

# School Readiness Kit

## Preparing Children for Kindergarten

Interactive Activities for Adults and Preschool Children

## Unit 6 Phonological Awareness

**Phonological awareness** is the ability to hear and recognize spoken words. This refers to recognition of words and parts of words. Hearing rhymes and alliteration (*Example: "Keisha can catch"*) rhythms and segments of words (ball without the "b" = all). It includes understanding that the sounds of language have meaning. Phonological awareness is "**in the ear;**" it **does not include print.**

Research has demonstrated that infants can hear sounds from all of the world's languages. By age one, a child's brain has focused on the sounds in the languages that are heard the most and prunes off the ability to distinguish subtle sounds in other languages.



**Phonemic awareness** is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds in spoken words. It involves understanding that speech can be

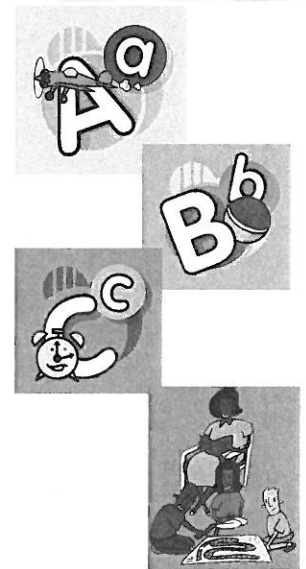
broken down into small units of sound.

**Phonics** requires looking at print. It involves both hearing and seeing. Children learn the sounds that letters make and experience what happens as letters (graphemes) are combined to make different sounds and words.

Phonological awareness is a critical step in learning to read. Many children will develop these concepts naturally, but most children will benefit by direct instruction. Adults can easily work with children through everyday conversation, word games, songs and fun activities.



Help your child hear the sounds more clearly by using the phonemic awareness "phone". Children love to hear themselves talk and hear parents whisper into the tube.



### Phonological Awareness Ages and Stages

Children gain an understanding of our language sounds and patterns in a predictable pattern as they mature. The more complex processing of phonological awareness will not occur until kindergarten to third grade. Children getting ready for kindergarten can work on the less complex activities. Young children will begin their phonological progression with **rhyming** (ends of words that sound alike). They will then move to **alliteration** (beginnings of words that sound alike), then move to **sentence segmenting** (recognizing individual words in the stream of language that makes a sentence) and move to **syllable blending and segmenting** (breaking words into the chunks of sound).

*Adapted from: Successful Early Literacy Strategies in the Pre-K Classroom. University of Arkansas, Fayetteville 2003*

#### Parent Tip:

To get an idea of the stage at which your child is functioning, take the online screening tool at [www.getreadytoread.org](http://www.getreadytoread.org). The website also provides supplementary activities and resources. The website will also give suggestions on the more complex activities appropriate for older children.

#### Items Needed for the Activities:

- ♦ Mother Goose "Rhymes for Keeps" Books
- ♦ Phonemic Awareness Phone (a plastic plumbing elbow...child holds one end to ear and other end to mouth to amplify the sound.)

## Listening

Listening and following directions is an indicator of school readiness. Practice requesting simple tasks and helping your child focus so that they can complete the task.

Reading to children will help them hear not only a rich vocabulary, but predictable sounds in rhyming books, etc. Taking a listening walk will allow children to perceive the differences in animal sounds, machines, wind effect, etc. Talk about what you are hearing. Is the sound long? short? high? low? Is there a pattern (bird calls)? Is there a vibration? Listen to varied types of music. Sing in the car and at bath time. Listen to children's music in the car and at home.

## Rhyming

Rhyming focuses on the end of words (cat, hat, bat). Use the rhymes and finger plays in the newsletters. Share nursery rhymes with the child. Choose stories with rhyming, predictable text. When the story becomes familiar to the child, leave out the rhyming word and let the child finish the sentence with a word that fits the rhyme.

## Alliteration

There are words that have common beginning sounds. Look for stories that have alliteration. Play with sorting objects or pictures - (*Example: When playing with play farm animals, put the animals with a given beginning sound "B," "Ch," "A"-apple, "A"-airplane.*) Cut pictures out of newspaper ads, catalogs, etc. Sort pictures into beginning sounds.

## Sentence Segmenting

Young children hear speech as a stream of language. Adults can help children identify speech as a combination of individual words. Clap or count each word in a spoken sentence. Move a word from the beginning to the end of a sentence:



The child is eating an apple.  
The apple was eaten by the child.  
~ OR ~

The flower was red.  
Red is the color of the flower.



## Syllable Blending & Segmenting

Children can also practice segmenting words by clapping, tapping or moving to syllables in a word. Start with names and familiar objects. After the child is experienced with syllables, ask, "What would baseball sound like without the "base"?" "What would baseball sound like without the "ball"?" When children have mastered compound words, work on the smaller units of phonemes or letter sounds. What would hat sound like without the "huh" sound? "At".



## Get on the Move for Phonemic Awareness !

Using multiple ways to help the development of phonemic awareness is critical. This includes body-kinesthetic, visual-spatial and musical rhythmic activities. Rhymes, chants, and songs combined with dancing, clapping, seeing, touching, etc. assist in the acquisition of phonemic awareness and are imprinted in three different areas of the brain systems that children use for recall.

Think about the sound of the /f/ phoneme— we **hear** the sound in songs, chants, rhymes, raps and poems. We can use a mirror and **see** what our mouth looks like when we pronounce the /f/ sound, we can use visual picture cues to link that phoneme, we can **show** the **f** symbol for the sound of /f/, and we can **feel** the sound with our teeth on our bottom lip.

Have your child place a Cheerio on his bottom lip and scrape it off with his teeth. This activity will create a motor memory experience and provide a concrete experience to an abstract learning experience.

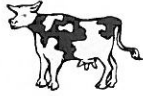


## The Farmyard

In the farmyard at the end of the day,  
All the animals politely say,  
"Thank you for my food today."

The cow says "Moo."

*Point to thumb.*



The pigeon, "Coo."

*Point to index finger.*



The sheep says, "Baaa."

*Point to middle finger.*



The lamb says, "Maaa."

*Point to fourth finger.*

The hen, "Cluck, cluck, cluck."

*Point to little finger.*



"Quack," says the duck.

*Point to the various fingers of  
the opposite hand for remaining  
animals.*



The dog, "Bow wow."



The cat, "Meow."



The horse, "Neigh."



The pig grunts, "Oink."

Then the barn is locked up tight.

And the farmer says, "Good Night."

*Hands together against cheek.*



Listen for  
rhyming words!

Talk about which  
words have  
similar sounds!

## Little Turtle

There was a little turtle.

*Make small circle with thumb and index finger.*

He lived in a box.

*Cup hands to form box.*

He swam in a puddle.

*Swimming motions.*

He climbed on the rocks.

*Climbing motion with hands.*

He snapped at a mosquito.

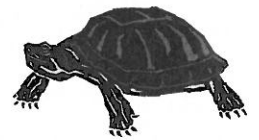
*Snap with thumb and forefinger.*

He snapped at a flea.

*Repeat.*

He snapped at a minnow.

*Repeat.*



He snapped at me.

*Turn hand toward self and snap.*

He caught the mosquito.

*Catching motion with hands.*

He caught the flea.

*Repeat.*

He caught the minnow.

*Repeat.*

But he can't catch me.

*Point to self and shake head, "No!"*

## " Listen, Listen, What's That Sound?"

Children will become more perceptive if we encourage them to listen to the variety of sounds in the environment. Listen to the call of the robin and compare it to the call of the blue jay. How are the sounds alike and different? What differences do you observe when a train is traveling toward you vs. away from you? Play with musical instruments. How does the drum sound different when you strike it softly or forcefully? Put water in different size bottles or glasses. What happens when the amount of water in the bottle changes? Phonological awareness encompasses all sounds, including sounds in language.

## Dramatic Play Area Book Store

- Cash register (pretend)
- Bags to hold purchases
- Stick-on price tags
- Pens, pencils, markers, order pad
- Posters, book jackets from children's books
- Shelf or table for arranging books by author or genre (stories, real things, poetry, music, etc.)
- Books
- Tape recorder, earphones, and books on tape



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Celebrating 50 Years  
of Service



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*The mission of the Great Start Collaborative is to assure a coordinated system of community resources and support to help all Genesee County families provide a great start for their children from pre-birth to age five.*



The School Readiness Kits are designed for children who will enter kindergarten the following school year. The activities in the kit will provide a foundation for curriculum and assessments that children will continue to work on in kindergarten. The kits provide parent/teacher information on literacy development and activities that parent/preschool teachers and child may do together.

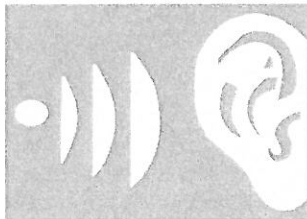
## Phonemic Awareness Expectations During Kindergarten

The State of Michigan has established Grade Level Content Expectations for Kindergarten in English and Language Arts. The expectations are rigorous and align the curriculum with the national standards. Children are very receptive to learning between birth and five years old. It is the best time to expose children to a variety of learning experiences that will set the stage for the academic experience in school.

In kindergarten, children will demonstrate their phonemic awareness by recognizing rhymes, alliterations, sound blending and deletion. They will demonstrate that words are composed of sounds

blended together and that words carry meaning. They will understand that the sounds in words are expressed by the letters of the alphabet.

Children will use letter-sound cues to recognize a few one-syllable words when presented in isolation of picture or other cues. They will recognize letters and sounds, particularly the beginning and final consonants in words.



Michigan schools use the Michigan Literacy Progress Profile (MLPP) for individualized assessment of students in grades K-3. The MLPP is a useful tool for teachers as they determine the literacy strengths and weaknesses of their students. The screening tool will be used with each child repeatedly between kindergarten and third grade to determine the progress that has been made in reading and writing. Targeted interventions are planned based on the areas identified as needing improvement so that each child will be a proficient reader and writer by third grade.

The literacy strategies presented in the School Readiness Kits are designed to provide a solid foundation for the MLPP and other literacy assessments.