

PHONICS

Phonics is the relationship between letters and sounds. Students need to hear individual sounds in order to connect sounds to letters.

Phonics skills are the building blocks to reading and writing.

Therefore, we stress phonemic awareness. Phonemic Awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual sounds (called phonemes) in spoken words. Before children learn to read print, they need to become more aware of how the sounds in words work. They must understand that words are made up of speech sounds, or phonemes, that are the smallest parts of sound in a spoken word.

Students do hands-on activities to learn about letters, words, and how they work.

Some examples are:

- Rhyming words
- Blending sounds
- Recognizing clusters and patterns in words
- Making words
- Spelling familiar words
- Applying what they learn in reading & writing.

**TIPS for helping your child develop
phonological awareness:**

- Notice and talk about photographs, pictures, drawings, and familiar written words (names, Mom)
- Notice environmental print and look for its meaning. Environmental print is the print of everyday life (signs, symbols, numbers, colors). For example, your child may recognize the McDonalds sign because of the color and golden arches. Talk about the /m/ sound and look for it in the name.
- Point under words as you read them.
- Make it a game. Take turns with your child and say as many rhyming words as you can.
 - As you say the rhyming words, *add actions*:
 - Thumb (1st initial sound), wiggle the rest of your hand to show the rhyming part
- Practice blending sounds together.
 - What words am I trying to say? Ddddddd oooooo gggggg
 - *Add action*: pull out a slinky/rubberband or imitate it as you say the sounds
- Segment words together.
 - first sound isolation: What is the first sound in "dog" /d/
 - *Add action*: Hold up your thumb 1st
 - last sound isolation: What is the last sound you hear in "dog" /g/
 - complete word: What are all the sounds you hear in dog?
 - *Add action*: CVC (consonant, vowel, consonant) word: thumb 1st initial sound, pointer finger middle vowel sound, & Mr. Tall Man last sound)
- Clap syllables of words with your child. Make it fun by letting your child think of the words.
- Help your child notice their name and high-frequency words in different situations and print (typed on a newsletter, written in their stories, as you read books together, on billboards, etc.)
- Challenge each other to find as many lowercase and capital letters as you can. For example, circle all the letter A's that you can find in a newspaper or on a page of a magazine.