

## Ways to Support Phonemic Awareness at Home.

### Syllable shopping

While at the grocery store, have your child tell you the syllables in different food names. Have them hold up a finger for each word part. *Eggplant* = egg-plant, two syllables. *Pineapple* = pine-ap-ple, three syllables. Show your child the sign for each and ask her to say the word.

### Rhyme time

“I am thinking of an animal that rhymes with big. What’s the animal?” Answer: pig. What else rhymes with big? (dig, fig, wig)

### Road trip rhymes

While you’re out driving in the car, spot something out the window and ask your child, “what rhymes with *tree* or *car* or *shop*?” Then switch roles and have your child spot something and ask you for a rhyme. This can turn into a game of nonsense rhymes (“What rhymes with *tree stump*?”) but that’s great for practicing sounds, too!

### Word families

Word families are sets of words that rhyme. Start to build your family by giving your child the first word, for example, *cat*. Then ask your child to name all the “kids” in the *cat* family, such as: *bat, fat, sat, rat, pat, mat, hat, flat*. This will help your child hear patterns in words.

### Silly tongue twisters

Sing songs, read rhyming books, and say silly tongue twisters. These help your child become sensitive to the sounds in words.

### Sound games

Practice blending sounds into words. Ask “Can you guess what this word is? m - o - p.” Hold each sound longer than normal.

### One sound at a time

Certain sounds, such as /s/ or /m/are great sounds to start with. The sound is distinct, and can be exaggerated easily. “Please pass the mmmmmmmilk.” “Look! There’s a ssssssssssnake!” It’s also

easy to describe how to make the sound with your mouth. “Close your mouth and lips to make the sound. Now put your hand on your throat. Do you feel the vibration?”

## **Tongue ticklers**

Alliteration or “tongue ticklers” — where the sound you’re focusing on is repeated over and over again — can be a fun way to provide practice with a speech sound. Try these:

For M: Miss Mouse makes marvelous meatballs!

For S: Silly Sally sings songs about snakes and snails.

For F: Freddy finds fireflies with a flashlight.

## **“I Spy” first sounds**

Practice beginning sounds with this simple game: ask your child questions like, “I spy something red that starts with /s/.”

## **Sound sleuth**

Choose a letter sound, then have your child find things around your house that start with the same sound. “Can you find something in our house that starts with the letter “p” pppppp sound? *Picture, pencil, pear*”

## **“I Spy” blending**

Here’s an easy phoneme blending game you can play while taking a walk. For blending, you can say, “I see a sign that says s-t-o-p” Then your child has to blend the sounds to guess your word — *stop*. (Remember to say only the sounds in the word — not the letters.) Keep the words short, moving from two to three to four sounds depending on your child’s skill level.

## **Jump, skip, hop!**

Create simple picture cards that you draw or cut out of magazines. Have your child identify what’s in the picture, and then break that word into its individual sounds. For example *dog* is d-o-g, three sounds (phonemes). Three sounds? You and your child do three jumping jacks, skips, or hops (followed by a high-five). You can also do this game outdoors without the cards, just call out simple words for your child.

## **Snail talk**

Tell your child you're going to communicate in "snail talk" and they need to figure out what you're saying. Take a simple word and stretch it out very slowly (e.g., /ffffllllaaaag/), then ask your child to tell you the word. Switch roles and have your child stretch out a word for you.

### **First sounds**

When you're reading together with your child, pick a word from the book and say it with emphasis on the first sound. Pick another word and compare them. "Zzz-zookeeper and rrr-rhinoceros. Can you hear what sound zzz-zookeeper starts with? Is it the same as rrr-rhinoceros?"

### **Sound counting**

Using LEGO bricks, beads, or pennies, say a word and have your child show you how many sounds the word makes. For example, *top* = t-o-p = three sounds, so your child would place three objects in a row. Then have them tap each object as they say the sound. Remember, your child is just showing you the sounds they hear. So the word *bike* would be = b-i-k (silent e) = only three sounds.