will engage in collaborative hands-on activities, some of which incorporate videos. For example, after discussing and viewing a video about explicitly teaching phonological awareness in small groups, you will engage in a role-play to explicitly teach phonological awareness in small groups with colleagues. In other activities you will be asked to share and reflect on your classroom teaching experiences. Table 3 includes information about the videos of phonological awareness instruction in preschool classrooms.

Table 3: Videos of Phonological Awareness Instruction in Preschool Classrooms

Title	Link	Duration
Video 1: The Literacy Tree: A Representation of Foundational Literacy Skills	https://youtu.be/dTzdfHqKh00	2:43
Video 2: Phonological Awareness Continuum	https://youtu.be/k0IDVed9dUU	4:56
Video 3: Small Groups in Action	https://youtu.be/YXaF5qjnSLQ	6:15
Video 4: Word Level Phonological Awareness Lesson	https://youtu.be/LSF1AZjTAqc	4:38
Video 5: Syllable Level Phonological Awareness Lesson	https://youtu.be/CmwMYcQmRGo	5:55
Video 6: Onset-Rime Level Phonological Awareness Lesson	https://youtu.be/FHxs4YiB0ZI	4:23
Video 7: Phoneme Level Phonological Awareness Lesson	https://youtu.be/GJQkPrhspbU	6:36
Video 8: Phonological Awareness Throughout the Day	https://youtu.be/5jicN0F12t0	8:06
Video 9: Phonological Awareness and Considerations for Intensive Instruction	https://youtu.be/YiZMBP9ap50	5:40

At the end of each session is a set of self-study activities for you to apply what was discussed during the session and to encourage self-study between sessions. The self-study activities will take approximately 30–60 minutes to complete. Each self-study activity follows the same structure that includes something for you to:

DO

DO an action step, such as trying a new strategy in your classroom and responding to reflection questions.

WATCH

WATCH, for example, a video about applying instructional strategies.

READ

READ to prepare for the next PLC session.

Slides

The slides presented by the facilitator during each session are provided after the self-study reading assignment and activities for the three sessions in each module. Use them for reference and notetaking during and between sessions.

Reproducible Materials

Reproducible instructional materials used throughout the sessions are provided after the presentation slides. You are encouraged to use these materials in your classroom.

Glossary

The glossary defines the words in bold type and is located after the Reproducible Materials section.

Session Schedule

Use table 4 to keep track of your session schedule. The gray color indicates the other modules that comprise this PLC. Our current focus is Module 2, Phonological Awareness.

Table 4: Session Schedule

Module	Session and Topic	Duration	Date and Time	Place	Completed
1 PRINT KNOWLEDGE	1. What Print Knowledge Is, Why It Is Important, How to Teach It Effectively	90 minutes			
	2. Teaching Print Knowledge and Using Small-Group Explicit Instruction	90 minutes			
	3. Teaching Print Knowledge Using Print Referencing During Read-Alouds, Considerations for English Learner Students and Students With Disabilities, and Additional Resources	60 minutes			
2 PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS	4. What Phonological Awareness Is, When It Develops, and Why It Is Important	90 minutes			
	5. Levels of Phonological Awareness and Features and Examples of Effective Phonological Awareness Instruction	90 minutes			
	6. Phonological Awareness Instruction in Action, Considerations for English Learner Students and Students With Disabilities, and Additional Resources	60 minutes			
3 VOCABULARY	7. Background on Vocabulary	90 minutes			
	8. How Do Children Learn New Words, Which Words Do I Teach, and How Do I Use Dialogic Reading to Teach Vocabulary?	90 minutes			
	9. More Ways to Teach Vocabulary, Considerations for English Learner Students and Students With Disabilities, and Additional Resources	60 minutes			
4 ORAL LANGUAGE	10. What is Oral Language, Why Is It Important, How Do Children Develop Syntax, and How Do I Teach Syntax?	90 minutes			
	11. Teaching Oral Language Through Conversations and Supporting Peer-to-Peer Language Interactions	90 minutes			
	12. Oral Language and Listening Comprehension, Considerations for English Learner Students and Students With Disabilities, and Additional Resources	60 minutes			

Session 4: What Phonological Awareness Is, When It Develops, and Why It Is Important

Key Terms	Definition
alphabetic principle	The understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds.
blend	Putting together syllables or phonemes of a spoken word quickly, to accurately say the word. For example, *dog – house = doghouse, /ă/ /m/ = am, /sh/ /ā/ /p/ = shape.*
deletion	Removing a syllable or phoneme in a spoken word. For example, *cupcake – cup = cake, nice – /n/ = ice.*
onset-rime	The smaller units within a word. The onset is the part before the vowel. The rime is the vowel and the string of letters that follow. For example, in *sun*, */s/* is the onset, and */un/* is the rime; and in string, */str/* is the onset, and */ing/* is the rime.
phoneme	The smallest unit of sound in spoken words. For example, *cat* has three phonemes: */k/ /ă/ /t/*.
phonemic awareness	The ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in spoken words.
phonics	Using printed letters and letter-sound relationships to read words.
phonological awareness	The understanding that speech can be broken down into parts and the ability to manipulate those parts at the word, syllable, onset-rime, and phoneme levels.
print knowledge	Knowing letter names, letters sounds, and concepts of print. Print knowledge does not include sounding out printed words, whereas phonics does.
segment	Separating or pulling apart the individual phonemes, or sounds, of a word into discrete units. For example, sun segmented is /s/ /ŭ/ /n/. Syllables and onset-rimes can also be segmented.
syllable	A larger unit of sound in a word. It is a word part that contains a vowel, or in spoken language, a vowel sound. For example, pumpkin has two syllables: pump-kin.

- When you see a letter between two forward slashes, say the *letter sound*. For example, "/m/, /ă/, /t/" indicates each sound in the word *mat*.
- When you see a hyphen, say each part of the word separately. For example, "pic-nic" means you say, "pic" and "nic" with a pause in between.

Unless otherwise indicated, all content about phonological awareness is auditory (heard) or oral (spoken)—that is, there is no print involved. So, children are listening, speaking, pointing, and gesturing during phonological awareness instruction and practice.

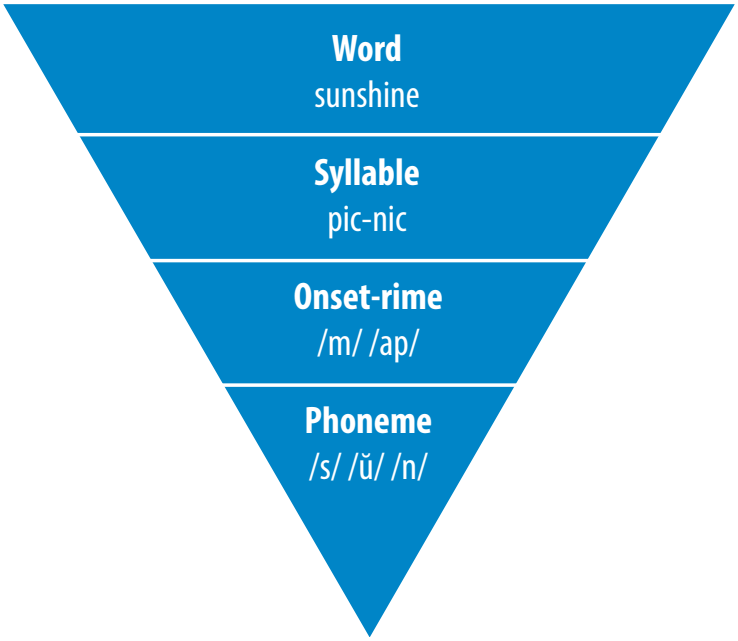
Self-Study Reading

What Is Phonological Awareness?

Phonological awareness is the understanding that speech can be broken down into parts, or units of sound, and the ability to manipulate those parts.[3] Phonological awareness is an auditory (heard) or oral (spoken) skill that does not involve reading letters or words. Children listen, speak, point, and gesture—for example to picture cards—during phonological awareness instruction and practice.

Phonological awareness includes four levels of the English language's sound structure, beginning with larger units of language and moving toward smaller ones (see figure 1). By unit, we mean a part of the sound structure of language that can be manipulated in phonological awareness tasks. The largest unit is the word (*sunshine*), followed by the syllable (*pic-nic*), the onset and rime (/m/ /ap/), and the phoneme, or individual sound (/s/ /ŭ//n/). Additional details on these levels are provided later in this session's Self-Study Reading.

Figure 1: Units of Language



Children with strong phonological awareness can manipulate sounds at every level. The range of tasks that can be taught and practiced at each level are discussed in detail in Sessions 5 and 6. For now, table 5 shows an example of one task at each level.

Table 5: Phonological Awareness Levels and Example Tasks

Phonological Awareness Level	Task	Child Response
Word Level	Put together (blend) sun-shine.	*sunshine*
Syllable Level	Say each part (segment) of *picnic.*	*pic-nic*
Onset-Rime Level	Put together (blend) /m/ /ap/.	*map*
Phoneme Level	Say each sound (segment) in *meat.*	*/m/ /ē/ /t/*

3 Lane & Pullen, 2004.

Distinguishing Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness, Phonics, Print Knowledge, and the Alphabetic Principle

Phonological Awareness and Phonemic Awareness

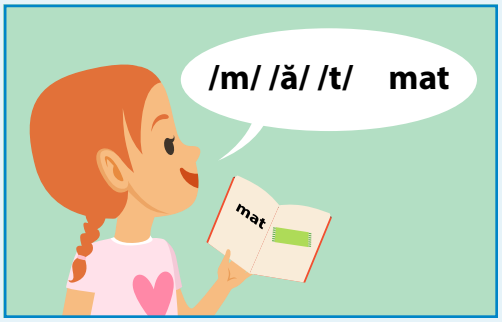
Phonological awareness and **phonemic awareness** are often used interchangeably, but they are not the same thing.[4] Phonological awareness includes skills at all levels—the word level, the syllable level, the onset-rime level, and the phoneme level—whereas phonemic awareness includes skills only at the phoneme level.[5] Remember, phonological awareness, which includes phonemic awareness, does not involve print; it is a spoken and auditory skill.

Alphabetic languages, such as English, represent language at the phoneme level, which means that letters typically correspond to sounds in spoken words. For example, *key* has three letters and two sounds (/k/ /ē/). In English, phonemes can be made with more than one letter (for example, /ch/, /ph/), and a single letter (x) can have two phonemes (/k/ /s/) when at the end or middle of a word (tax, exit).

Identifying and manipulating phonemes can be a challenge because people do not speak in isolated phonemes. Each phoneme in a word is affected by the phonemes that surround it. For example, pay close attention to the form of your mouth, specifically your lips, as you say these words out loud: *bed, bake, bottle, barn, bread*. The /b/ in each word sounds different. Say the words again and focus on how /b/ sounds and how it feels in your mouth as you say each word. Do you hear and feel the difference of /b/? The different phonemes that follow the B in each word slightly alter the sound B makes.

It's About What We Hear, Not What We See

Phonics



Phonological awareness and phonics are both part of the foundation of literacy but are often confused. Phonological awareness includes children's sensitivity to and ability to manipulate sounds within spoken language, whereas phonics is the use of the predictable relationship between the sounds of spoken language and the letters and spellings that represent those sounds to read written language.[6] Phonics is also defined as an instructional method of teaching reading by matching printed letters with letter sounds. So, phonological awareness is auditory, and phonics is visual—it includes print. Having strong phonological awareness skills helps children when phonics instruction begins.[7]

It may help to think about phonological awareness as something that can be taught and practiced in the dark. For example, you can ask a child to say the syllables heard in the spoken word garden (gar-den) in the dark, without print or pictures. However, because phonics always involves letters, light is needed to see the print when teaching and practicing phonics.

Print Knowledge

Print knowledge, another part of the foundation for later literacy skills, is also related to but different from phonological awareness and phonics. Print knowledge includes knowledge of **letter names**, **letter sounds**, and **concepts of print**. Print knowledge and phonics both include

4 The section is based on Scarborough and Brady (2002).
5 Lane, Pullen, Eisele, & Jordan, 2002.
6 Phillips & Piasta, 2013.
7 Phillips, Clancy-Menchetti, & Lonigan, 2008.

identifying letter sounds, but print knowledge does not include using knowledge of letter sounds to read words, whereas phonics does. For example, if you ask a child what sound the letter P makes, he or she can demonstrate print knowledge by responding, "/p/." Print knowledge is the focus of Module 1 of this Professional Learning Community. Table 6 is a summary of these important terms, sometimes referred to as "important P-Words".[8]

Table 6: Summary of Important P-Words

P Word	Definition
phonemic awareness	The ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in spoken words.
phonics	Using printed letters and letter-sound relationships to read words.
phonological awareness	The understanding that speech can be broken down into parts and the ability to manipulate those parts at the word, syllable, onset-rime, and phoneme level.
print knowledge	Knowing letter names, letters sounds, and concepts of print. Print knowledge does not include reading words, whereas phonics does.

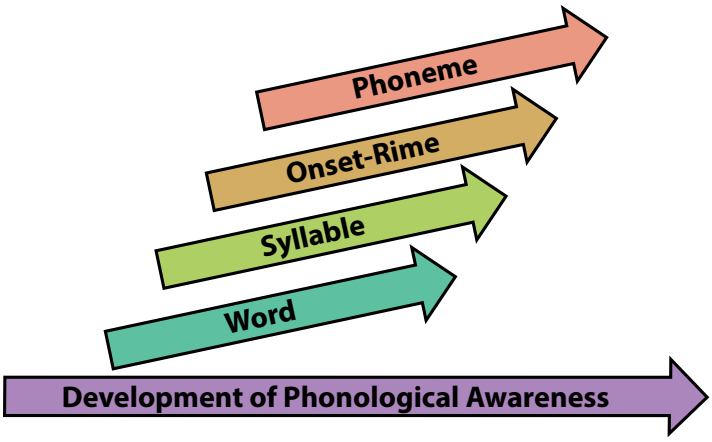
The Alphabetic Principle

The ability to decode a word depends on understanding the **alphabetic principle**, which is the understanding that letters represent sounds that form words and the knowledge of predictable patterns between written letters and spoken sounds. Children learn these relationships and apply them while reading and writing words.[9] The more formal literacy instruction, including phonics, that children receive in kindergarten builds on and strengthens children's print knowledge, phonological awareness, and understanding of the alphabetic principle.

8 Scarborough & Brady, 2002.
9 Ehri, 2002; Phillips & Torgesen, 2006; Share, 1995.

Phonological awareness is an overarching term that is used to explain several levels of the sound structure of language. These levels of phonological awareness overlap in terms of when children are able to manipulate units of sound within each level. The levels can be thought of as a continuum of learning. Importantly, phonological awareness is not sequential, where children must master one level before moving to the next level. Rather, children's skills at multiple levels of the phonological awareness continuum may develop at the same time.[10] Figure 2 illustrates the phonological awareness continuum; see https://youtu.be/k0IDVed9dUU for an animation with details.

Figure 2: Phonological Awareness Continuum



10 Anthony, Lonigan, Driscoll, Phillips, & Burgess, 2003.

Children's Abilities Vary Across the Phonological Awareness Continuum

At the beginning of preschool, most children will already be somewhere on the phonological awareness continuum. For example, some children may be able to identify initial sounds in words while others are still working toward hearing different sound structures within words. Regardless of where children are on the continuum, phonological awareness instruction can begin. With the appropriate support from teachers, all children can make progress along the phonological awareness continuum, and all children can improve their sensitivity to sounds and skill at manipulating them.

Teaching and Learning Along the Phonological Awareness Continuum

Since children enter preschool with diverse developmental levels of phonological awareness, teachers first need to determine where each child is on the continuum. Instruction does not necessarily need to start at the beginning of the phonological continuum for all children, nor does the entire continuum need to be taught in preschool. For example, children who begin preschool already proficient at blending and segmenting compound words likely do not need to spend a lot of time practicing with those larger units of sound. Growth is key when it comes to the phonological awareness continuum. So, no matter where a child starts, it is important only that he or she make adequate movement during the preschool years. To be most effective, phonological awareness instruction needs to be explicit and delivered primarily in small groups. Small-group instruction is addressed in Session 5.

Playful Teaching Promotes Playful Learning

For children to be engaged in active, playful learning, teaching needs to be active and playful. Examples of phonological awareness activities that engage children in playful learning are provided in Sessions 5 and 6.

When Does Phonological Awareness Develop?

Early language experiences at home and in preschool play an important role in developing children's phonological awareness. Although speaking and listening may seem unrelated to learning to read, being aware of sounds in words is actually very important to reading. Before learning to read, children need to be aware of sounds in words without relating those sounds to print. Children demonstrate phonological awareness through their speaking and listening skills. Singing nursery rhymes, silly songs, and making up silly words or poems are ways to enhance preschool children's awareness of sounds. These skills are fun to practice because many children love to play with sounds in words. However, for most children, engaging only in these activities is not enough to build phonological awareness.

Because phonological awareness does not come naturally to all children, it needs to be explicitly taught and practiced.[11] Difficulties with phonological awareness are at the heart of most children's reading challenges. Therefore, a key goal in preschool is to provide a strong foundation in phonological awareness so that children can benefit from reading instruction later in school.[12]

11 Philips et al., 2008.
12 Philips et al., 2008.

Why Is Phonological Awareness Important?

Phonological Awareness Is Directly Related to Reading Ability

Phonological awareness is directly related to reading ability.[13] If phonological awareness is strong, reading ability is likely to be strong.[14] Even though reading is not formally taught in preschool, critical foundational skills and instruction are provided that will directly support children when they are introduced to formal reading instruction. Phonological awareness is one of those skills—and teaching it in developmentally appropriate lessons is very important. It is also important for preschool teachers to know the developmental sequence of how having phonological awareness supports learning to read. This knowledge will help you fulfill your critically important role in teaching these skills to children.

Phonological Awareness Builds Children's Capacity to Learn Phonics

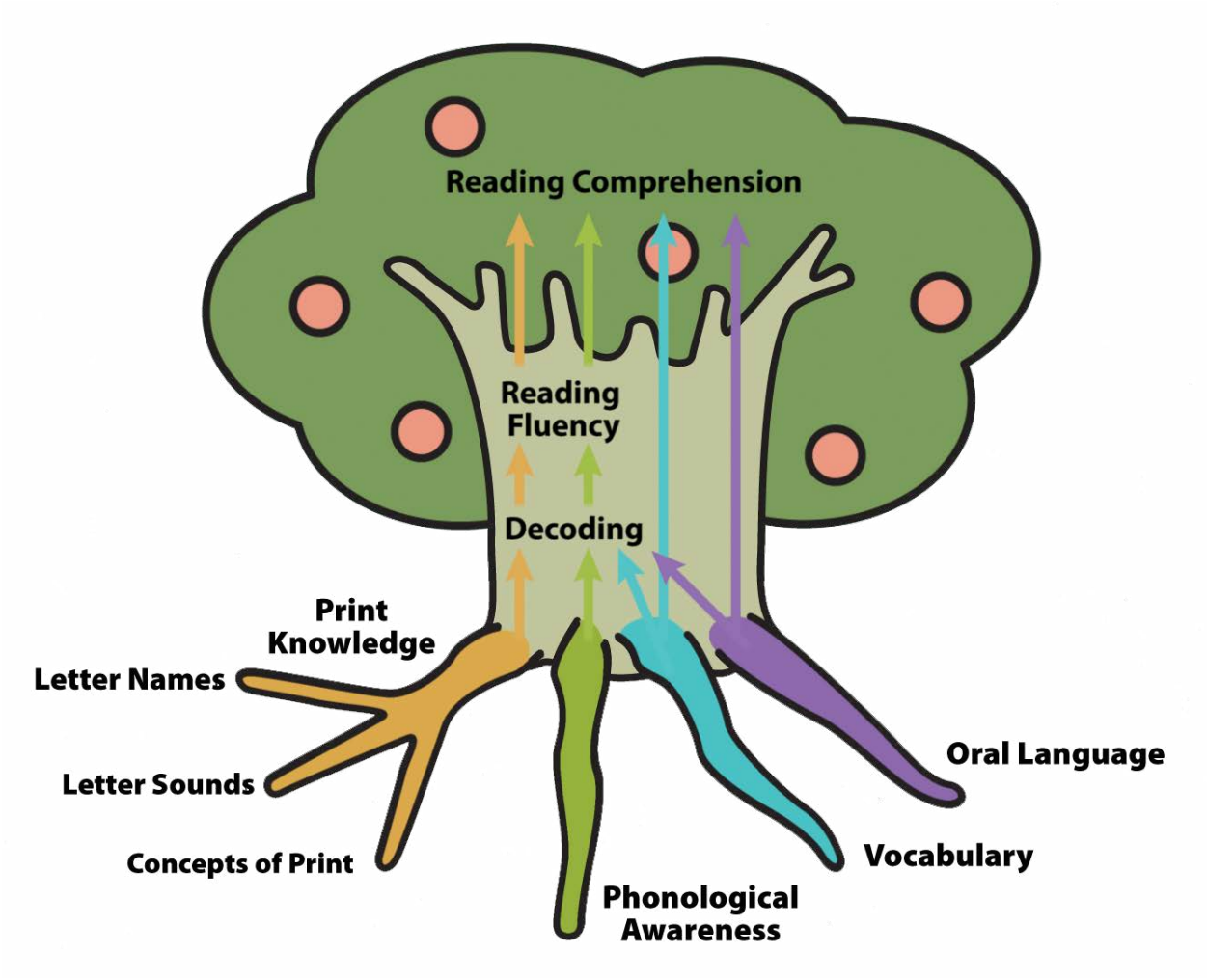
The goal of phonological awareness instruction in preschool is to build children's capacity to hear and manipulate sounds in spoken words. For example, children can learn to blend sounds together, to make words, and to delete sounds from words, leaving other words or parts of words. Children's capacity to manipulate the sounds in spoken words, especially the smallest units of sound (phonemes), will be important in formal reading instruction later. This capacity will directly relate to their new understanding of phonics, which is the understanding that there is a predictable relationship between the sounds of spoken language and the letters and spellings that represent those sounds in written language. Children who have acquired phonological awareness and print knowledge can quickly understand the connections between sounds and letters. Those children, who also more readily use those connections to identify words in print, almost invariably become better readers than children who have difficulty acquiring these skills.[15]

Phonological Awareness Is a Foundational Skill for Reading

Phonological awareness is one of the core foundational skills in the development of early reading abilities. Children with strong phonological awareness also benefit more from phonics instruction in kindergarten, grade 1, and beyond, so they acquire better decoding skills to sound out and read words. Think about the feedback that elementary school teachers often provide when students are trying to read or write an unfamiliar word, such as "Sound it out." This cue makes sense only to a child who has a strong foundation in phonological awareness, letter names, letter sounds,[16] and who has been taught a process to sound out, or **decode**, a word. Decoding skills then support the development of reading fluency, and reading fluency promotes reading comprehension. So, without a foundation of phonological awareness, a child is unlikely to develop the word-reading skills needed to understand text, which is the goal of reading.[17] The literacy tree in figure 3 represents the importance of emergent literacy skills to later reading development; see https://youtu.be/dTzdfHqKh00 for an animation elaborating on this relationship.

13 Ball & Blachman, 1991; Foorman et al., 2016; Wagner et al., 1994.
14 Share & Stanovich, 1995; Wagner et al., 1997.
15 Share & Stanovich, 1995.
16 Philips et al., 2008.
17 Lane & Pullen, 2004.

Figure 3: The Literacy Tree



Phonological Awareness Is Included in State Standards

Each state addresses print knowledge in its early learning standards. Locate and review your state standards to see how your state has included print knowledge as a key learning goal for children. If you work with 3- and 4-year-old children, become familiar with your state's learning standards for both age-ranges. In fact, since children's learning and development are not uniform, it is helpful for all teachers to be familiar with learning progressions so they can build upon the individual and developmental characteristics of each child. When reviewing your state's standards for 3- and 4-year-olds, you may find that they are located within different documents. For example many states include 3-year-old standards within early learning guidelines for children birth through three. In addition, it can be helpful to familiarize yourself with the kindergarten standards related to language and literacy in your state. These are likely in separate documents as well.

Now you are ready for PLC Session 4.

Activity 1

FAQs About Phonological Awareness

Directions: Complete the middle column in the table below. We will return to this activity at the end of this module to complete the third column and compare your responses.

FAQ	My Response Before Session 4	My Response After Session 6
What is meant by teaching phonological awareness?		
What is the difference between phonological awareness and phonics?		
What is the best age range for teaching phonological awareness?		
How can I use the phonological awareness continuum to determine where to begin instruction?		
What are the differences between alliteration, rhyme, and rime?		

Activity 2

Sorting Important "P-Words"

Directions: Read the instructional scenario card in the left column. In the right column, circle which component of literacy instruction is described in the scenario: print knowledge, phonological awareness, phonemic awareness, or phonics (use the key terms on page 4 as a resource). Explain why by completing the sentence.

Instructional Scenarios	Prompts
#1 Ethan sees the letters CAT together in his book. He says, "/k/ /ă/ /t/, /k/ /ă/ /t/, /k/ -at, cat! I read cat!"	This scenario is an example of (circle one) because: Print Knowledge Phonological Awareness Phonemic Awareness Phonics _____ _____
#2 Ms. Smith begins reading the book *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* to the children. As she gets to a new page, she says, "Oh look! The first letter on this page is a B in Brown. Do you see how this first letter is an uppercase B? It is an uppercase B because it is the first letter of a sentence. Every sentence begins with an uppercase letter."	This scenario is an example of (circle one) because: Print Knowledge Phonological Awareness Phonemic Awareness Phonics _____ _____
#3 As Ms. Smith calls children to the snack table, she says, "I'm going to say a friend's name without the first sound. Can you guess whose name I am calling? Ready? –eth. –eth. Whose name?" The children say, "Beth!" Then, the teacher responds by saying, "Yes, Beth go to the snack table. Beth without the first sound is –eth."	This scenario is an example of (circle one) because: Print Knowledge Phonological Awareness Phonemic Awareness Phonics _____ _____
#4 Ms. Smith has laid out several objects on the table. Ms. Smith tells Bobby to find the item that ends in /k/. Bobby studies the objects and finds the fork. The teacher praises Bobby saying, "You're right! Fork ends in the /k/ sound."	This scenario is an example of (circle one) because: Print Knowledge Phonological Awareness Phonemic Awareness Phonics _____ _____

Instructional Scenarios	Prompts
#5 Mary is looking at a picture book. Ms. Smith notices and sits down to read with her. She sees an octopus picture in the book. Ms. Smith says, "*Octopus* is a long word. How many syllables does it have? Let's clap them out. Oc-to-pus. That's three syllables."	This scenario is an example of (circle one) because: Print Knowledge Phonological Awareness Phonemic Awareness Phonics _____ _____
#6 Howard is given several pictures. Ms. Smith asks him to choose one picture, name the picture, and say each sound in the order he hears them. Howard chooses a dog. He says, "Dog. /d/ /ŏ/ /g/."	This scenario is an example of (circle one) because: Print Knowledge Phonological Awareness Phonemic Awareness Phonics _____ _____
#7 Ms. Smith looks at a book with Jacob. Jacob sees the word *pup* and looks confused. His teacher tells him to sound it out. Jacob says, "/p/ /ŭ/ /p/." The teacher says, "Good, what word?" Jacob says the sounds faster together until he excitedly says, "pup!"	This scenario is an example of (circle one) because: Print Knowledge Phonological Awareness Phonemic Awareness Phonics _____ _____
#8 Annie reads her teddy bear a story. Ms. Smith notices the book is upside down. She comes over to Annie and says, "I see you are reading your bear a story. I bet he loves it. Let's hold the book this way so it is easier to read."	This scenario is an example of (circle one) because: Print Knowledge Phonological Awareness Phonemic Awareness Phonics _____ _____
#9 Ms. Smith writes the word *bug* on the board. "Let's all sound out this word. /b/ /ŭ/ /g/. What word? Bug!"	This scenario is an example of (circle one) because: Print Knowledge Phonological Awareness Phonemic Awareness Phonics _____ _____

Instructional Scenarios	Prompts
#10 Eric picks a picture card from the top of two stacks. One is a picture of a fox, and the other is a picture of a box. Eric says, "Fox. Box. Rhyme time!" Then, Ben chooses a picture card from the top of two stacks. One is a picture of a dog and the other is a picture of a hat. Ben says to Eric, "Dog. Hat. No rhyme time."	This scenario is an example of (circle one) because: Print Knowledge Phonological Awareness Phonemic Awareness Phonics _____ _____
#11 Mary and John create a shopping list in the housekeeping center. They write down all of the food they need to purchase at the grocery store. The teacher notices their list and says, "Oh, I see you are making a list to help you remember what you need at the store. You wrote the letter P. Is that for peaches or pretzels?"	This scenario is an example of (circle one) because: Print Knowledge Phonological Awareness Phonemic Awareness Phonics _____ _____
#12 Ms. Smith asks Tommy to look at a picture card, name it, and say each sound he hears. Tommy looks at a picture card of a fin and says, "Fin. /f/ /ĭ/ /n/."	This scenario is an example of (circle one) because: Print Knowledge Phonological Awareness Phonemic Awareness Phonics _____ _____

Activity 3

Reflect, Plan, and Implement (Self-Study)

Directions: Before the next session, complete the DO, WATCH, READ activities below. These activities are to assist you in incorporating small-group instruction into your daily schedule. There are many ways to add small groups throughout your day. You can build in small-group sessions in 20-minute increments throughout your day. The lead teacher can conduct small-group sessions while the teacher assistant supervises the other children. The teacher assistant can conduct small-group sessions while the lead teacher interacts with the other children during center time, for example. The flexibility of small-group scheduling allows a variety of classrooms with a variety of resources to implement at least some small-group instruction.

DO	Use the guiding questions and schedule planning templates below to plan how you could adjust your daily schedule to incorporate small-group instruction into your classroom.
How many children are in my classroom?	How many small groups will I create in my classroom? Small groups should consist of three to six children.
Who will be in each small group? Group 1 _____ Group 2 _____ Group 3 _____ Group 4 _____ Group 5 _____	
What times of the day will I implement small groups?	
Who can assist me in my implementation of small groups? A teacher assistant is helpful during small-group time. What activities can the teacher assistant be doing with the other children while I conduct a small-group lesson?	
What are quiet center activities that children can currently do independently or with the help of one teacher not engaged in a small-group lesson?	
What are quiet center activities that children can be taught to do independently or with the help of one teacher not engaged in a small group lesson?	

Activity 3 (continued)

Reflect, Plan, and Implement (Self-Study)

Current Schedule

Directions: Write your current daily classroom schedule, including whole-group instruction, small-group instruction, and center time. Place a star next to activities that must not be altered.

Time	Activity

Activity 3 (continued)

Reflect, Plan, and Implement (Self-Study)

Schedule Planner

Directions: Review your current schedule. Where could you build in regular small-group instruction time? Write a revised version of your daily classroom schedule that includes ample time for small-group instruction. Remember that you can allocate one large block of time for several small groups or you can carve out 15- to 20-minute blocks throughout the day. Sample daily schedules to use as a resource are in the Reproducible Materials section at the end of this Participant Guide.

Time	Activity

Activity 3 (continued)

Reflect, Plan, and Implement (Self-Study)

WATCH	**Watch Video 3: Small Groups in Action:** (https://youtu.be/YXaF5qjnSLQ). Answer the reflection questions below.

Questions	Answers
1. How did the teacher reinforce what was learned in previous phonological awareness lessons during center time?	
2. What was the assistant doing?	
3. How was the teacher and assistant positioned while teaching small groups? Why?	
4. What can the teacher and assistant discuss before center or small-group time to maximize all children's engagement?	
5. How did the children change centers?	
6. What did children do with completed artwork and other activities?	
7. List specific steps that need to happen to implement small groups in a smoothly running classroom.	

READ	• **Self-Study Reading for Session 5** on pages **16–25**. • **Optional:** One resource from Additional Resources section in Session 6.
What questions or comments do you have about the Self-Study Reading?	
What is one thing you learned from the reading?	

Session 5: Levels of Phonological Awareness and Features and Examples of Effective Phonological Awareness Instruction

Self-Study Reading

Levels of Phonological Awareness

When teaching phonological awareness and providing opportunities for practice, have a good supply of pictures for common words that your children know. Picture cards and puzzles are often used in phonological awareness instruction and practice. In each of the levels and tasks described below, pictures of commonly known words are used as prompts and as manipulatives. Each level in the phonological awareness continuum is described next. Even though you are selecting words the children likely know, it is always good practice to begin every activity by verbally labeling each picture.

Word Level

The simplest level of phonological awareness is the word level. This often involves manipulating individual words in **compound words** (by **blending**, **segmenting**, and **deleting**). A compound word is a word made up of two or more words such as doghouse, cupcake, and airport. The activities in table 7 illustrate opportunities for children to demonstrate their word-level phonological awareness. In general, tasks are listed from simple to more complex—that is, most children find blending easier than deleting.

Table 7: Word-Level Phonological Awareness Activities

Task	Teacher Prompt	Child Response
Blending (putting together)	Show one picture puzzle piece at a time (*dog* and *house*). "I'll say a word, one part at a time. You put the parts together to make the whole word. *Dog* (pause) *house*. What word?"	The child puts the two puzzle pieces together and says *doghouse*.
Segmenting (breaking apart)	Show a picture of a *cupcake* and be sure the child can correctly identify it. "What two words make up the word *cupcake*?"	*Cup-cake*
Deleting (removing one of two words from a compound word and determining what word remains)	"I will give you a word and ask you to remove one part of it, and you tell me what part is left. Say *sidewalk*."	*Sidewalk*
	"Now say *sidewalk* without saying *side*."	*Walk*
	Repeat by deleting the other word in the compound word. When the child grasps the idea, switch roles and the child can become the teacher!	

Syllable Level

The syllable level of phonological awareness involves the ability to **blend**, **count**, **delete**, and **segment** parts of multisyllabic words. A multisyllabic word is a word with more than one syllable, such as *tiger*, *hamburger*, and *hippopotamus*. The activities in table 8 illustrate opportunities for children to demonstrate their syllable-level phonological awareness. When practicing phonological awareness at the syllable level, it is important to note that oral syllabication and written syllabication are not always the same. In some cases, there may be multiple, acceptable oral syllabications. So, be consistent from day to day with the same words when orally blending, segmenting, and deleting syllables. To be consistent, we used the Merriam-Webster oral syllabication rules for the syllable level tasks in this PLC.

Table 8: Syllable-Level Phonological Awareness Activities

Task	Teacher Prompt	Child Response
Blending (putting together parts of a word to create a whole word)	"I'm going to break a word into parts, and you say the whole word. *To–ma–to*."	*Tomato*
Counting (counting the syllables in a spoken word by clapping or tapping each syllable)	How many syllables in (pause) *hamburger*?"	(Clapping for each syllable) *Ham–bur–ger*, three!
Segmenting (hearing a word and breaking it into syllables)	"I'm going to say a word and you say each part you hear in the word. Paper."	*Pa–per*
Deleting (saying a given word without a specific syllable)	"Say *pencil*."	*Pencil*
	"Now say *pencil* without *cil*."	*Pen*

Onset-Rime Level

The onset and rime are smaller units within a syllable. The onset is the part of the syllable that comes before the vowel, and the rime is the vowel and everything after it. For the word *run*, the onset is /r/, and the rime is /un/. For the word *stop*, the onset is /st/, and the rime is /op/. Some types of words do not lend themselves to onset-rime activities. Words that begin with a vowel (a, e, i, o, u) are not used in onset-rime activities because they do not have an onset. Also, words with open syllables—that is, words with a vowel at the end of the syllable, such as *be* and *go*—are not used in onset-rime activities. The following chart shows a variety of words divided into their onsets and rimes.

Word	Onset	Rime
sit	s	it
put	p	ut
thin	th	in
spot	sp	ot
street	str	eet
spoil	sp	oil

The onset-rime level is a transitional level between phonological awareness and phonemic awareness. Children can demonstrate onset-rime-level phonological awareness by engaging in the activities described in table 9.

Table 9: Onset-Rime Level Phonological Awareness Activities

Task	Teacher Prompt	Child Response
Rime matching (determining whether two words rhyme)	Show a picture of a fox and a picture of a box. "Do these words rhyme: *fox*, *box*?"	Yes
	"These words rhyme because they share the same rime: -ox." (You can explain to children that fox and box rhyme because they sound the same in the middle and the end.)	
	(You may find that it helps children to hear three words--two rhymes and one word that does not rhyme.) "Which two words rhyme: *cat*, *mop*, *hat*?	*Cat, hat.*
Onset matching	"Which of these words have the same first sound: *toy*, *man*, *toad*?	*Toy, toad.*
Onset-rime blending	"What word do these sounds make: /f/ /an/?"	*Fan*
Onset identity (beginning sounds) (saying the first part, or sound, of a word that is shown in a picture and heard)	Show a picture of a boat, and say the word without an article such as *a* or *an*, which can be confused with the beginning sound. "This is (pause): boat, what is the first sound you hear in (pause) boat?"	/b/
Alliteration (saying a word that begins with the same onset as a word that is heard)	Show a picture of a dog. "Tell me another word that begins with the /d/ sound."	If the child produces a real word like *duck* or a nonsense word like *dak* it is considered correct.
Onset-rime segmenting	"I'm going to say a word and you tell me the first sound you hear and then the rest of the word. *Doll.*"	/d/ /oll/
Deleting onsets and rimes (saying what is left after removing the onset or the rime)	Show a picture of a coat. "Say coat without /k/."	*Oat*
	"Say coat without /oat/."	/k/
Generating rhymes (saying a word that rhymes with a word that is heard)	Show a picture of a frog. "Tell me a word that rhymes with frog."	If the child produces a real word like *log*, or a nonsense word like *mog*, it is considered correct.

Manipulating sounds using onset-rime can be more difficult because the sounds can become distorted, or sound wrong. For example, if you use onset-rime to blend the word *pat*, it is difficult to say /p/ without it being distorted or sounding like /puh/. This then makes blending the word sound like, /puh/ /at/, *puhat*—but there is no such word. So, when teaching these lessons, take care to pronounce the individual sounds correctly.

Now that you understand more about onsets and rimes and how to manipulate them, let's take a moment to think about rhyming. Silly rhyming songs, books that include rhyming, and nursery rhymes may be children's first exposure to the idea that words have characteristics other than semantic meaning. That is, children often start to mimic rhyming words such as *cat* and *hat* rather than think about what a cat is or what a hat looks like on someone's head. So, rhymes may be the first aspect of phonological awareness that children learn to copy after they hear it in a song, or a book read to them. However, manipulating rhymes can be challenging because rhyme manipulation is actually onset-rime manipulation. Words that rhyme share the same rime, as in the words *sun* and *run* (they have the same rime, -un). Children need to be able to segment, or separate, the onset from the rime. Rhyming activities can be a playful way for children to engage in word manipulation but should not be considered a sufficient single method of phonological awareness instruction.

Phoneme Level

The phoneme level of phonological awareness is when children become able to manipulate individual phonemes, or sounds, in words. The phoneme level of phonological awareness is called phonemic awareness. Although some children will develop the capability to manipulate phonemes during the preschool period, this level generally emerges in kindergarten. As with the other levels, picture cards and other manipulatives such as small counters are often used in phonemic awareness instruction and practice. These tasks are considered part of phonological awareness and not phonics because they are completed orally, without using letters. Children can demonstrate phonemic awareness by engaging in the activities described in table 10.

Table 10: Phoneme Level Phonological Awareness Activities

Task	Teacher Prompt	Child Response
Isolating and **producing** phonemes in one-syllable words at the initial, final, and medial (middle or vowel) position.	"What is the first sound you hear in *sun*?"	/s/
	"What is the last sound you hear in *mat*?"	/t/
	"What is the middle sound you hear in *sit*?"	/ĭ/
Blending	"I'm going to say each sound in a word and you tell me the word. /s/ /ŭ/ /n/."	*Sun*
Segmenting	"Tell me each sound you hear in the word *mat*."	/m/ /ă/ /t/
Deleting	Say, "*Meat*."	*Meat*
	"Now say *meat* without /m/." (This same task is used at the onset-rime level, using *coat*; there can be overlap between tasks at the onset-rime level and tasks at the phoneme level.)	*Eat*
Substituting (making a new word by replacing one phoneme with another phoneme)	"The word is *fun*. Change /f/ to /r/. What's the new word?"	*Run*

Features of Effective Phonological Awareness Instruction

Developmentally appropriate preschool classrooms provide time for children to choose from a variety of activities that are of interest to them. Preschool children also benefit from planned, teacher-guided, interactive small- and large-group activities.[18] In particular, research supports the benefit of explicit, teacher-guided instruction for phonological awareness. This kind of instruction is especially important when introducing new phonological awareness skills.

Although some children naturally develop sufficient phonological awareness to be able to learn to read without formal and more explicit instruction, many others do not. Incidental exposure to phonological awareness, such as singing rhyming songs or clapping syllables with the whole class, is not sufficient. Most children need, and all children can benefit from, explicit phonological awareness activities—meaning activities in which children are asked to actively manipulate the sounds in words at the word, syllable, onset-rime, and phoneme levels.

High-quality instruction is structured and strategically planned by you. It does not assume children's prior knowledge and experience regarding the goal of instruction. Effective instruction requires you to preplan a lesson that includes:

- Defining specific goals: Children will be able to…
- Determining instructional setting: Small group? Whole group?
- Planning instructional supports: Books? Pictures? Blocks?

Module 1 discusses the features of effective instruction to use when teaching any aspect of literacy. Effective, high-quality instruction:

Is **systematic**.

Includes a carefully planned **scope and sequence**.

Is **explicit**.

Is **scaffolded**.

Is **differentiated**.

These features of effective instruction work in combination and are the basis of high-quality literacy instruction from which all children benefit. Each feature and its connection to teaching phonological awareness are described in more detail below.

18 National Association for the Education of Young Children, 2009.

Systematic Instruction

Systematic instruction is carefully thought out, moves from the simple to the complex, builds on prior learning, and is delivered in manageable steps. The goal of systematic instruction is to ensure that whenever children are asked to learn a new skill or concept, they already possess the appropriate knowledge and understanding to efficiently learn it.[19]

The first place to look for guidance on how to be systematic when teaching phonological awareness is your curriculum, if you have one. Verify that the phonological awareness instructional plan in your curriculum incorporates the features of effective instruction that are taught and practiced during these PLC sessions. If your curriculum does not provide clear guidance on how to teach phonological awareness, the information provided here can guide you in developing a systematic plan for doing so throughout the year.

A key component of systematic instruction is the order in which skills are introduced. Determining this order allows you to plan a scope and sequence of instruction.

Scope and Sequence

Although there is no one right way or order in which to teach phonological awareness, the phonological awareness continuum included in these PLC sessions makes sense developmentally. Children enter preschool with a wide range of phonological awareness abilities, so children are at different points on the phonological awareness continuum. Some children may not be able to blend two words together to create a compound word (the word level); others may already be able to blend and segment syllables in spoken words (the syllable level). So, a developmentally appropriate scope and sequence is recommended for phonological awareness instruction. If your curriculum does not have this, the phonological awareness continuum from this Module can be used as a guide.

It is not necessary to teach the entire continuum to every child or to teach the same content to all children, but effective instruction includes a clear scope and sequence for all children. The goal is to use informal and formal assessment to determine where each child is along the continuum and then form small, homogeneous (same-ability level) groups so that you can focus instruction on the appropriate level of the continuum to meet children's needs.[20] Small groups are flexible, so children move in and out of different groups as they progress at different rates.

Explicit Instruction

Small-group **explicit instruction** is an effective instructional practice for teaching phonological awareness. Small-group phonological awareness instruction is a short part of each day for preschoolers. In fact, brief (10- to 15-minute), interactive, small-group or individual daily sessions using evidence-based instructional methods is all that children require.[21] This instruction can be embedded into a curriculum that simultaneously supports the development of children's language, math, social skills, motor skills, and their general knowledge and interests.[22]

Explicit instruction involves the I Do, We Do, You Do instructional routine when introducing a new skill or concept. For phonological awareness, a small-group explicit lesson might involve a game in which children match pictures of words that begin with the same onset, or beginning sound. Cumulative practice is also an important part of small-group explicit instruction because children need to have opportunities to practice the same phonological awareness skills on multiple occasions. For example, when introducing a new phonological awareness skill during small-group instruction, also review a few examples of the phonological awareness skill previously taught.

19 Adams, 2001.
20 Lonigan et al., 2009; Rashotte, MacPhee, & Torgesen, 2001.
21 Ehri et al, 2001; U.S. Department of Education, 2006.
22 Philips et al., 2008.

After phonological skills have been explicitly taught and have been practiced through cumulative review, implicit instruction is used to provide review and practice to enhance those phonological awareness skills. **Implicit instruction** is the opposite of explicit instruction. It is used to provide practice opportunities for skills previously introduced using explicit instruction. Implicit instruction typically involves less scaffolding than explicit instruction does. For example, you may have a syllable dance party in the classroom, where you point to an object and name it and the children rock their hips as if they are dancing as they say each syllable in the word. For the syllable dance party the word *table* is said, *ta-ble*, while rocking hips to the right one time (*ta-*) and then to the left (*-ble*).

Activity Selection

The order in which children are introduced to activities at different levels of the phonological awareness continuum is an important part of a systematic instructional plan. It is also important to carefully consider the specific tasks that children will complete within and across phonological awareness levels for one lesson. Descriptions of these tasks are provided in the previous section on levels of phonological awareness. Keep in mind that for many children:

- Matching and blending activities are easier than segmenting and deleting activities.
- Activities with visual supports and cues, such as pictures of the words, are easier for children than tasks that do not include visual supports.

The levels of the phonological awareness continuum are not discrete stages—where mastery of one stage precedes the beginning of the next—but are instead overlapping. Making the task features of an activity more difficult may make the lesson harder for children than a simpler task at the next level of the continuum. For example, children may find it easier to complete a blending onset-rime activity than an activity asking them to delete syllables from words.

The key is to understand how the phonological awareness level, the task, and the visual supports all independently relate to an activity's difficulty.

Doing so will allow you to thoughtfully plan your scope and sequence and know in the moment how to simplify or increase the challenge of activities for different children as part of how you scaffold and differentiate instruction.

Focus on One or Two Teaching Points

A small-group explicit instruction lesson should be brief and focus on no more than two skills at a time. In each small group it is important to minimize the number of tasks and manipulation of different unit (of language) sizes. Too many tasks or phonological awareness levels in one lesson could be confusing to the children. For example, asking children to blend compound words, segment and blend syllables in spoken words, and identify the first sound in words involves too many tasks (blend, segment, and onset identity) at too many levels (word, syllable, and phoneme). High-quality phonological awareness lessons often include just one or two tasks at a single level, where one task is a new one and the other task is a review.

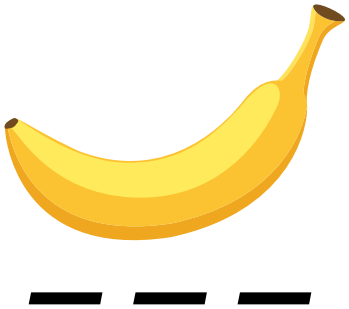
Scaffolded Instruction

While teaching phonological awareness lessons, it is important to scaffold instruction. **Scaffolded instruction** provides feedback to children's responses to help them demonstrate a skill or concept when they could not otherwise have done so on their own. In other words, it gives children the support they need toward greater understanding. Scaffolded instruction includes:

- Providing prompts, cues, and gestures.
- Breaking down the problem into smaller steps.

- Using visual aids.
- Providing an example.
- Offering encouragement.

For example, if you ask a child to say each part in the word *purple*, and the child says, "*purple*," then a scaffold might be to model the answer you were looking for, saying "I'm going to say each part of the word *purple*, *pur-ple*," while clearly emphasizing the pause between the parts. Using hand gestures to represent each syllable also can be helpful. A different scaffold for this same error might be to tell the child that there are two parts in the word *purple* and ask him or her to say each part with a clear pause in between. A visual is another scaffold to use for this same error. For example, if you ask a child to say each part in the word *banana* and the child says, "*banana*," use a picture of a *banana* with three dashes under it, and explain that there are three syllables, or parts, in the word (*ba–na–na*).



Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction involves implementing different activities for each group based on that group's instructional needs. For example, you may explicitly teach one group skills at the word level of the phonological awareness continuum, and another group might be ready to blend and delete words at the syllable level. Another way to differentiate is to teach two small groups at the same level of the continuum but to include more challenging activities for one group and simpler activities for the other. Lessons that address each group's needs should be carefully selected.

Part of differentiating instruction includes pacing and the speed with which children move through the continuum. Multiple small groups might engage in the same level of phonological awareness instruction, but the pace of the lesson for each small group may be different. One group may need more opportunities to practice and receive your feedback, so those children would spend more days in small-group instruction working on a particular skill.

Examples of Effective Phonological Awareness Instruction

The instructional examples presented below incorporate the features of effective instruction.

Example of Lesson on Onset-Rime Blending

This lesson illustrates small-group explicit instruction.

- The lesson is explicit because it was preplanned by the teacher and uses the I Do, We Do, You Do instructional routine.
- The goal of the lesson is for children to blend onsets and rimes in spoken words.
- This is a task at the onset-rime level of the phonological awareness continuum.
- Two visual props are included to support children's understanding. Each child receives an activity sheet that has a grid. Each box on the grid has a picture that represents a word: *dog*, *book*, *table*, *bears*, *car*, *apple*, *boat*, *pig*. Counters are also provided for each child. The grid with pictures assists children by providing a visual representation of the units the children manipulate, or blend, into words. However, the printed word is not presented on the picture because this activity is designed to be spoken, not written.

I DO	**Explain and Model** The teacher explains the objective of the lesson: "Before we begin our lesson, let's name each picture." • The teacher points to each picture as the children name it. The teacher provides the name and description of unknown pictures. The teacher continues, "Now, we are going to put sounds together to make a word and then we'll find our word on our paper. Listen. What word do these sounds make: /d/ /og/? *Dog*. Now, I'll find *dog* and put my counter on it." The teacher continues, "Listen to another example. What word do these sounds make /b//ook/? *Book*. Now I'll find *book* and put my counter on it."
WE DO	**Provide Guided Practice with Scaffolding** Teacher: "Now, together, let's practice blending sounds to make a word: /t/ /able/. What word?" The teacher and children say, "*Table*." Teacher: "Good! Put your counter on the picture of the *table*." Teacher: "Nice job putting sounds together to make a word! Let's do another one together: /b/ /ears/, what word?" Everyone: "*Bears*." Teacher: "Great job! Put your counter on the picture of the *bears*." • The teacher continues guiding the children with blending the onsets and rimes of *car*, *apple*, *boat*, and *pig*. • The teacher provides scaffolding when children make an error. For example, if a child says a wrong word, the teacher might say, "Listen. The parts of this word are /p/ /ig/, while sliding forward one counter for the onset and another counter for the rime. The teacher would then ask the child to try again with her. Or, if the child puts his counter on the wrong picture, the teacher might say, "That is /c/ /ar/, *car*. Can you find /p/ /ig/, *pig*?"
YOU DO	**Independent Practice** The teacher provides several segmented words for each child, one child at a time, in the small group. • The teacher encourages other children in the group to listen and think about the answer when it is someone else's turn. • Each child has the opportunity to listen to the segmented prompt and provide the blended, whole word. • During this time, the teacher provides immediate corrective feedback and scaffolding, such as repeating the onset and rime using hand gestures.

Repetition and Patience

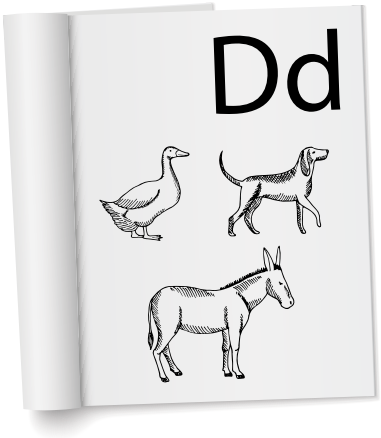
As a review and for next steps for the lesson just described, the teacher will provide ongoing opportunities to practice blending onsets and rimes to make words. For example, when children are sharing their stuffed animals during show-and-tell, the teacher may say, "Oh, I see a /d/ /og/. What do I see?" The children respond, "*Dog*." Other examples include /m/ /ouse/, *mouse*; /k/ /at/, *cat*; /f/ /oks/, *fox*. During a later small group lesson for children who mastered the activities with simple onsets, the teacher may implement the same lesson but use words with more complex onsets like /st/ /op/ and /sl/ /ug/. For blending, you will want to, eventually, remove the picture support so you know that children can blend the spoken words without the use of the pictures.

Small-group explicit instructional activities will likely need to be repeated numerous times with the same and different words before children master the task. Be patient. These activities often challenge children, but they show steady progress when provided recurrent practice and consistent scaffolds.

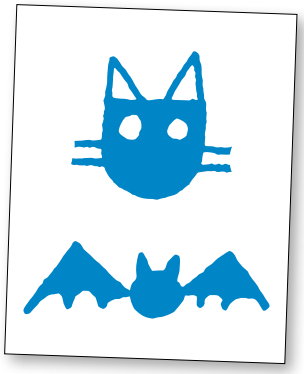
Learn and Then Practice (A Lot)

It is important to provide multiple explicitly taught lessons when introducing a new skill. Once children are ready for independent practice, they benefit from multiple opportunities to practice the skill. These review activities—called implicit and incidental instruction to differentiate them from the more intentional and systematic, explicit instruction described above—work well when embedded in ongoing instruction and during transitions. Implicit and incidental instruction reinforce new skills

but on their own are not as likely to support initial learning. Each time a new element is introduced in phonological awareness instruction, such as a new task or a smaller unit of language size (for example, going from words to syllables), begin with explicit instruction.



Implicit instruction is typically designed to feel authentic and contextualized (built in). It is unstructured in that it does not include the I Do, We Do, You Do instructional routine. It assumes that children already have some background knowledge or understanding of the skill. An example of implicit instruction is reading an alphabet book about farm animals and asking, "Which farm animals were on the D page?" (for example, *duck*, *dog*, *donkey*) and then asking, "Can you name another animal that begins with /d/?" In this example, it is assumed that children already can identify the first sound in a word and match on the shared onset of words rather than having to think about what a *duck* and a *dog* look like. You could also call children to line up by the first sound of their names: "Please line up if your name begins with /s/." This example also assumes that children already can identify the first sound in their own name.



Incidental instruction provides unplanned opportunities to seize the moment. For example, when a child draws a cat and a bat, and the teacher says, "I see you drew a cat and a bat…hey! *Cat* and *bat* rhyme! What else rhymes with *cat* and *bat*?" In this example, the teacher assumes that the child understands rhymes.

Examples of Explicit, Implicit, and Incidental Instruction for One Skill

Below are examples of how explicit, implicit, and incidental instruction can be combined and implemented to teach children to delete syllables from spoken words.

- **Explicit instruction.** The teacher implements systematic, small-group instruction using the I Do, We Do, You Do instructional routine to teach children how to delete syllables from spoken words. For example, "The word is *teacher*. Now, I'll say *teacher* without saying *tea*. *Cher*." Five words are used to model (*tea-cher*, *chil-dren*, *mar-ker*, *re-cess*, *sing-ing*) and time is provided for individual practice with scaffolding. The teacher repeats this explicit activity multiple times with the same and different words.
- **Implicit instruction.** During whole-group instruction the teacher leads the I Spy game with two-syllable objects around the classroom. Children say the whole word, the teacher identifies one of its syllables to delete, and then the children say the real or nonsense word that remains. For example, "I spy *paper*. Say *paper* without saying *per*." The children say, "*pa*."
- **Incidental instruction.** During a read-aloud of *Secret Seahorse*, the teacher asks the children to say *secret* without *cret*. The children say, "*se*."

Now you are ready for PLC Session 5.

Activity 4

Video-Viewing Guide: Levels of Phonological Awareness

Directions: During and after viewing each video of small-group phonological awareness instruction, answer the guiding questions below. Each video represents one level of phonological awareness (word, syllable, onset-rime, phoneme).

Video 4: Word Level Phonological Awareness Lesson (https://youtu.be/LSF1AZjTAqc)	
DURING VIDEO	
If the child does not respond, how would you scaffold instruction in this situation?	
How did the teacher scaffold instruction in this situation?	
How would you scaffold instruction in this situation? *Child said* shoe-horse.	
How did the teacher scaffold instruction?	
AFTER VIDEO	
What did you notice about the teacher's patience?	

Video 5: Syllable Level Phonological Awareness Lesson (https://youtu.be/CmwMYcQmRGo)	
DURING VIDEO	
How would you scaffold instruction in this situation? *Child said* banana *had two syllables.*	
How did the teacher scaffold instruction in this situation?	
AFTER VIDEO	
What other scaffolds did the teacher use?	
Was the pace of the lesson too fast, too slow, or just right? How do you know?	

Activity 4 (continued)

Video-Viewing Guide: Levels of Phonological Awareness

Directions: During and after the viewing of each video of small group phonological awareness instruction, answer the guiding questions below.

Video 6: Onset-Rime Level Phonological Awareness Lesson (https://youtu.be/FHxs4YiB0ZI)	
DURING VIDEO	
How would you scaffold instruction in this situation? *Child said* book *and* house *rhyme.*	
How did the teacher scaffold instruction in this situation?	
AFTER VIDEO	
What other scaffolds did the teacher use?	
Was the pace of the lesson too fast, too slow, or just right? How do you know?	

Video 7: Phoneme Level Phonological Awareness Lesson (https://youtu.be/GJQkPrhspbU)	
DURING VIDEO	
The child selected the *car* backpack. How would you scaffold instruction in this situation? *The child selected the /k/* car *backpack instead of the /d/* deer *backpack for domino.*	
How did the teacher scaffold instruction in this situation?	
AFTER VIDEO	
What other scaffolds did the teacher use?	
Was the pace of the lesson too fast, too slow, or just right? How do you know?	
What did you notice about the teacher's patience?	

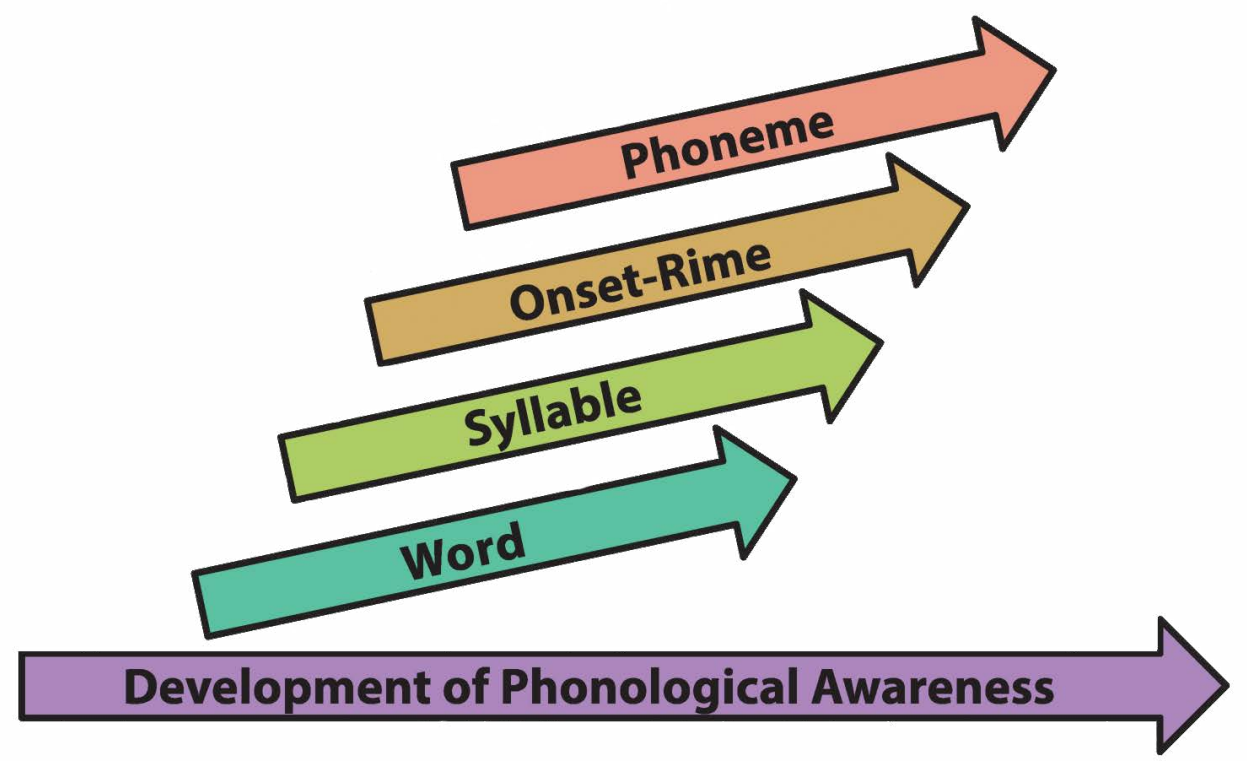
Activity 5

Phonological Awareness Continuum

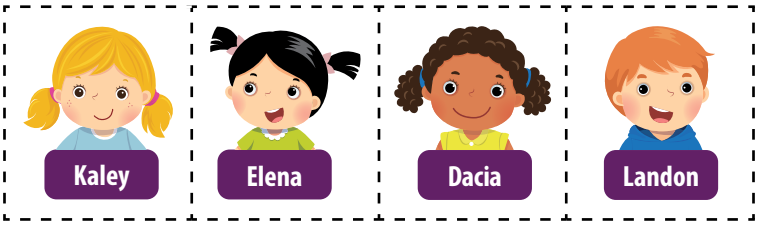
Directions: Work in pairs. Use the Levels of Phonological Awareness section from the Self-Study Reading as a resource. Read each child's instructional scenario and place the child's marker on the level that the scenario represents on the phonological awareness continuum. Then answer the guided questions to describe each child's phonological awareness.

Note: There is no one right response for the "Determine next steps" questions in this activity.

The Phonological Awareness Continuum



Markers:



Activity 5 (continued)

Phonological Awareness Continuum

Kaley's Instructional Scenario	
Teacher: I'm going to say a word one part at a time. Then you say the whole word. Ti-ger. What word? **Kaley:** Tiger. **Teacher:** Mon-key. What word? **Kaley:** Monkey. **Teacher:** Li-on. What word? **Kaley:** Lion. **Teacher:** Great job saying the whole word. Now, say spider. **Kaley:** Spider. **Teacher:** This time, say spider as you tap the table for each part you hear. **Kaley:** Spi-der (as she taps the table for each part). **Teacher:** Great job of saying each part in the word spider. Say pasta. **Kaley:** Pasta. **Teacher:** Say pasta as you tap the table for each part you hear. **Kaley:** Pas-ta (as she taps the table for each part). **Teacher:** Great job of saying each part you hear in the word pasta.	Place the Kaley marker on the level that represents this instructional scenario on the Phonological Awareness Continuum.
1. Determine level. Which Phonological Awareness level does this scenario represent (word, syllable, onset-rime, or phoneme)?	
2. Determine the task within the above specified level. Which Phonological Awareness task(s) does this scenario represent? Use the tables beginning on page 16 as a resource.	
3. Explain how you know. What did the child do that helped you determine the level and task?	
4. Determine next steps. Would you stay at the same Phonological Awareness level in your next lesson? If not, what would be your next Phonological Awareness level? Which tasks, within that level, would you have this child complete next?	

Activity 5 (continued)

Phonological Awareness Continuum

Landon's Instructional Scenario	
Teacher uses picture cards for each target word. **Teacher:** This is (pause) cat. Tell me each sound you hear in cat. **Landon:** /k/ /ă/ /t/. **Teacher:** This is (pause) boat. Tell me each sound you hear in boat. **Landon:** /b/ /ō/ /t/. **Teacher:** This is (pause) sock. Tell me each sound you hear in sock. **Landon:** /s/ /ŏ/ /k/. **Teacher:** Nice job of saying each sound you hear in a word!	Place the Landon marker on the level that represents this instructional scenario on the Phonological Awareness Continuum.
1. Determine level. Which Phonological Awareness level does this scenario represent (word, syllable, onset-rime, or phoneme)?	
2. Determine the task within the above specified level. Which Phonological Awareness task(s) does this scenario represent? Use the tables beginning on page 16 as a resource.	
3. Explain how you know. What did the child do that helped you determine the level and task?	
4. Determine next steps. Would you stay at the same Phonological Awareness level in your next lesson? If not, what would be your next Phonological Awareness level? Which tasks, within that level, would you have this child complete next?	

Activity 5 (continued)

Phonological Awareness Continuum

Elena's Instructional Scenario	
Teacher: Say birdhouse. **Elena:** Birdhouse **Teacher:** Now say birdhouse without saying house. **Elena:** Bird. **Teacher:** Say cupcake. **Elena:** Cupcake. **Teacher:** Now say cupcake without saying cup. **Elena:** Cake.	Place the Elena marker on the level that represents this instructional scenario on the Phonological Awareness Continuum.
1. Determine level. Which Phonological Awareness level does this scenario represent (word, syllable, onset-rime, or phoneme)?	
2. Determine the task within the above specified level. Which Phonological Awareness task(s) does this scenario represent? Use the tables beginning on page 16 as a resource.	
3. Explain how you know. What did the child do that helped you determine the level and task?	
4. Determine next steps. Would you stay at the same Phonological Awareness level in your next lesson? If not, what would be your next Phonological Awareness level? Which tasks, within that level, would you have this child complete next?	

Activity 5 (continued)

Phonological Awareness Continuum

Dacia's Instructional Scenario	
Teacher uses picture cards for each target word. **Teacher:** This is (pause) mouse. What is the first sound you hear in mouse? **Dacia:** /m/. **Teacher:** This is (pause) fork. What is the first sound you hear in fork? **Dacia:** /f/. **Teacher:** This is (pause) sock. What is the first sound you hear in sock? **Dacia:** /s/. **Teacher:** This is (pause) pig. What is the first sound you hear in pig? **Dacia:** /p/.	Place the Dacia marker on the level that represents this instructional scenario on the Phonological Awareness Continuum.
1. Determine level. Which Phonological Awareness level does this scenario represent (word, syllable, onset-rime, or phoneme)?	
2. Determine the task within the above specified level. Which Phonological Awareness task(s) does this scenario represent? Use the tables beginning on page 16 as a resource.	
3. Explain how you know. What did the child complete that helped you determine the level and task?	
4. Determine next steps. Would you stay at the same Phonological Awareness level in your next lesson? If not, what would be your next Phonological Awareness level? What tasks, within that level, would you have this child complete next?	

Activity 6

Role Play Explicitly Teaching Phonological Awareness in Small Groups

Directions: Work in triads and role-play teaching phonological awareness in small groups. Each triad will have a teacher and two children (labeled CHILD 1 and CHILD 2 in the scripts). Rotate roles for each script so that each participant plays each role. After completing each script, answer the questions at the end before moving to the next script.

Activity 6 (continued)

Role Play Explicitly Teaching Phonological Awareness in Small Groups

Script #1: Blending Syllables
Objective: Children blend syllables in spoken words.
Materials: Word list of two-syllable words.

TEACHER: I will say each syllable, or part, in a word and you say the whole word. Listen as I do the first one. What word is *win-ter*? *Winter.* Let's try some together. What word is *pea-nut*?

CHILDREN: *Peanut.*

TEACHER: Yes! What word is *ba-loon?*

CHILDREN: *Balloon!*

TEACHER: Nice job of saying whole word. What word is *mon-key?*

CHILD 1: *Mon-key.*

TEACHER: You said each syllable in the word. Can you put the syllables together to say the whole word fast? *Mon-key.*

CHILD 1: *Monkey.*

TEACHER: Great! What word is *ti-ger?*

CHILDREN: *Tiger.*

TEACHER: Now, we will take turns. I will say a word one syllable at a time and you say the whole word. Remember to say the answer in your head when it is not your turn.

(Provide each child with 2-3 turns using the following words. Scaffold as needed.)

nap-kin, napkin

ba-con, bacon

a-wake, awake

doc-tor, doctor

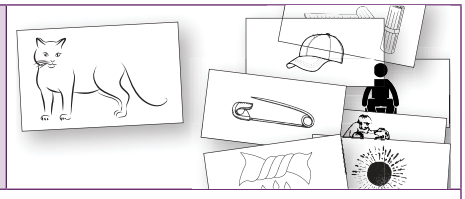
win-dow, window

Answer the questions about Script #1 before completing Script #2 (see the end of this Activity).

Activity 6 (continued)

Role Play Explicitly Teaching Phonological Awareness in Small Groups

Script #2: Rime Match
Objective: Children match rimes.
Materials: Rime picture header card (cat). Rime picture cards. Chart paper or whiteboard to display picture header card and rime picture cards.



TEACHER: (Place the picture header card of the cat at the top of the chart paper.) We are going to determine if two words rhyme. (Point to the *cat* picture header card.) This is a picture of a *cat*. (Hold up a picture of a *bat*.) This is a *bat*. *Cat*, *bat*. They sound the same in the middle and the end. /*k*/ /***at***/, /*b*/ /***at***/. *Cat* and *bat* rhyme! So, I will place the picture of the *bat* under the picture of the *cat* because they rhyme.

(*Hold up a picture of a pig.*) What is this?

CHILDREN: *Pig.*

TEACHER: *Pig*. *Cat*. Do they rhyme?

CHILD 2: Yes!

TEACHER: Let's check that one. Say *pig*.

CHILD 2: *Pig*.

TEACHER: Say *cat*.

CHILD 2: *Cat*.

TEACHER: Do they sound the same in the middle and the end? /*p*/ /***ig***/, /*k*/ /***at***/. /*ig*/, /*at*/.

CHILD 2: No.

TEACHER: Nice job! *Pig* and *cat* do not rhyme. So, we will not place the picture of the *pig* on our chart. (Hold up a picture of a *rat*.) What is this?

CHILDREN: *Rat*.

TEACHER: *Rat*. *Cat*. Do they rhyme?

CHILDREN: Yes!

TEACHER: Great job! *Rat* and *cat* rhyme because they have the same middle and end sound, /***at***/. /*r*/ /***at***/, /*k*/ /***at***/. (Hold up a picture of a *mop*.) What is this?

CHILDREN: *Mop*.

TEACHER: *Mop*. *Cat*. Do they rhyme?

CHILDREN: *No*.

TEACHER: Right! *Mop* and *cat* do not rhyme because they do not have the same middle and ending sound. /*m*/ /***op***/, /*k*/ /***at***/. /*op*/ and /***at***/ do not sound the same. So, we will not place the picture of the mop on our chart. Now, we will take turns deciding if two words rhyme. Remember to say the answer in your head when it is not your turn.

(Provide each child with 1-2 turns using the following words. Scaffold as needed.)

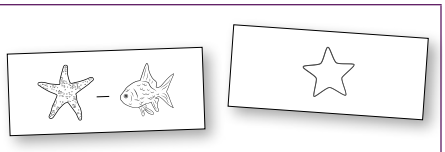
cat-mat, *cat-sat*, *cat-hat, cat-pat, cat-pin, cat-sun, cat-wet, cat-dog*

Answer the questions about Script #2 before completing Script #3 (see the end of this Activity).

Activity 6 (continued)

Role Play Explicitly Teaching Phonological Awareness in Small Groups

Script #3: Compound Word Game
Objective: Children determine what word is left when one of the two individual words from a spoken compound word is deleted (taken away).
Materials: Picture Cards



Place compound word take away picture cards in a stack face down. Place "answer" picture cards in a stack face down. Be sure the answer picture cards are in the correct order to correspond to the order of the compound word take away picture cards.

TEACHER: Today we are going to determine which word is left when we take one word away from a compound word.

Listen and watch as I do one (Show the picture of *sunflower – flower*. Point to the picture of the *sunflower*). This is a picture of, *sunflower*. What word is left if I take *flower* away from *sunflower*? *Sun.* (Hold up the picture of the *sun*).

Now it is your turn. (Show the picture card of *butterfly - fly*. Point to the *butterfly*.) What is this?

CHILDREN: *Butterfly*.

TEACHER: What word is left if I take *fly* away from *butterfly*?

CHILDREN: *Butter*.

TEACHER: Nice job of knowing what word is left when we take away a word from a compound word! When I take *fly* away from *butterfly*, I have *butter*. (Hold up the picture of *butter*).

(Show the picture of *football - ball*. Point to the *football*). This is a picture of, *football*. What word is left if I take *ball* away from *football*?

CHILDREN: *Ball*.

TEACHER: Let's try that one again. Say *football*.

CHILDREN: *Football*.

TEACHER: Now say *football* without saying *ball*.

CHILDREN: *Foot*.

TEACHER: Yes! When I take *ball* away from *football*, I have *foot*. (Hold up the picture of *foot*).

(Show the picture of *horseshoe – horse*. Point to the *horseshoe*). This is a picture of, *horseshoe*. What word is left if I take *horse* away from *horseshoe*?

CHILDREN: *Shoe*.

TEACHER: Nice job! Now, we will take turns determining what word is left when one word is taken away from a compound word. Remember to say the answer in your head when it is not your turn.

(Provide each child with 1-2 turns using the following words. Scaffold as needed.)

starfish – fish, (star)

toothbrush – tooth, (brush)

firetruck – truck, (fire)

cupcake – cup, (cake)

anthill – hill, (ant)

fishbowl – fish, (bowl)

Answer the questions about Script #3 in the table below.

Activity 6 (continued)

Role Play Explicitly Teaching Phonological Awareness in Small Groups

Directions: After you answer the questions about each script, answer the two questions at the bottom of the table.

Question	Lesson Script #1	Lesson Script #2	Lesson Script #3
Which level of phonological awareness is the focus of the lesson?			
Which type of task is the focus of the lesson?			
What type of scaffolds are included?			
What is similar about the three lesson scripts?			
What is different about the three lesson scripts?			

Activity 7

Reflect, Plan, and Implement (Self-Study)

Directions: Before our next session, complete the Do, Watch, Read activities below.

DO	Video record yourself teaching a phonological awareness lesson to a small group. Use one of the two lesson plans provided in the Reproducible Materials section at the back of this guide. If you do not have access to a video camera, use a tablet or smartphone, if available. If there are regulations about video recording children in your classroom, set up the device so only you are in the video and/or the children's backs are to the device.
WATCH	The video of yourself teaching the small-group phonological awareness lesson. Reflect on the questions in the first column. Write your answers below.
Which level of phonological awareness was the focus of the lesson?	
Which task(s) were included in the lesson?	
Describe an opportunity that occurred for you to scaffold instruction. How did you scaffold? Was it an effective scaffold?	
What would you have done differently?	
What will you do next with this small group and why?	
READ	• Self-Study for Session 6 on pages 39–46. • Optional: One resource from the Additional Resources on pages 44–46.
What questions or comments do you have about the Self-Study Reading?	
What is one thing you learned from the reading?	

Session 6: Phonological Awareness Instruction in Action, Considerations for English Learner Students and Students With Disabilities, and Additional Resources

Self-Study Reading

Phonological Awareness Instruction in Action: Ms. Warner's Classroom

Daily Literacy Routines

Ms. Warner implements small-group explicit instruction as part of literacy instruction in her preschool class. Each day, she works with small groups of three or four children for 10–15 minutes. Each homogenous (similar-ability) group is flexible, so children move in and out of different groups as needed based on assessment and teacher observation.

Ms. Warner sits at the teacher table facing the rest of the class, so she can monitor as needed. While the small group works at the teacher table, the rest of the class engages in other classroom activities with a teacher assistant or at independent literacy learning centers practicing skills and concepts that have already been explicitly taught. They might also engage in group activities led by a teacher assistant, such as shared reading, math and science activities, or art projects.

Careful Planning

Ms. Warner does not have a preschool literacy curriculum that addresses phonological awareness, so she needs to determine the scope and sequence of skills to be taught. She also needs to find or design the lessons to teach the skills explicitly and obtain and prepare the materials to support the lessons. Ms. Warner plans to use the phonological awareness continuum and information that was discussed in her PLC sessions to inform her scope and sequence. She understands that children enter the classroom with varying levels of phonological awareness and do not need to master all levels of the phonological awareness continuum but make consistent growth. Even though most of her children need to begin at the word level, she still forms small groups for explicit instruction so that the children receive more practice opportunities and immediate corrective feedback and scaffolding from her.

At the Teacher Table

Ms. Warner explicitly teaches a syllable-blending lesson to a small group of four children. She knows, based on prior assessment and her observations, that these children are at the syllable level of phonological awareness. The goal for this lesson is for the children to hear a word segmented by syllables and then blend the syllables to say the word. The instructional materials include a list of multisyllabic words, objects around the room, picture cards, and a puppet.

Explain and Model

I DO First, Ms. Warner introduces Sam the puppet to the children, allowing each child to say hello to Sam. Then, she explains and models, "Sam says words one part at a time. He needs your help to put the parts of the word together to say the whole word. Sam will look at three pictures and say the name of one picture, one part at a time. Then you will put the parts together and say the whole word as you point to the picture of that word. Watch and listen." (Three picture cards are in front of Sam: lion, table, window). Mrs. Warner says, "Sam, please name one of these pictures." Sam says, "*Ta-ble*." Ms. Warner responds, "*table*" as she points to the picture of the *table*. When saying the words broken apart (in Sam's voice), Ms. Warner is sure to have a clear pause between the syllables; in contrast, she makes sure not to pause when saying the complete word. Mrs. Warner shows Sam three picture cards (tiger, elbow, kitten) and provides another example, "Sam, please name one of these pictures." Sam, says "*Ti-ger*." Ms. Warner responds while pointing to the picture of the *tiger*, "*Tiger*."

Guided Practice with Scaffolding

WE DO Next, Ms. Warner provides guided practice and scaffolds instruction as the children practice blending syllables. Ms. Warner says, "Now it's your turn. Listen as Sam says the name of one of these pictures." Three pictures sit in front of the children. Sam says, "*El-bow*." Mrs. Warner asks, "What word?" The children point to the picture of an *elbow* and say, "*Elbow*." Ms. Warner says, "Nice job putting *el-bow* together to say the word, *elbow*!" Ms. Warner continues with guided practice (li-on, tur-tle). She scaffolds instruction as needed. For example, one child responds *tur-tle*, instead of *turtle*. Ms. Warner says, "Sam says the word in two parts, and you put the parts together to say the word. Listen to Sam: *Tur-tle*. (In teacher voice) turtle. Now you try, *tur-tle*." All the children say, "*Turtle*."

Independent Practice with Cumulative Review

YOU DO Ms. Warner then provides individual turns for each child. She continues to use two-syllable words to ensure that each child can blend syllables. She provides immediate feedback and scaffolding, repeating directions and modeling again as needed. Once children master blending with the support of pictures, Ms. Warner eventually uses only spoken words and no pictures. She ends the lesson by thanking the children for helping Sam put parts of words together to say the whole word.

Differentiating Instruction to Meet Children's Needs

In a later, small-group explicit lesson, Ms. Warner teaches the same skill using different two-syllable words. Once some children have mastered blending two-syllable words, Ms. Warner increases the challenge for these children. She regroups all the children so that the ones who have mastered two-syllable words are together and can move on to three-syllable words. She uses the same activity but increases its complexity by using three-syllable words such as *computer* and *exercise*. Again, Ms. Warner eventually uses only spoken words and no pictures, so children practice and master the skill without the support of a picture.

Follow-Up with Implicit and Incidental Instruction

Later each day and throughout the next several weeks, Ms. Warner provides opportunities for the children to practice blending syllables. During snack and lunch time, she uses food words to segment and asks the children to say the word (for example, *rai-sin*, *coo-kie*, and *sand-wich*). She also pauses during a read-aloud to segment a word into syllables and asks children to put the parts together to say the word.

Considerations for English Learner Students and Students With Disabilities

This section describes general principles and strategies for teaching phonological awareness to English learner students and students with disabilities. These children may need more time to practice with teacher feedback, more explicit instruction, or another modified strategy. Teachers working with students who have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) should consult the plan and work in concert with a specialist (preschool special education teacher or speech-language pathologist). If a teacher suspects a child should be screened for a possible disability or delay, they should consult an administrator.

Making Instruction Accessible to All Children

It is important to approach teaching with the goal of meeting the needs of every child in the classroom. If you design instruction from the start to be responsive to all children's needs—including those with a wide range of cognitive and sensory abilities, those with limited prior exposure to phonological awareness concepts, and those with developmental disabilities and delays—you will need to make fewer on-the-spot adaptations later when you implement it. In other words, you can build features that support all children directly into material selection, activities, and the manner in which you interact with children while guiding their learning during those activities.

For example, if there are children in your classroom who have difficulty using their fingers to pick up small objects or picture cards, you can add magnets to these items; then, during the activity, these children can fully participate by using a magnet wand to manipulate the objects or picture cards. As another example, if there are children in your classroom who have hearing impairments, you can select a location for small-group instruction that is quiet, so that those children can better hear you and their peers model saying words and sounds and can get the most out of the instructional opportunity.

Planning ahead to enhance accessibility can make all the difference. Of course, this does not mean that you will not need to monitor how children are engaging with your instructional activities—being responsive in the moment is very important, too.

Providing regular feedback is an important aspect of accessible and adaptive instruction. The discussion below describes some aspects of instruction that you should consider when designing accessible instruction that you can adapt to different children's needs. Many of these will look familiar because they have been already described as part of high-quality, explicit instruction.

Scaffolding

Scaffolding is a key element in accessible, differentiated instruction. Providing feedback to a child's incorrect response—in other words, providing cues so that the child can successfully complete the task—is scaffolding instruction. One way to scaffold instruction is to provide supportive verbal prompts and more modeling. For example, if a child who is asked to say the two parts of the compound word *popcorn* responds, "*Popcorn*," that response needs to be scaffolded. The teacher might say, for example, "The word is *popcorn*. If the first part is *pop*, then the second part is _____?" An example of a nonscaffolded response is "Try again" or "Listen again; the word is *popcorn*." Do you notice the difference in the two examples? In the first example the teacher provided a cue to the child by providing the first part of the word, *pop*. In the second example the teacher is simply asking the child to try again, which is not helpful. An important part of scaffolding is immediate corrective feedback, so children do not practice or get reinforced for incorrect responses to a task, which can confuse them. Providing frequent positive feedback for even partially correct responses or good efforts is especially important for children's motivation and attention.

Accept Nonverbal Responses

Although verbal responses should be encouraged, children can demonstrate knowledge of phonological awareness with nonverbal responses.[23] You can elicit nonverbal responses in a variety of ways. For example, to determine whether children can segment syllables in words, you can ask them to clap each word part. You can also use pictures during phonological awareness instruction—for example, showing a child a picture of a *bird*, a *cat*, and a *dog* and asking children to point to the picture that begins with /b/. For children with very limited oral language, you may stay with pointing activities for a long time. However, always encourage children to talk. In the previous example, you might ask the child to repeat, "Bird starts with /b/. Say it with me, *bird*." For other children, you can change expectations from accepting nonverbal responses to encouraging verbal responses as instruction progresses.

Use Pictures and Prompts

Using pictures to support understanding is an excellent strategy for all children, even those who readily give verbal responses. However, it is especially important to ensure that children with language impairments or English learner children know the names of pictured objects or actions before you ask them to use it in a phonological awareness activity. Take a minute to briefly point to each picture or item and clearly say its name before continuing with the planned activity. Have children repeat it to you so that they hear themselves say it. This will ensure that children with less advanced English language skills are not confused.

Adjust Pacing and Scaffolding

During small-group instruction, one way teachers differentiate is by changing the pace of instruction. You can move faster for groups that are completing tasks successfully and slower for groups that need more practice and feedback. More scaffolded instruction, or more support, is provided for groups that need it and fewer scaffolds for groups that do not.

Simplify Instruction

You may have some children who are progressing slowly in mastering phonological awareness. For these children, in addition to providing consistent scaffolding and a slower pace, it can be helpful to further simplify the instruction. For example, you may typically conduct small-group activities using four or six different words in a lesson. For children having difficulty understanding the specific phonological awareness task, try simplifying to just two different words at a time. That way, you can scaffold by asking children a forced-choice question that can be easier for them to answer correctly. For example, if your task is to blend compound words, you might show pictures of a football and a birdhouse. Label the two pictures, and then say, "Listen, *bird* (long pause) *house*….is that *football* or *birdhouse*?" Once children can master this version of activities, you can slowly scale up to using more words at a time and asking children to produce the correct responses themselves. Young children frequently repeat the last word heard. So, vary the placement of the correct response (first, second, or last).

Accelerate When Needed

You may also have children who are progressing more quickly across the phonological awareness continuum than others. Providing more complex phonological awareness activities at different levels (moving to syllable, onset-rime, and phoneme level skills) is appropriate for those children. Children who demonstrate skill at tasks using onset-rime, for example, may be ready for phonemic awareness activities such as blending and segmenting phonemes, or individual sounds, in two- or three-phoneme

23 Browder, Ahlgrim-Delzell, Flowers, & Baker, 2012.

words. For example, "I'm going to say a word one sound at a time, then you tell me the word. Listen. /*m*/ /*ē*/. What word?" The children respond, "*Me*." A slightly more complex task is asking children to say each sound they hear in the word *am*. The correct response is /*ă*/ /*m*/. Notice in the first example, the children blended, or put together, the sounds they heard in the word *me*. The second example is more complex because the children were required to segment, or take apart, the sounds in *am*.

Another way to accelerate learning is to include some activities that bring together the letter name and letter sound knowledge children have been gaining in their print knowledge lessons with the phonological awareness skills they have been gaining in separate lessons. Using letters for which children already know the sounds, you can ask children to complete onset segmentation or deletion activities, onset-rime blending activities, or phoneme blending activities using letter tiles or magnets. For all of these activities use only simple consonant-vowel-consonant words such as *sat*, *mug*, and *pin*. Avoid words with complex consonant clusters at the beginning or end such as *drip*, *throw*, *milk*, or *duck*.

The Importance of Sound Pronunciation

Children can struggle to develop phonological and phonemic awareness because they have learned incorrect ways to pronounce letter sounds. It is important to correctly pronounce sounds and avoid common mistakes such as adding /uh/ (the schwa sound) after a consonant. For example, in an effort to ensure the whole class can hear her saying each sound, sometimes a teacher will say /suh/ instead of /s/ for the letter sound for S, and /tuh/ instead of /t/ for the letter sound for T. This distortion of letter sounds may confuse children when the teacher says, "I'm going to say each sound in a word and you tell me the word: /suh/ /ă/ /tuh/. What word?" Most of the time, children will respond, "*suhatuh*," and it is unlikely that they will say "*sat*." Instead, the teacher should say, "I'm going to say each sound in a word and you tell me the word: /s/ /ă/ /t/. What word?" The idea of pronouncing sounds clearly and correctly applies to every level of phonological awareness. For example, at the onset-rime level, say /f/-/ast/ instead of /fuh/ /ast/. So, when children blend the onset and rime, they will say *fast* as opposed to *fuhast*.

To effectively teach phonological awareness skills, teachers must pronounce letter sounds correctly and understand that there are two ways that sounds can be categorized: continuous/stop sounds and voiced/unvoiced sounds.

A **continuous sound** can be pronounced for several seconds without any distortion. For example, the letter sound for M is /m/. You can hold /m/ for several seconds, and the sound will remain the same. Continuous sounds are the easiest sounds for children to produce and blend. A **stop sound** is a quick sound that can be correctly pronounced for only an instant. For example, /b/ or /t/. It is very important not to say /buh/ or /tuh/, adding the schwa sound.

A **voiced sound** is one that makes the vocal cords vibrate, such as /v/ or /j/. Place your hand on your throat at your vocal cords and say /v/. Do you feel the vibration? An **unvoiced sound** is one that does not make the vocal cords vibrate, such as /s/ or /f/. Place your hand on your throat at your vocal cords and say /s/. There is no vibration, so it is an unvoiced sound. Learning the differences between these sounds will help you become more conscious of the way phonemes sound and feel.

Review the sound pronunciation guide in table 11 and practice accurately saying sounds.

Table 11: Sound Pronunciation Guide

Sound	Key Word	Continuous or Stop	Voiced or Unvoiced
/b/	big	stop	voiced
/a/	apple	continuous	voiced
/p/	park	stop	unvoiced
/t/	top	stop	unvoiced
/d/	dog	stop	voiced
/v/	van	continuous	voiced
/e/	Ed	continuous	voiced
/f/	fan	continuous	unvoiced
/g/	go	stop	voiced
/k/	cat	stop	unvoiced
/i/	it	continuous	voiced
/z/	zoo	continuous	voiced
/s/	sell	continuous	unvoiced
/o/	octopus	continuous	voiced
/m/	mat	continuous	voiced
/n/	net	continuous	voiced
/r/ not /er/	run	continuous	voiced
/u/	up	continuous	voiced
/l/	log	continuous	voiced
/y/	yes	continuous	voiced
/w/	wet	continuous	voiced
/h/	hat	stop	unvoiced
/qw/	quit	stop	unvoiced
/j/	jump	stop	voiced
/ks/	fox	continuous	unvoiced

Spanish

Some teachers may choose to also complete phonological awareness activities using Spanish words. There are a few key considerations to note when planning for these activities. First, compound words are much less common in Spanish than in English, so it can be more challenging to find words to use in activities. There are certainly some to try such as *lavaplatos* (dishwasher), *cortarcésped* (lawnmower), *saltamontes* (grasshopper), and *girasol* (sunflower). Second, in general, Spanish has fewer monosyllabic words than English. This means that the types of words selected for use in phonological awareness activities will typically have more syllables and more phonemes than the words one would usually select in English.

Additional Resources

This section includes additional evidence-based instructional resources and articles to enhance phonological awareness instruction and extend knowledge about effective early childhood instruction. The resources and articles in this section were free and readily available when this document was finalized.

Phonological Awareness Instructional Resources

- *Voluntary Prekindergarten Learning Center Activities* developed by a team of teachers and researchers at the Florida Center for Reading Research. Under the title Phonological Awareness, you will find activities that address rhyme, syllables, compound words, and onset and rime. https://fcrr.org/student-center-activities/pre-kindergarten
- *Reading Rockets (readingrockets.org)* creates and disseminates free, evidence-based resources and information about reading.
  - Letters vs. Phonemes
    Reading researcher Dr. Louisa Moats explains to a kindergarten teacher why it is critical to differentiate between the letters and sounds within a word when teaching children to read and write. https://youtu.be/J608Dbhs6J8
  - The Importance of Visual Input
    Reading researcher Dr. Louisa Moats demonstrates to a kindergarten teacher how modeling the making of sounds helps children firmly establish letter sounds.
    https://youtu.be/k-28Mdl0I_M
  - Development of Phonological Skills
    Moats, L., & Tolman, C. (2009). *The development of phonological skills*. This resource describes the milestones for acquiring phonological skills.
    https://www.readingrockets.org/article/development-phonological-skills
  - Six Syllable Types
    Moats, L., & Tolman, C. (2009). *Six syllable types*. This resource describes the six types of syllables, why it is important to teach syllables, and the sequence students learn about spoken and written syllables. https://www.readingrockets.org/article/six-syllable-types
  - Importance of Phonological Awareness for Later Reading and Spelling
    Moats, L., & Tolman, C. (2009). *Why phonological awareness is important for reading and spelling*. This resource helps describe the link between phonological awareness and later reading success. https://www.readingrockets.org/article/why-phonological-awareness-important-reading-and-spelling
  - Targeting Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Problems
    Learn some of the ways phonological and phonemic awareness problems articulate from a child, parent, and teacher perspective. https://www.readingrockets.org/article/why-phonological-awareness-important-reading-and-spelling
- *Colorin Colorado! (colorincolorado.org)* creates and disseminates free, research-based information and activities about supporting English learner students.
  - Supporting English Learner Students
    Describes early literacy instruction in dual language preschools (Spanish/English). https://www.colorincolorado.org/article/early-literacy-instruction-dual-language-preschools-spanishenglish

Related Articles

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- Wilson, T., Nabors, D., Berg, H., Simpson, C., & Timme, K. (2012). Small-group reading instruction: Lessons from the field. *Dimensions of Early Childhood, 40*(3), 30–39.https://www.rcboe.org/cms/lib/GA01903614/Centricity/Domain/11936/Dimensions_Vol40_3_Wilson.pdf

Now you are ready for PLC Session 6.

Activity 8

Video-Viewing Guide: Phonological Awareness Throughout the Day

Directions: As you view Video 8: Phonological Awareness Throughout the Day (https://youtu.be/5jicN0F12t0), record reflections about the guiding statements.

Guiding Statements	Reflections
During small-group instruction the tasks were blending (putting together) and segmenting (pulling apart) spoken words at the syllable level.	1.
Provide two examples of where (setting) and how (task) the teacher reinforced phonological awareness at the syllable level throughout the day.	2.
Provide three examples of where (setting) and how (task) the teacher reinforced phonological awareness at the word level throughout the day.	1.
	2.
	3.
List opportunities and settings throughout your day when you could embed phonological awareness.	

Activity 9

Scaffolding Opportunities

Directions: Read the assigned classroom scenario and identify how the teacher scaffolded instruction. Then discuss the assigned scenario and determine a more effective way the teacher could have scaffolded instruction. Record the instructional scaffold, then share your ideas.

Classroom Scenario #1
Aniyah is learning about syllables in a small group with Mr. Medina. Aniyah selects a picture card with a dragon on it. Mr. Medina says, "That's a dragon. Say *dragon*." Aniyah says *dragon*. Then, Mr. Medina says, "Now say *dragon* without *dra*." Aniyah says, "*dra*." Mr. Medina draws a picture of a dragon on some chart paper, points to his picture and says, "Think again, *dragon* without the *dra*."
How did the teacher scaffold instruction?
What is a more effective instructional scaffold?

Classroom Scenario #2
Mrs. Garcia shows the children dominoes and says, "This is a domino. Let's count the syllables as I say the word slowly. *Do* (exaggerated pause) *mi* (exaggerated pause) *no*. How many syllables does *domino* have?" All children shout, "Three!" Mrs. Garcia asks Anita to break *domino* into syllables. Anita says, "dom-ino." Mrs. Garcia stares at Anita and says, "How many syllables did we have in *domino*? How many syllables were in *octopus*? It is the same number. How many syllables were in *parachute*? How did we break *parachute* into syllables?"
How did the teacher scaffold instruction?
What is a more effective instructional scaffold?

Classroom Scenario #3
During the game Rime Sorting, Jaylen chooses a picture of a cat. She says, "*Cat*, /k/ /at/." She carefully looks at the sorting pictures of hat, man, and bug. Jaylen finally places her cat picture under the sorting picture of a man. She then places a ham picture and dad picture under man. Jaylen proudly says, "Mrs. Singleton, I am done! I found all the words that match." Mrs. Singleton says, "Good try, Jaylen. Let's look again. I think *cat* goes under a different sorting picture that starts with /h/ /h/ /h/."
How did the teacher scaffold instruction?
What is a more effective instructional scaffold?

Classroom Scenario #4
Mr. Zhang recently introduced compound words and practiced with the children pairing picture cards that make up different compound words. Malik chooses a *doghouse* picture card and asks Nancy, "What two words make this word?" Nancy says, "*Doghouse*. *House* and *dog*." Then, Nancy looks for the two pictures, lays them on the table with *house* first and *dog* second. Mr. Zhang says, "Nice try, Nancy. Malik, can you help Nancy?"
How did the teacher scaffold instruction?
What is a more effective instructional scaffold?

Classroom Scenario #5
Tyler and Zahara are playing an onset-rime game. Tyler chooses a picture card and says, "*Goat*, /g/ /oat/." Ms. Mosley tells Zahara to say the word that Tyler just segmented. Zahara says, "*Coat*." Ms. Mosley smiles kindly and says, "Not quite, Zahara. Try taking a turn with this picture card."
How did the teacher scaffold instruction?
What is a more effective instructional scaffold?

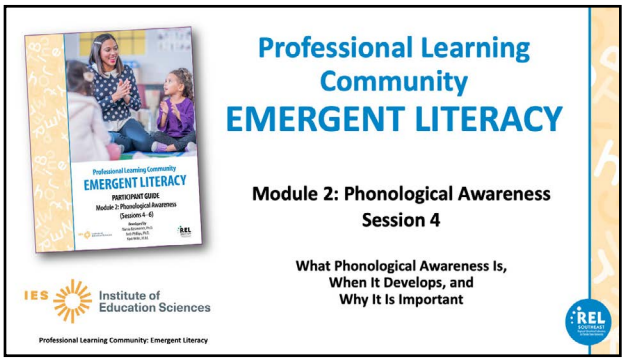
Activity 10

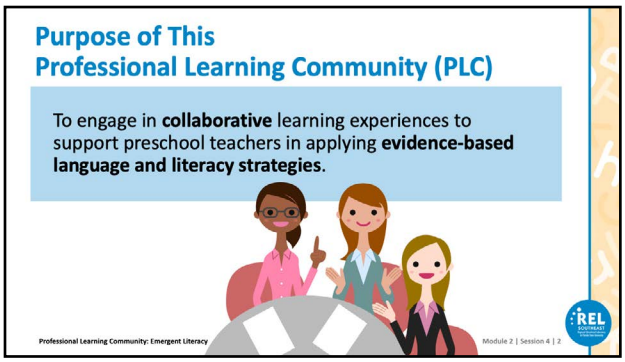
Reflect, Plan, and Implement (Self-Study)

Directions: Before the next session, complete the Do, Watch, Read activities below.

DO	Review the section on considerations for English learner students and students with disabilities in the Self-Study Reading for this session on pages 41–44. Record at least three strategies that you have used while teaching phonological awareness in small groups. Describe why and how you used those strategies.
1.	
2.	
3.	
WATCH	**Video 9: Phonological Awareness and Considerations for Intensive Instruction** (https://youtu.be/YiZMBP9ap50). As you watch, record evidence of the strategies you read about and discussed during the PLC session.
READ	Self-Study Reading for Session 7 on pages 1–7 to prepare for Module 3: Vocabulary
What questions or comments do you have about the Self-Study Reading?	
What is one thing you learned from the reading?	

Slides


Professional Learning Community
EMERGENT LITERACY
Module 2: Phonological Awareness
Session 4
What Phonological Awareness Is,
When It Develops, and
Why It Is Important
IES Institute of Education Sciences
Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy


Purpose of This
Professional Learning Community (PLC)
To engage in collaborative learning experiences to support preschool teachers in applying evidence-based language and literacy strategies.
Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy
Module 2 | Session 4 | 2

Norms For Our PLC
Cell phones on silent
Pay attention to self and others
Presume positive intentions
Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy
Module 2 | Session 4 | 3

Modules and Sessions

Module	Topic	Session	Duration
1	Print Knowledge	1	90 minutes
		2	90 minutes
		3	60 minutes
2	Phonological Awareness	4	90 minutes
		5	90 minutes
		6	60 minutes
3	Vocabulary	7	90 minutes
		8	90 minutes
		9	60 minutes
4	Oral Language	10	90 minutes
		11	90 minutes
		12	60 minutes

Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy
Module 2 | Session 4 | 4

Five-Step Process for PLC Sessions

STEP 1 Debrief

STEP 2 Define and Discuss Session Goals and Content

STEP 3 Learn and Confirm

STEP 4 Collaborate and Practice

STEP 5 Reflect, Plan, and Implement

Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy
Module 2 | Session 4 | 5

STEP 1

Debrief

DO
- Implement print referencing lesson plan.
- Did the book work well? Why/why not? What did the children learn? How did you scaffold instruction?

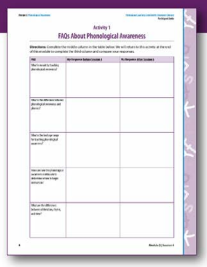
WATCH
- Video 8: Small-Group Explicit Instruction for the Letter M.
- Review evidence of effective strategies.

READ
- Self-Study Reading for Session 4.
- Comments and questions?

Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy
Module 2 | Session 4 | 6

Activity 1: **FAQs About Phonological Awareness**

- Record your responses in the middle column.
- We will return to this activity at the end of this Phonological Awareness module to compare responses.



Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy
Module 2 | Session 4 | 7

STEP 2

Define and Discuss Session Goals and Content

✓Understand phonological awareness and why it is important.

✓Understand the phonological awareness continuum.

Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy
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Self-Study Reading for Session 4

- What Is Phonological Awareness?
- When Does Phonological Awareness Develop?
- Why Is Phonological Awareness Important?
- The Phonological Awareness Continuum

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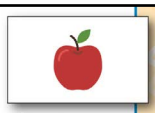
Module 2 | Session 4 | 9

What Is Phonological Awareness?



- The understanding that speech can be broken down into parts, or units of sound, and the ability to manipulate those parts.
- An auditory or oral skill that does not involve reading letters or words.
- Children listen, speak, point, and gesture during phonological awareness instruction and practice.

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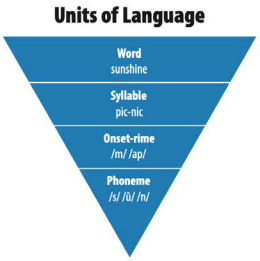
Units of Language

- Units refer to a sound structure of language that can be manipulated in phonological awareness tasks.



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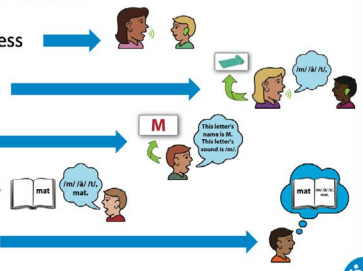
The Important "P Words"

- Phonological awareness
- Phonemic awareness
- Print knowledge
- Phonics
- Alphabetic principle



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STEP 3 **Learn and Confirm**

Activity 2: **Sorting Important "P-Words"**

1. Identify which component of literacy instruction is described in each scenario: **print knowledge**, **phonological awareness, phonemic awareness,** or **phonics**.

2. Explain.

Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy
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Preschool Provides a Strong Foundation

- Phonological awareness does not come naturally to all children, so it needs to be explicitly taught and practiced.
- Difficulties with phonological awareness are at the heart of most children's reading challenges.
- A goal in preschool is to provide a strong foundation in phonological awareness so that children can benefit from reading instruction in their future years in school.

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Think-Pair-Share

How do you teach phonological awareness?

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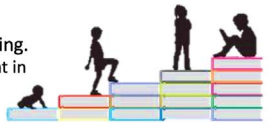
Why Is Phonological Awareness Important?

- ✓It is directly related to reading ability.
- ✓It builds children's capacity to learn phonics, once phonics is introduced in later grades.
- ✓It is a foundational skill for reading.
  - ✓It is associated with achievement in decoding in later grades.
- ✓It is included in state standards.



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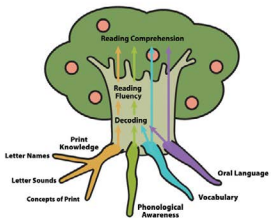
Video 1: The Literacy Tree- A Representation of Foundational Literacy Skills



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Phonological Awareness is Included in State Standards

Look at our state's standards and notice how phonological awareness is included as a key learning goal.

Highlight key words related to phonological awareness.

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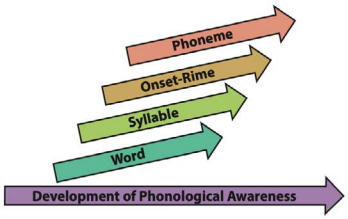
Video 2: Phonological Awareness Continuum



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STEP 4

Collaborate and Practice

Word Level

Phoneme Level

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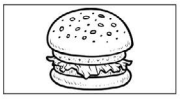
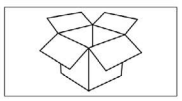
Collaborate and Practice

Syllable Level



Onset-Rime Level



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Collaborate and Practice

Syllable Level

Phoneme Level

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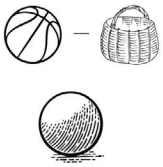
Collaborate and Practice

Word Level



Onset-Rime Level

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STEP 5 **Reflect, Plan, and Implement**

Think-Pair-Share

- ✓ What did you learn during this session that confirmed what you already knew about why phonological awareness is important?
- ✓ What did you learn that contradicted what you already knew about why phonological awareness is important?

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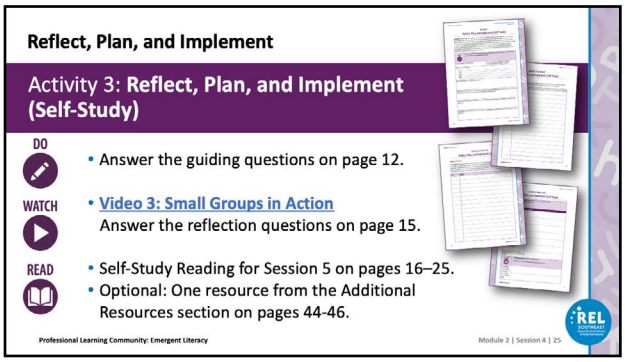
Reflect, Plan, and Implement
Activity 3: Reflect, Plan, and Implement (Self-Study)
DO
• Answer the guiding questions on page 12.
WATCH
• Video 3: Small Groups in Action
Answer the reflection questions on page 15.
READ
• Self-Study Reading for Session 5 on pages 16–25.
• Optional: One resource from the Additional Resources section on pages 44-46.
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Module 2 | Session 4 | 25

We have completed
Session 4
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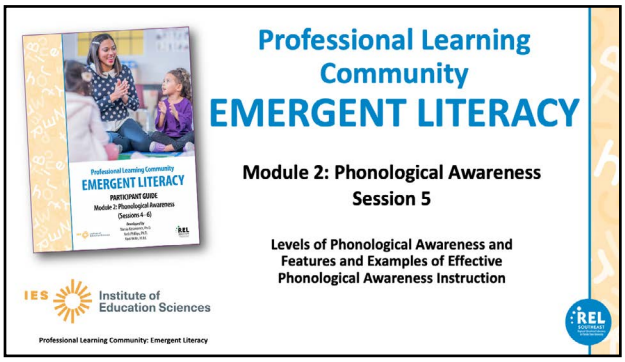
Professional Learning Community
EMERGENT LITERACY
Module 2: Phonological Awareness
Session 5
Levels of Phonological Awareness and Features and Examples of Effective Phonological Awareness Instruction
IES Institute of Education Sciences
Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy

Purpose of This Professional Learning Community (PLC)

To engage in **collaborative** learning experiences to support preschool teachers in applying **evidence-based language and literacy strategies**.

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Module 2 | Session 5 | 28

Norms For Our PLC

Cell phones on silent

Pay attention to self and others

Presume positive intentions

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STEP 1

Debrief

DO

- Answer the guiding questions about your classroom schedule on page 12.

WATCH

- Video 3: Small Groups in Action
- Answer the reflection questions on page 15.

READ

- Self-Study Reading for Session 5 on pages 16–25.
- Optional self-selected reading from the Additional Resources section on pages 44-46.

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STEP 2 **Define and Discuss Session Goals and Content**

✓Review main ideas from Session 4.

✓Understand how to explicitly teach phonological awareness in small groups.

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Small-Group Explicit Instruction of Phonological Awareness

- Implement daily, interactive sessions (10–15 minutes).
- Use evidence-based instructional methods.
- Integrate into a curriculum that simultaneously supports the development of children's language, math, social skills, motor skills, and their general knowledge and interests.

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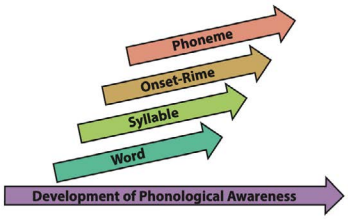
Video 2: Phonological Awareness Continuum



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STEP 3

Learn and Confirm

Activity 4: **Video-Viewing Guide: Levels of Phonological Awareness**

Video 4: Word Level Phonological Awareness Lesson

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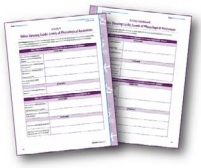
Activity 4: **Video-Viewing Guide: Levels of Phonological Awareness**

Video 5: Syllable Level Phonological Awareness Lesson



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Activity 4: **Video-Viewing Guide: Levels of Phonological Awareness**

Video 6: Onset-Rime Level Phonological Awareness Lesson

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Activity 4: **Video-Viewing Guide: Levels of Phonological Awareness**

Video 7: Phoneme Level Phonological Awareness Lesson

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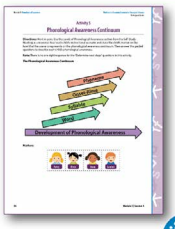
Activity 5: **Phonological Awareness Continuum**

1. Read each child's instructional scenario and place the child's marker on the level that represents the scenario on the phonological awareness continuum.
2. Answer the guided questions to describe each child's phonological awareness.



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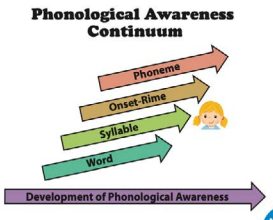
Activity 5: **Phonological Awareness Continuum**

Kaley

1. **Syllable** level.
2. **Blending** and **segmenting** tasks.
3. Kaley put two syllables of a spoken word together and broke a spoken word into syllables.
4. **Deletion** task at the **syllable** level.



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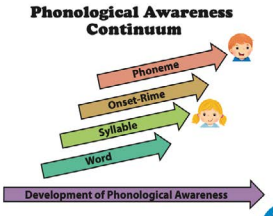
Activity 5: Phonological Awareness Continuum

Landon

1. **Phoneme** level.
2. **Segmenting** task.
3. Landon said **individual sounds** of a spoken word.
4. **Deletion** task at the **phoneme** level.



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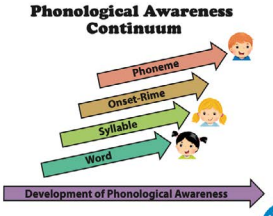
Module 2 | Session 5 | 40

Activity 5: Phonological Awareness Continuum

Elena

1. **Word** level.
2. **Deletion** task.
3. Elena deleted a word from a spoken compound word.
4. **Blending** and/or **counting** tasks at the **syllable** level.



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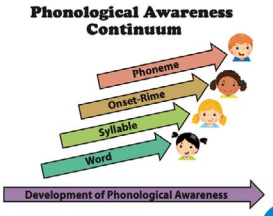
Activity 5: Phonological Awareness Continuum

Dacia

1. **Onset-rime** level.
2. **Onset identity (beginning sound)** task.
3. Dacia identified the first sound of a spoken word.
4. **Segmenting** task at the **onset-rime** level.



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STEP 4

Collaborate and Practice

Activity 6: **Role Play Explicitly Teaching Phonological Awareness in Small Groups**

Role play in triads and look for scaffolding opportunities.

- Each triad has a Teacher, Child 1, and Child 2.
- Rotate roles with each new lesson script.
- Answer questions in the table at the end of this activity before moving to the next lesson script.

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Activity 6: **Role Play Explicitly Teaching Phonological Awareness in Small Groups**

Question	Lesson Script #1	Lesson Script #2	Lesson Script #3
Which level of PA is the focus of the lesson?	Syllable	Onset-rime	Word
Which type of task is the focus of the lesson?	Blending	Matching	Deletion
What type of scaffolds are included?	Stating the error made and restating the task.	Picture Cards Saying just the rime of both words when child made an error.	Picture Cards

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Activity 6: **Role Play Explicitly Teaching Phonological Awareness in Small Groups**

Similarities of Lessons

- Explicit (I Do, We Do, You Do)
- Focused on one level of phonological awareness
- Included instructional scaffolds

Differences of Lessons

- Phonological awareness level (syllable level, onset-rime level, word level)
- Unit size (syllable, rime, word)
- Type of task (blending, matching, deletion)
- Types of scaffolds

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STEP 5

Reflect, Plan, and Implement

Think-Pair-Share

- ✓ What did you learn during this session that confirmed what you already knew about teaching phonological awareness in small groups?
- ✓ What did you learn that contradicted what you already knew about teaching phonological awareness in small groups?

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Reflect, Plan, and Implement

Activity 7: **Reflect, Plan, and Implement (Self-Study)**

DO

- Videotape yourself teaching a small-group explicit lesson on phonological awareness. See the Reproducible Materials at the back of the Participant Guide for lesson plans.

WATCH

- The video of yourself teaching a small-group lesson on phonological awareness. Answer the reflection questions.

READ

- Self-Study Reading for Session 6 on pages 39–46.
- Optional: One resource from the Additional Resources section pages 44-46.

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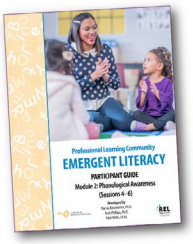

Professional Learning Community
EMERGENT LITERACY

Module 2: Phonological Awareness
Session 6

Phonological Awareness in Action, Considerations for English Learner Students and Students With Disabilities, and Additional Resources

IES Institute of Education Sciences

Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy

Purpose of This Professional Learning Community (PLC)

To engage in **collaborative** learning experiences to support preschool teachers in applying **evidence-based language and literacy strategies**.

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Norms For Our PLC

Cell phones on silent

Pay attention to self and others

Presume positive intentions

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STEP 1

Debrief

DO

- Video record yourself teaching a small-group explicit lesson on phonological awareness. See the Reproducible Materials at the back of the Participant Guide for lesson plans.

WATCH

- The video of yourself teaching a small-group lesson on phonological awareness. Answer the reflection questions.

READ

- Self-Study Reading for Session 6 on pages 39–46.
- Optional self-selected reading from the Additional Resources section.

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STEP 2

Define and Discuss Session Goals and Content

✓ Review main ideas from Sessions 4 and 5.

✓ Understand how to effectively scaffold phonological awareness instruction.

✓ Considerations for English learner students and students with disabilities.

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STEP 3

Learn and Confirm

Phonological Awareness Throughout the Day

- How do you embed phonological awareness throughout the day? Provide a specific example of the phonological awareness activity and the setting.

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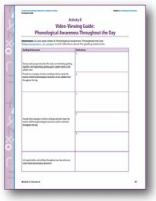
Activity 8: **Video Viewing Guide: Phonological Awareness Throughout the Day**

Video 8: Phonological Awareness Throughout the Day



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STEP 4

Collaborate and Practice

Activity 9: **Scaffolding Opportunities**

1. Read the assigned classroom scenario.
2. Identify and record how the teacher scaffolded instruction.
3. Discuss and record a more effective way the teacher could have scaffolded instruction.

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Collaborate and Practice

Activity 9: **Scaffolding Opportunities**

Classroom Scenario #1

1. How did the teacher scaffold instruction?
2. What is a more effective instructional scaffold?
   - "There are two syllables in dragon, drag-on. Say each syllable in dragon."

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Activity 9: **Scaffolding Opportunities**

Classroom Scenario #2

1. How did the teacher scaffold instruction?

2. What is a more effective instructional scaffold?
   - Ask one relevant clarification question, "How many syllables did we have in do-mi-no?"
   - If the child says three, then the teacher can say, "Right! You only broke the word into two parts. Let's see if you can break domino into THREE parts."
   - If the child doesn't say three, then the teacher can say, "Listen as I say the word again – do-mi-no." The teacher holds up one finger as she says each syllable.

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Activity 9: **Scaffolding Opportunities**

Classroom Scenario #3

1. How did the teacher scaffold instruction?

2. What is a more effective instructional scaffold?
   - Focus child's attention on the ending sounds to identify the rime by saying, "Look at the cat picture. Listen. Cat, /k/ /at/. What sound do you hear at the end of /k/ /at/?"
   - If the child says /at/, then the teacher can say, "Right! Now let's listen for the /at/ sound at the end of these three words – hat, man, bug."

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Activity 9: **Scaffolding Opportunities**

Classroom Scenario #4

1. How did the teacher scaffold instruction?

2. What is a more effective instructional scaffold?
   - Teacher revisits child after the peer support and says, "Do you see how Malik put the dog picture first and the house picture after that? Listen. (While pointing to the pictures) Dog (exaggerated pause) house. Dog comes first. Now you try again. Put these pictures in the right order to make doghouse."

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Activity 9: **Scaffolding Opportunities**

Classroom Scenario #5

1. How did the teacher scaffold instruction?

2. What is a more effective instructional scaffold?
   - Stay on the goat picture card and say, "Listen to the beginning sound of goat. /g/ /g/ /g/ /oat/. What word?"

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Revisit Questions From Session 4

Activity 1: **FAQs About Phonological Awareness**

- Record your responses in the third column.
- How did your responses change from Session 4?

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STEP 5 **Reflect, Plan, and Implement**

Activity 10: **Reflect, Plan, and Implement (Self-Study)**

DO
- Review Considerations for English Learner Students and Students With Disabilities. Record three strategies you have used.

WATCH
- Video 9: Phonological Awareness and Considerations for Intensive Instruction and record evidence of effective strategies.

READ
- Self-Study Reading for Session 7 located in the Participant Guide for Module 3: Vocabulary.

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We have completed
Session 6
Professional Learning Community: Emergent Literacy
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REL

Reproducible Materials

Activity 3 Resource: Sample Daily Schedule for 8 hour full-day program

Time	Activity
7:30–8:00	Arrival/Morning routine (sign-in, breakfast, put belongings away, quiet table activity, morning tubs, etc.)
8:00–8:30	Whole-group time/Circle time (theme-related story, alphabet, numbers, shapes, show and tell, message of the day, etc.)
8:30–10:00	Learning center time (block center, dramatic play, sand/water table, fine motor toys including puzzles and manipulatives, reading center, writing center, discovery center, computer center, art center, etc.)
10:00–10:20	Clean-up time, handwashing, bathroom, and snack
10:20-11:30	Outside/Gross motor activity (free play on playground) Small-group instruction – Group #1 – Teacher will keep one small group of children inside while the other children go outside. This group will get 40 minutes on the playground instead of 70 minutes. Group #1 and Group #3 can alternate days to allow all children to get more outside time.
11:30-11:50	Whole-group time/Circle time (theme-related story, music and movement, concept development, show and tell, daily message, etc.)
11:50-12:00	Handwashing, bathroom, and prepare for lunch
12:00-12:30	Lunch
12:30-12:45	Quiet reading time, prepare for nap Small-group instruction – Group #2 – Teacher will create a small group of children who typically do not nap for the full hour and 30 minutes. This group will begin their small-group time as soon as they are ready for nap. When the group is finished, these children will join their peers for the remainder of nap time. The teacher could implement lessons with two small groups during nap time. One group could occur before the children go to sleep, and the other group could comprise children who wake up earlier than 2:15.
12:45-2:15	Nap time
2:15-2:35	Snack and story time
2:35-3:10	Outside/Gross motor activity (free play on playground)
3:10-3:20	Handwashing and bathroom
3:20-4:10	Learning center time (block center, dramatic play, sand/water table, fine motor toys including puzzles and manipulatives, reading center, writing center, discovery center, computer center, art center, etc.) Small-group instruction – Group #3 – Teacher conducts one small group while the other children participate in free-choice centers. This can occur after the teacher starts the children on their free-choice centers.
4:10-4:30	Closing circle time and dismissal

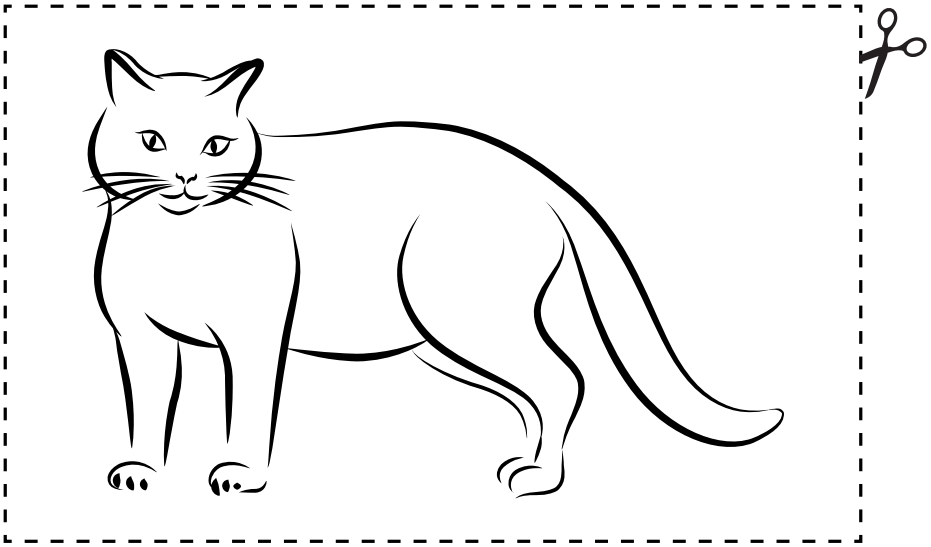
Activity 3 Resource: Sample Schedule for 6 Hour Full-day Program

Time	Activity
8:30-9:00	Arrival/Morning routine (sign-in, put belongings away, quiet table activity, morning tubs, etc.)
9:00-9:40	Whole group time/Circle time (theme related story, music and movement, show & tell, message of the day, etc.)
9:40-9:50	Snack
9:50-10:40	Outside/Gross motor activity (free play on playground)
10:40-10:55	Handwashing, bathroom and prepare for lunch
10:55-11:25	Lunch
11:25-12:30	Learning center time (block center, dramatic play, sand/water table, fine motor toys including puzzles and manipulatives, reading center, writing center, discovery center, computer center, art center, etc.) Small-group instruction – Groups #1, 2, 3 – Children rotate groups every 20 minutes. The other children participate in free-choice centers until their group is called.
12:30-2:00	Nap time
2:00-2:25	Whole group time/Closing circle time (theme related story, music and movement, show and tell, closing activities, etc.)
2:25-2:30	Dismissal

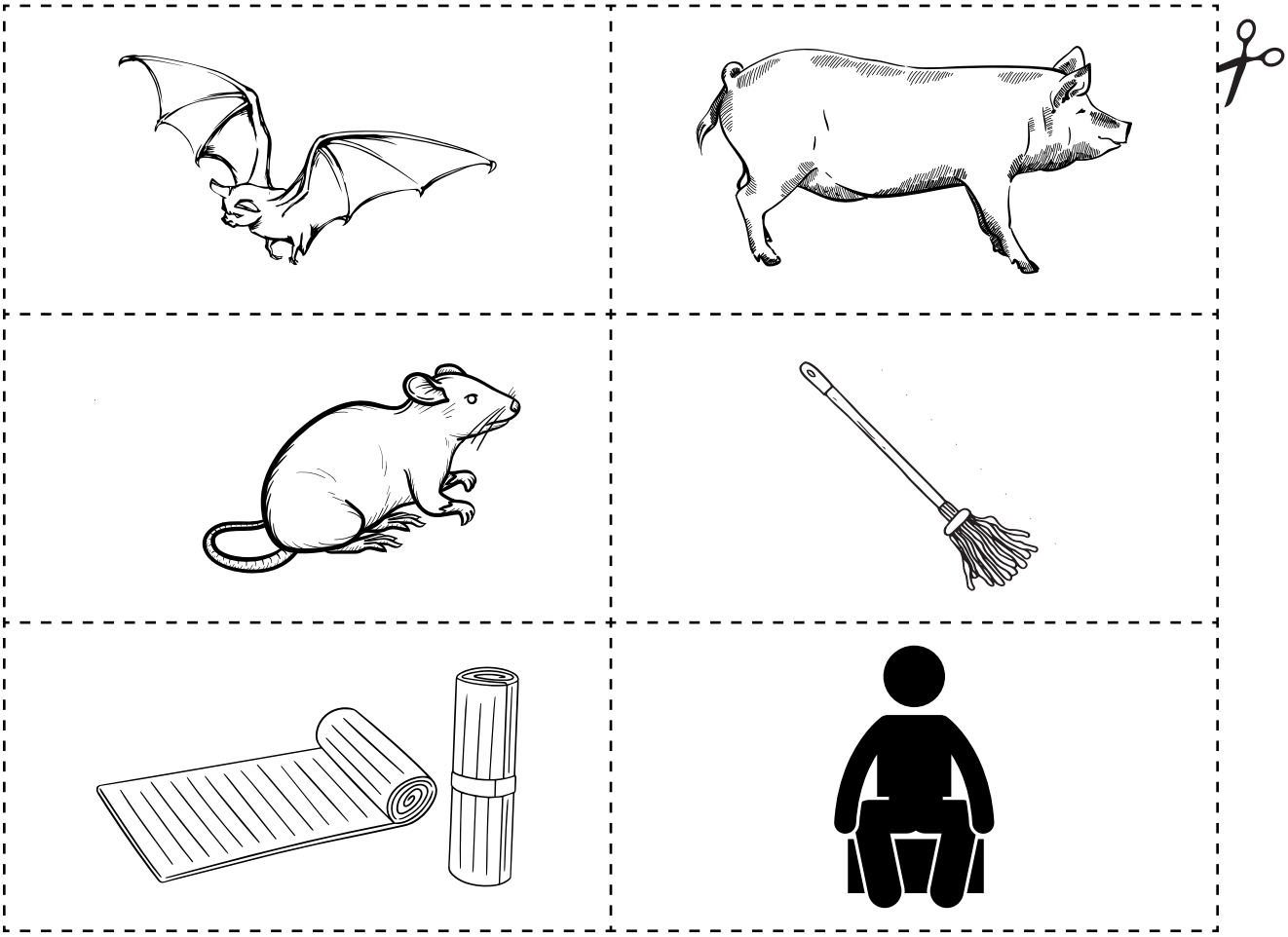
Activity 3 Resource: Sample Schedule for 3-4 Hour Half-day Program

Time	Activity
8:30-9:00	Arrival/Morning routine (sign-in, put belongings away, quiet table activity, morning tubs, etc.) Small-group instruction – Group #1 – Children who arrive on time or early are organized into this group. Teacher works with them as other children arrive and follow the morning routine. If assistant is available, he or she will assist other children on arrival.
9:00-9:40	Whole-group time/Circle time (theme-related story, music and movement, show and tell, message of the day, etc.)
9:40-9:55	Handwashing, bathroom, and snack
9:55-10:55	Learning center time (block center, dramatic play, sand/water table, fine motor toys including puzzles and manipulatives, reading center, writing center, discovery center, computer center, art center, etc.)
10:55-11:10	Handwashing and bathroom
11:10-12:00	Outside/Gross motor activity (free play on playground) Small-group instruction – Group #2 – Teacher will keep one small group of children inside while the other children go outside. This group will get 30 minutes on the playground instead of 50 minutes. Group #2 and Group #3 can alternate days to allow all children to get more outside time.
12:00-12:10	Handwashing and bathroom
12:10-12:30	Whole-group time/Closing circle time (theme-related story, music and movement, concept development, show and tell, message of the day, closing activities, etc.) Small-group instruction – Group #3 – Children who are typically picked up toward the later end of the dismissal window can be organized into this group. Teacher works with them as other children leave or while the assistant conducts the whole-group circle time.
12:30	Dismissal

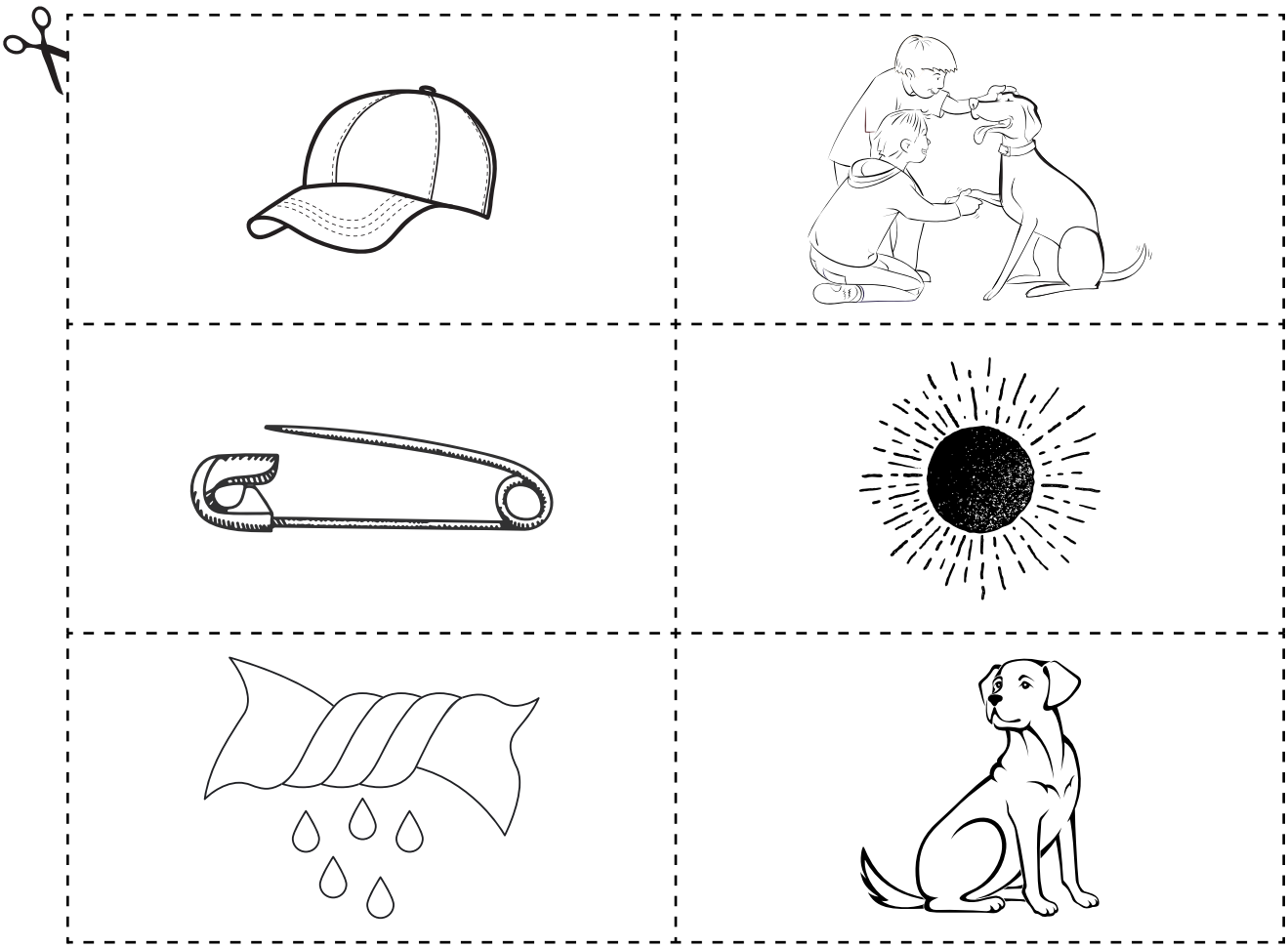
Activity 6 Resource: Rime Match (Script #2)



Rime Picture Header Card

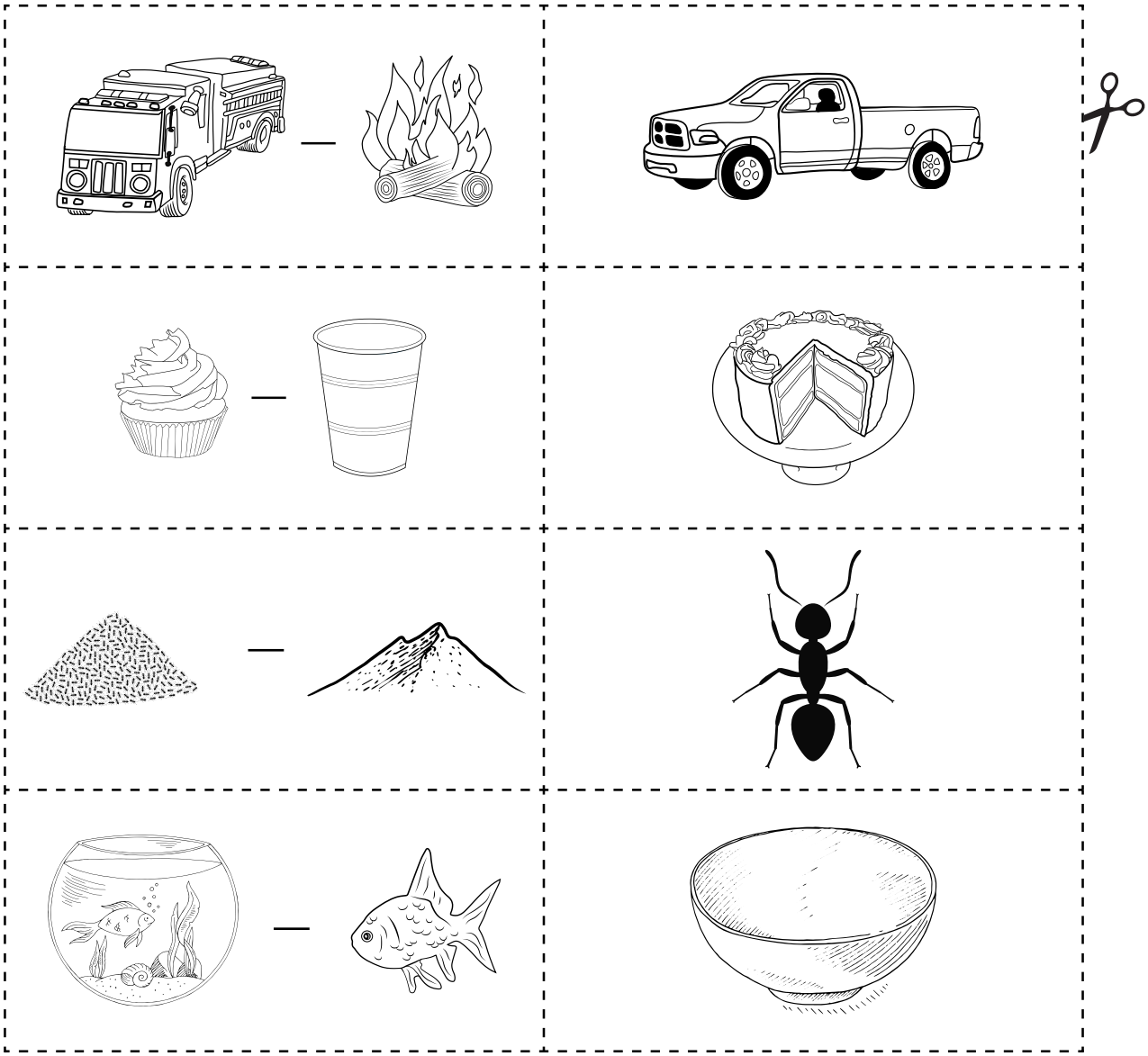


Rime Picture Cards
bat, pig, rat, mop, mat, sat



Rime Picture Cards
hat, pat, pin, sun, wet, dog

Activity 6 Resource: Compound Word Game (Script #3)



Activity 7 Resource: Phonological Awareness Lesson Plan (Syllable Graph)

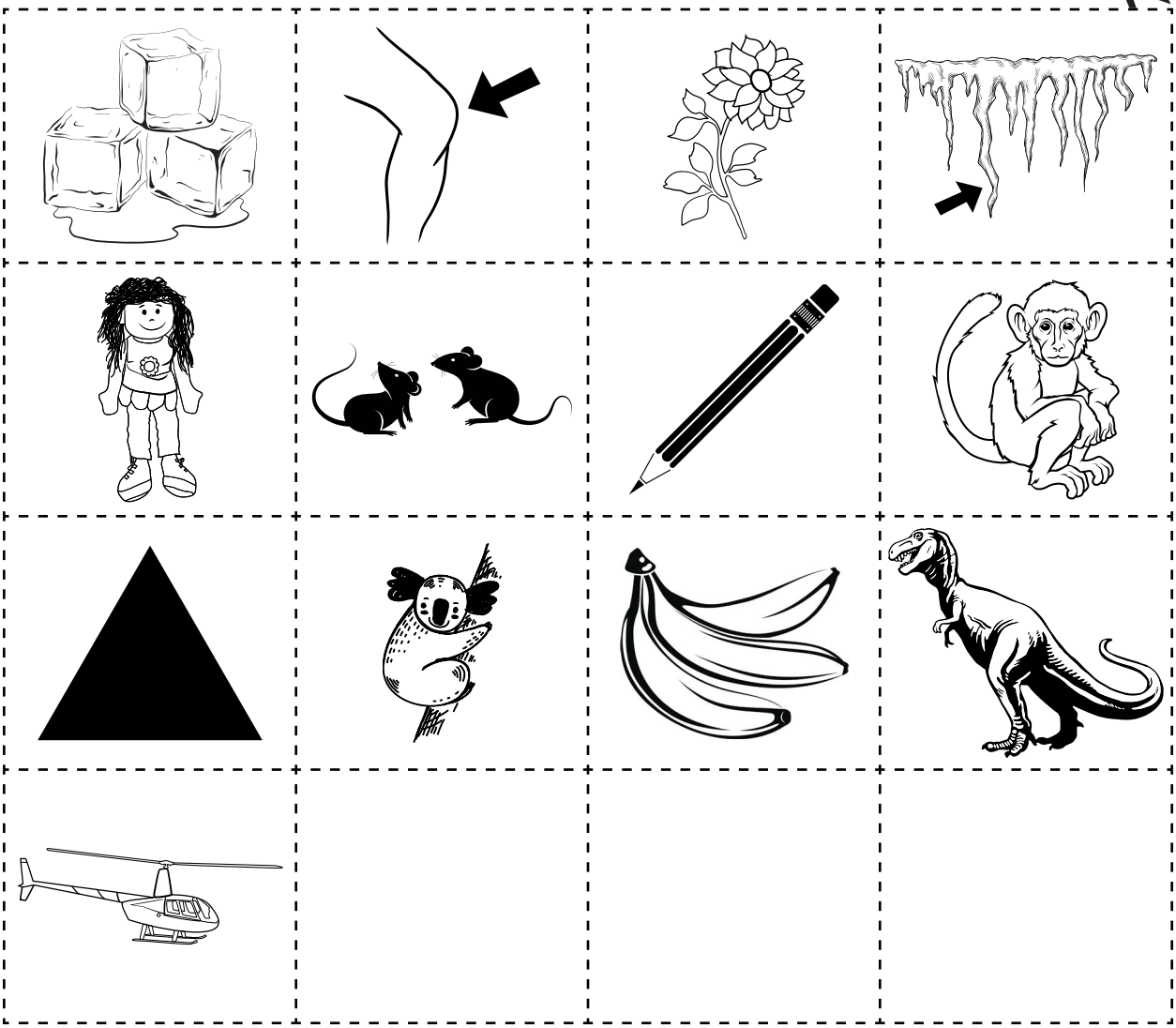
Directions: This is the "Do" from Activity 7. Select one of the two following phonological awareness lesson plans: Syllable Graph or Compound Word Search. Implement the lesson with a small group of children.

Lesson Plan #1: Syllable Graph
Objective: The child will segment syllables in spoken words. **Materials:** Picture Cards and Syllable Graph Activity Sheet
TEACHER: Today we are going to say each syllable, or part, of a word. We will count the number of syllables, or parts, in the word. Then, we will place the word on our Syllable Graph. Listen. This is a picture of *ice*. I will say *ice* as I finger tap each syllable, or part. (Say *ice* as you finger tap one time). I finger tapped one time, so there is one syllable in *ice*. I will place the *ice* picture card under the number 1. Now it is your turn. What is this? (Show the picture card for *knee*.) **CHILDREN:** *Knee*. **TEACHER:** Finger-tap and say each syllable in *knee*. **CHILDREN:** *Knee*. (Teacher and children tap one time while saying *knee*.) **TEACHER:** How many times did you finger tap? **CHILDREN:** One time. **TEACHER:** Yes! We finger-tapped one time so there is one syllable in *knee*. Please place the picture card for *knee* under the number one on our syllable graph. (Hand the picture card to a child to place on the graph.) What is this? (Show the picture card for *flower*.) **CHILD:** *Flower*. **TEACHER:** Finger-tap and say each syllable in *flower*. **CHILD:** *Flow-er* (Teacher and children finger tap two times while saying *flow-er*.) **TEACHER:** How many times did you finger tap? **CHILDREN:** Two. **TEACHER:** Yes! We finger-tapped twice so there are two syllables in *flower*. Please place the picture card for *flower* under the number two on our syllable graph. (Hand the picture card to a child to place on the graph.) What is this? (Show the picture card for *icicle*.) **CHILD:** *Icicle*. **TEACHER:** Finger-tap and say each syllable in *icicle*. **CHILD:** *Ice-i-cle* (Teacher and children finger tap three times while saying *ice-i-cle*.) **TEACHER:** How many times did you finger tap? **CHILDREN:** Three. **TEACHER:** Yes! We finger-tapped three times so there are three syllables in *icicle*. Please place the picture card for icicle under the number three on our syllable graph. (Hand the picture card to a child to place on the graph.) Now, we will take turns saying and counting the number of syllables in a word and placing the picture card on our Syllable Graph. Remember to say the answer in your head when it is not your turn.
(Provide each child with 2-3 turns using the following words. Scaffold as needed.) *doll (1)* *mice (mice, 1)* *pencil (pen-cil, 2)* *monkey (mon-key, 2)* *triangle (tri-an-gle, 3)* *koala (ko-a-la, 3)* *banana (ba-na-na, 3)* *dinosaur (di-no-saur, 3)* *helicopter (he-li-cop-ter, 4)*

Syllable Graph

1	2	3	4

Syllable Graph Picture Cards



ice, knee, flower, icicle,
doll, mice, pencil, monkey
triangle, koala, banana, dinosaur,
helicopter

Activity 7 Resource: Phonological Awareness Lesson Plan (Compound Word Search)

Lesson Plan #2: Compound Word Search
Objective: The child will segment and blend spoken compound words. **Materials:** Compound Word Picture Cards and Picture Cards
Place the Compound Word Picture Cards in a stack face down. Scatter the Picture Cards face up on the table. **TEACHER:** A compound word is a word that is made up of two words. (Hold up a picture of a *pancake*.) *Pancake* is a compound word because it is made up of two separate words. (Locate and hold up a picture of a *pan* when you say *pan* and of a *cake* when you say *cake*.) What two words make *pancake*? *Pancake* is made up of *pan* (pause) *cake*. (Move pictures of *pan* and *cake* together.) *Pancake*! Today we are going to say a compound word, then break it into two smaller words, then say the compound word again. Listen. (Hold up a picture of a *basketball*.) This is a (pause) *basketball*. What two words make this word? (Hold up individual picture cards as you say each word separately. Move the picture cards together when you say the whole word.) *Basket* (pause) *ball*, *basketball*. Now it is your turn. What is this? (Show the picture card for *doghouse*.) **CHILDREN:** *Doghouse*. **TEACHER:** What two words make *doghouse*? **CHILDREN:** *Dog-house*. **TEACHER:** Great! Can you find the picture card for *dog*? Can you find the picture card for *house*? (Provide time for children to search for the picture cards, scaffolding as necessary. When they are located, set the picture cards near each other with space in between. Point to each picture card as the children name it and then slide the picture cards together and ask children to say the compound word.) Great job of finding the picture cards. (Point to *dog*.) *Doghouse* is made up of? **CHILDREN:** *Dog*. **TEACHER:** (Point to *house*.) **CHILD:** *House*. **TEACHER:** (Slide the pictures together.) What word? **CHILD:** *Doghouse*! **TEACHER:** Nice job of saying the compound word, breaking it into two words, and then saying the compound word again! What is this? (Show the picture card for *moonlight*.) **CHILDREN:** *Moonlight*. **TEACHER:** What two words make *moonlight*? **CHILDREN:** *Moon-light*. **TEACHER:** Great! Can you find the picture card for *moon*? Can you find the picture card for *light*? (Provide time for children to search for the picture cards, scaffolding as necessary. When they are located, set the picture cards near each other with space in between. Point to each picture card as the children name it and then slide the picture cards together and ask children to say the compound word.) Great job of finding the picture cards. (Point to *moon*.) *Moonlight* is made up of? **CHILDREN**: *Moon*. **TEACHER:** (Point to *light*.) **CHILD:** *Light*. **TEACHER:** (Slide the pictures together.) What word? **CHILD:** *Moonlight*! **TEACHER:** Nice job of saying the compound word, breaking it into two words, and then saying the compound word again! What is this? (Show the picture card for *sunglasses*.) **CHILDREN:** *Sunglasses*. **TEACHER:** What two words make *sunglasses*? **CHILDREN:** *Sun-glasses*.

TEACHER: Great! Can you find the picture card for *sun*? Can you find the picture card for *glasses*? (Provide time for children to search for the picture cards, scaffolding as necessary. Whey they are located, set the picture cards near each other with space in between. Point to each picture card as the children name it and then slide the picture cards together and ask children to say the compound word.)

Great job of finding the picture cards. (Point to *sun*.) *Sunglasses* is made up of?

CHILDREN: *Sun*.

TEACHER: (Point to *glasses*.)

CHILD: *Glasses*.

TEACHER: (Slide the pictures together.) What word?

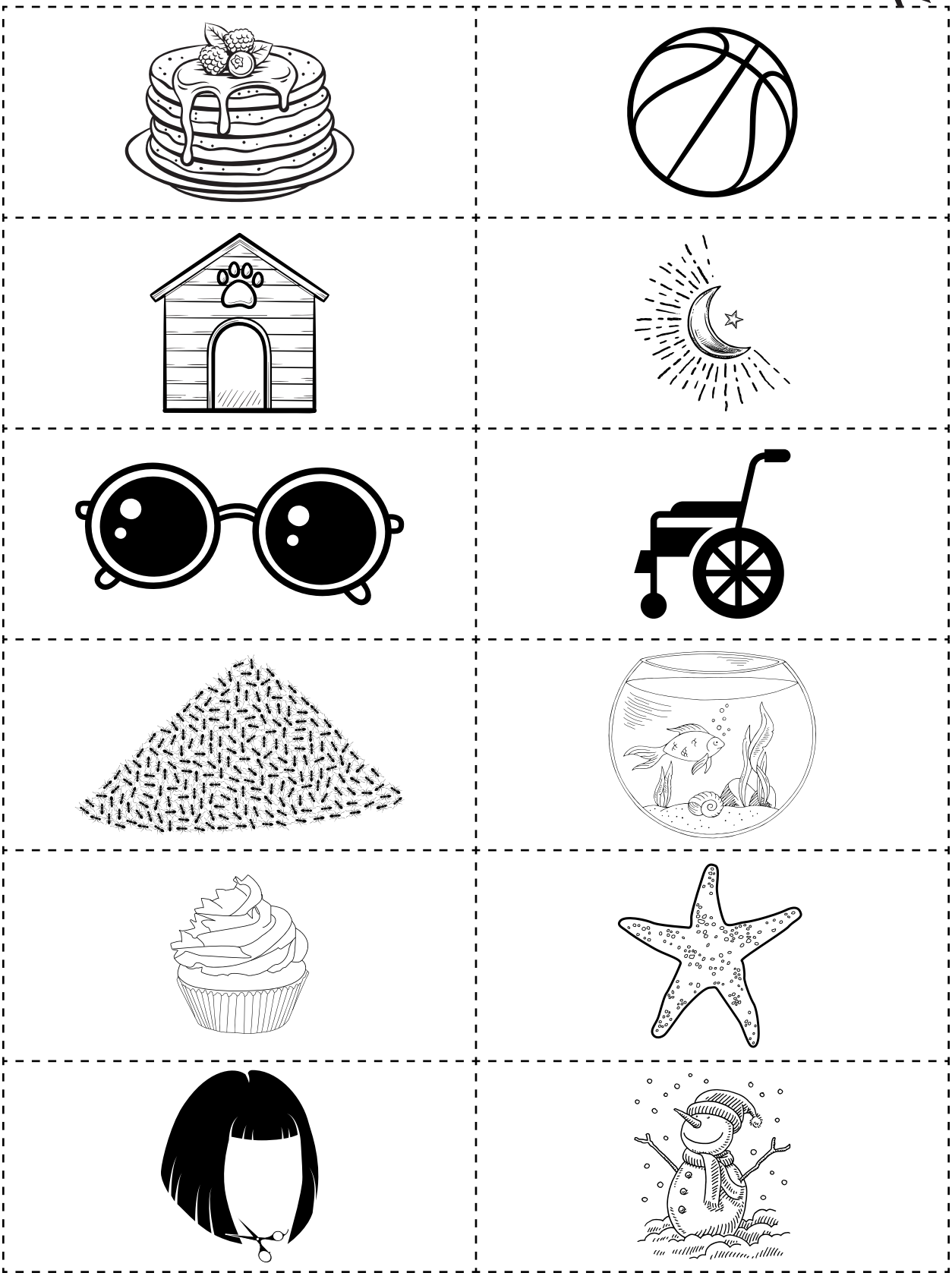
CHILD: *Sunglasses*!

TEACHER: Nice job of saying the compound word, breaking it into two words, and then saying the compound word again! Now, you will each get your own turn. Remember to say the answers in your head when it is your friend's turn.

(Provide each child with 2-3 turns using the following words. Scaffold as needed.)

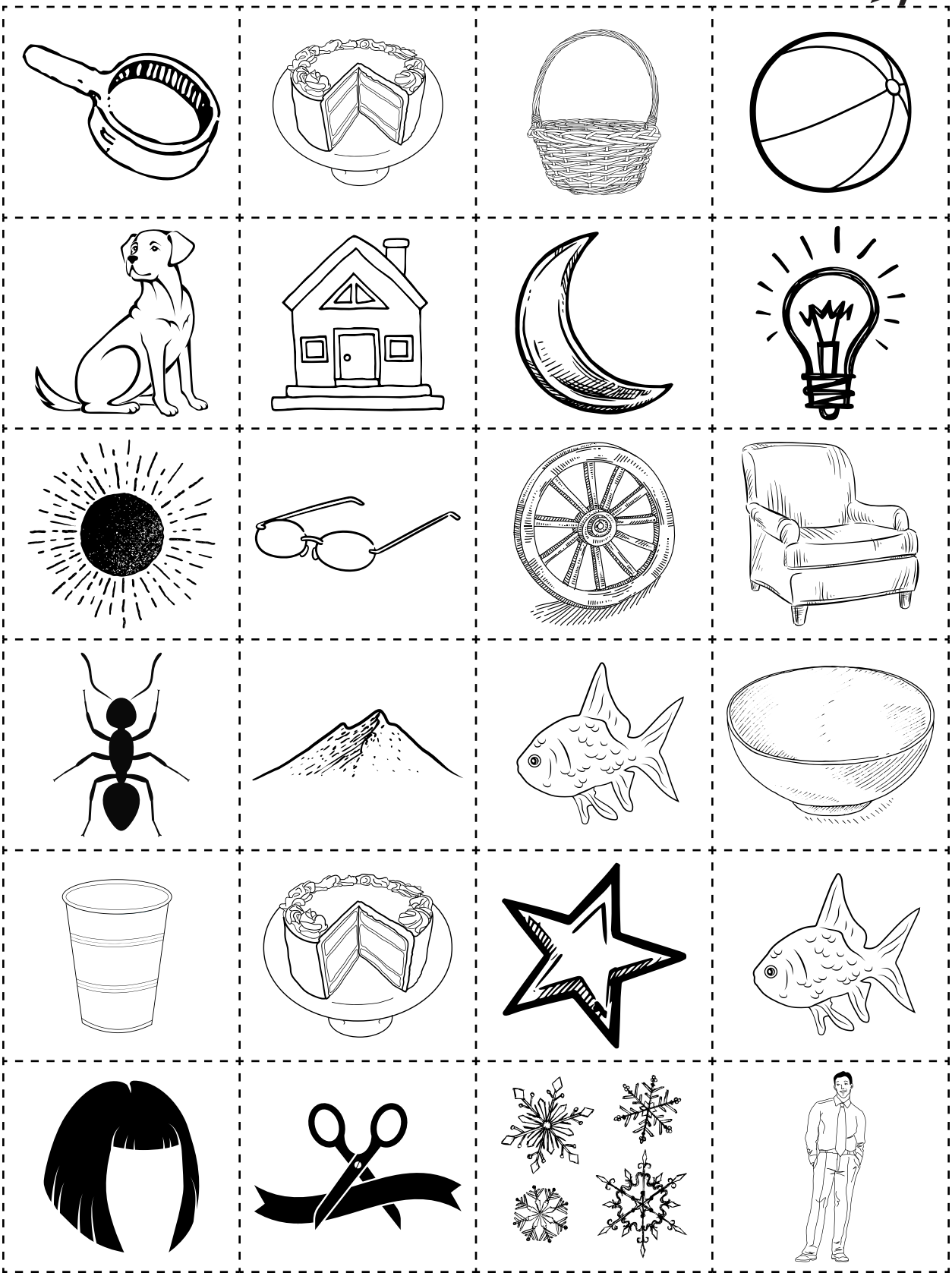
wheelchair (wheel-chair)
anthill (ant-hill)
fishbowl (fish-bowl)
cupcake (cup-cake)
starfish (star-fish)
haircut (hair-cut)
snowman (snow-man)

Compound word picture cards



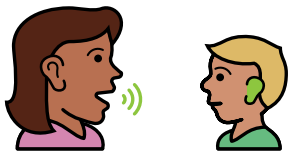
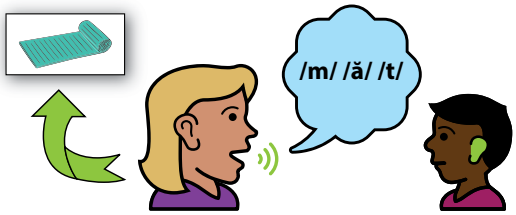
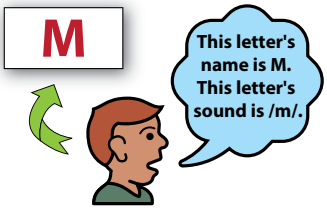
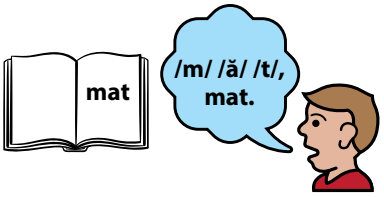
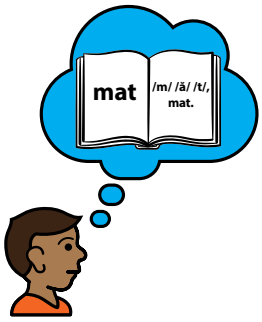
pancake, basketball, doghouse, moonlight, sunglasses, wheelchair,
anthill, fishbowl, cupcake, starfish, haircut, snowman

Picture cards



pan, cake, basket, ball, dog, house, moon, light, sun, glasses, wheel, chair,
ant, hill, fish, bowl, cup, cake, star, fish, hair, cut, snow, man

Phonological Awareness: Key Terms and Definitions for Teachers

Key Term	Definition
Phonological Awareness 	The understanding that spoken language can be broken down into parts and the ability to manipulate those parts at the word, syllable, onset-rime, and phoneme levels.
Phonemic Awareness 	The ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in spoken words.
Phoneme	The smallest unit of sound in spoken words. Mat has three phonemes: /m/ /ă/ /t/.
Print Knowledge 	Knowing letter names (M), letters sounds (/m/), and concepts of print.
Phonics 	Using printed letters and letter-sound relationships to read words.
Alphabetic Principle 	The understanding that there are systematic and predictable relationships between written letters and spoken sounds.

Glossary

Alliteration is the repetition of the initial phoneme of each word. For example, Harry the happy hippo hula-hoops with Henrietta.

Alphabetic principle is the understanding that letters represent sounds that form words; it is the knowledge of predictable patterns between written letters and spoken sounds.

Blending is putting together syllables or phonemes of a spoken word quickly, to accurately say the word. For example, /a/ /m/ = *am*.

Collaborative involves working together cooperatively, especially in a joint intellectual effort.

Compound words are words made up of two or more words. For example, *doghouse*, *cupcake*, and *airport*.

Concepts of print are the basic understandings of how print works. They include knowing the difference between letters and other symbols, knowing that we read from left to right, and knowing that the words on the page—not the pictures—convey the meaning.

Continuous sounds can be pronounced for several seconds without any distortion. For example, the letter sound for M is /m/.

Counting is determining the number of syllables or phonemes in a spoken word.

Decoding is translating a word from print to speech, usually by using knowledge of letter-sound correspondences. It is the act of reading a new word by sounding it out.

Deletion is removing a syllable or phoneme in a spoken word. For example, *cupcake – cup = cake*, *nice – /n/ = ice*.

Differentiated instruction is matching instruction to each child's different needs and abilities.

Emergent literacy includes the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that are developmental precursors to conventional forms of reading and writing.

Evidence-based strategies are strategies shown by science to be effective ways to teach young children new skills. To be considered high quality, a research study should show that the intervention is the only reason for any changes in child behavior.

Explicit instruction is teacher-led, interactive instruction where the teacher makes the children aware of the skill or concept being studied, explains and models the skill or concept, provides guided practice with scaffolding, and allows children to engage in independent and cumulative review.

Implicit instruction is the opposite of explicit instruction. It is used to provide children practice opportunities for skills previously introduced in explicit instruction. Typically, there is less scaffolding than explicit instruction.

Incidental instruction is an instructional strategy where skills are reinforced without being the direct focus of the lesson or activity at hand.

Letter names are the name of letters. In this guide, letter names are shown as A, D, M, for example.

Letter sounds is matching a speech sound to its letter(s). Typically, letter sounds are written with slashes. For example, the letter M says /m/.

Matching is determining whether two sounds or words are the same.

Onset-rime is the smaller units within a word. The onset is the part of a word before the vowel. The rime is the vowel and the string of letters that follow. For example, in *sun*, /s/ is the onset, and /un/ is the rime; and in *string*, /str/ is the onset, and /ing/ is the rime.

Pacing is the rate at which a lesson moves. It is an important, and often overlooked, part of systematic instruction. A quick pace can help children pay close attention to the material being presented and provide children more practice time. More practice time increases the opportunity for greater achievement, keeps children actively engaged, and reduces behavior management problems by keeping children on task.

Phoneme is the smallest unit of sound in spoken words. For example, *cat* has three phonemes: /k/ /a/ /t/.

Phonemic awareness is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in spoken words.

Phonics is using printed letters and letter-sound relationships to read words.

Phonological awareness is the understanding that speech can be broken down into parts and the ability to manipulate those parts at the word, syllable, onset-rime, and phoneme level.

Print knowledge is knowing letter names, letters sounds, and concepts of print. Print knowledge does not include sound out printed words, whereas phonics does.

Scaffolding is the support that is given to children in order for them to arrive at the correct answer. This support may occur as immediate, specific feedback that a teacher offers during practice. For instance, the assistance may include the teacher giving encouragement or cues, breaking the problem down into smaller steps, or providing an example. Providing children temporary instructional support assists them in achieving what they could not otherwise have done alone.

Scope and sequence are a "road map," or overview, of instruction that shows the full range of content (scope) to be taught and the order (sequence) in which the content is taught.

Segmenting is separating or pulling apart the individual phonemes, or sounds, of a word into discrete units. For example, *sun* segmented is /s/ /ŭ/ /n/. Syllables and onset-rimes can also be segmented.

Stop sound is a quick sound that can be correctly pronounced for only an instant. For example, /b/ or /t/. It is very important not to say /buh/ or /tuh/, adding the schwa sound.

Substituting is making a new word by replacing one phoneme with another.

Syllable is a larger unit of sound in a word. It is a word part that contains a vowel, or in spoken language, a vowel sound. For example, *pumpkin* has two syllables: pump-kin.

Systematic instruction is carefully thought out, builds on prior learning, and moves from the simple to the complex. The planning of instruction takes place before activities and lessons are implemented.

Unvoiced sounds are sounds that do not make the vocal cords vibrate. For example, /s/ or /f/.

Voiced sounds are sounds that make the vocal cords vibrate. For example, /v/ or /j/.

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