

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonological Awareness lessons. **Phonological awareness** allows children to recognize and work with the sounds of language. These activities are sometimes called ear exercises because the focus is on hearing the parts or sounds in words. Your child will not be seeing these words in print during the phonemic awareness lessons.

Why is Phonological Awareness Important?

Phonological awareness is a strong predictor of reading success. It is especially important at the earliest stages of reading development and is a foundation for reading.

How Can You Support Phonological Awareness at Home?

Throughout the school year, you will receive newsletters sharing ideas of games or “ear exercises” you can play with your child. Phonological awareness is simple to support at home - all you need is language! Help your child understand that the words they hear in speech are made up of parts and sounds.

You can begin building phonological awareness in your child by:

- ★ Reciting nursery rhymes
- ★ Reading books with rhyming words
- ★ Playing with alliteration (words that begin with the same sound)
 - Example: Seven silly sisters said surprise!
- ★ Reciting tongue twisters with a focus on individual sounds in words.
 - Example: How much wood would a woodchuck chuck, if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

We look forward to supporting you and your child in building foundational literacy skills this school year! In addition to the newsletters you will receive, you can find more support and information on our website and social media pages.

Visit our website: <https://www.heggerty.org>

View lesson demonstrations: <http://bit.ly/3hqB9Tz>

WEEKS 1-2: Compound Words



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonological Awareness lessons. Over the next 2 weeks, your child will be working with compound words. A **compound word** is a word that is made up of two small words. Some of the phonemic awareness skills your child will be engaged in include: blending, segmenting, deleting and initial phoneme isolation. **Blending** is a skill that our learners can apply when they want to read words. Your child will blend two words together to make a compound word. **Segmenting** is a skill that helps children hear the parts in a word so they can begin to write and spell. Your child will **segment** a compound word into its two smaller words. **Deleting** is a skill that helps students to recognize patterns in words which develops reading fluency. Your child will delete a word within a compound word to identify what is left. Lastly, the skill of **initial phoneme isolation** requires your child to listen to a word and identify the first sound they hear in that word. The following activities are ways for you to continue to support the development of these skills with your child at home.

Phonological awareness activities take place orally and are about having fun with language play. Therefore, there is no need for any writing or reading during this practice. Just have fun with the sounds in words!

Consider using the following activities at home with your child:

- ★ Ask your child to listen for the sound they hear at the beginning of a word you say aloud.
 - What is the first sound we hear in the word napkin? Answer: /n/ (say sound, not letter name)
 - What is the first sound we hear in the names of friends, objects, or family members?
- ★ Can you **blend** (put together) two small words to make one big (compound) word?
 - Say, foot - print Child: foot - print → footprint
 - Say, day - dream Child: day - dream → daydream
 - Say, life - guard Child: life - guard → lifeguard
- ★ Can you **segment** (separate) this compound word into two smaller words?
 - Say, afternoon Child: afternoon → after - noon
 - Say, downstairs Child: downstairs → down - stairs
 - Say, homework Child: homework → home - work
- ★ Can you tell me what is left if I **delete** (take away) one small word from a compound word?
 - Say, "cupcake" Child: cupcake → "Without cake what's left is?" Child: cup
 - Say, "baseball" Child: baseball → "Without base what's left is?" Child: ball
 - Say, "snowman" Child: snowman → "Without man what's left is?" Child: snow
- ★ Books to enjoy together to have more fun with compound words or alliteration!
 - Thumbtacks, Earwax, Lipstick, Dipstick: What Is a Compound Word? by Brian Cleary & Brian Gable
 - Many Marvelous Monsters by Ed Heck

Extension: Try removing words from the end or the beginning of the word.

 **Make it Multi-sensory!** Use legos, blocks, magnets or tiles to represent the syllables! For example, give your child two blocks. Hold one block in each hand to represent the separate syllables. Push blocks away from each other to segment syllables or push them together to blend syllables into a whole word. View our lesson demonstrations to see how using our hand motions can also support these skills. [Heggerty Phonemic Awareness - YouTube](#)

WEEKS 3 - 4: SYLLABLES



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonological Awareness lessons. Over the next 2 weeks, your child will be working with syllables. A **syllable** is a part of a word that contains a vowel sound. For example, the word *understand* has 3 syllables: un-der-stand. Each syllable (part) has one vowel sound. Your child will learn to blend (put together), segment (pull apart), and substitute (change) syllables within a word. One additional skill your child will be working with is **isolating final phonemes**, where they will identify the final sound they hear in a word. Research tells us, “phoneme awareness performance is a strong predictor of long-term reading and spelling success, and it can predict literacy performance more accurately than variables such as intelligence, vocabulary knowledge, and socioeconomic status” (Gillon, 2018)

Phonological awareness activities take place orally and are about having fun with language play. Therefore, there is no need for any writing or reading during this practice. Just have fun with the sounds in words!

Consider using the following activities at home with your child:

- ★ **Punch it Up!** Give your child a word from the list below and have them punch their fist up in the air when they say the last sound.

float globe dream neCK hiVe froZe

- ★ Can you blend (put together) these syllables to make a word?"

in - sect → insect stu - dent → student gym - nas - tics → gymnastics

- ★ **Be a Ninja!** Say a word and have your child act like a ninja by chopping words into their syllables. Say, “Can you segment (chop) this word into its individual syllables?"

afternoon → af - ter - noon member → mem - ber fantastic → fan - tas - tic

- ★ **Switch-A-Roo!** Can you tell me the new word I can make if I substitute (change) one syllable in a word to a new one?

Say turkey → change /tur/ to /mun/ and the word is? → monkey
 Say longer → change /long/ to /quick/ and the word is? → quicker
 Say monster → change /mon/ to /ham/ and the word is? → hamster

- ★ Books to enjoy together: Look for these books at the library that support syllable and sound awareness!
 - *The Word Collector* by Peter H. Reynolds
 - *Tanka Tanka Skunk!* by Steve Webb
 - *Don't Be Silly, Mrs. Millie* by Judy Cox



Make it Multi-sensory! Use legos, blocks, magnets or tiles to represent the syllables! For example, use blocks to represent syllables. Push 2 blocks away from each other to segment syllables or push them together to blend syllables into a whole word. View our lesson demonstrations to see how using our hand motions can support your child. [Heggerty Phonemic Awareness - YouTube](#)

WEEKS 5 - 7: ONSET-RIME



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. Your child has worked with larger parts of words (compound words and syllables). Over the next 3 weeks, our lesson focus will shift to hearing 2 different parts of a word, the first sound (**onset**) and the rest of the word (**rime**). Your child will be adding, deleting or changing the onset (first sound) to make new words. "Indeed, a child's phonological awareness knowledge has been described as the best single predictor of early reading performance." (Liberman & Liberman 1989).

Consider using the following activities at home with your child:

- ★ **Rhyme Time!** Say, "Which word rhymes with ___?" and then give two choices (a word that rhymes, and a word that does not rhyme).

Examples:

"Which word rhymes with run: ran or bun?"

"Which word rhymes with hall: tall or pill?"

*Tell your child, "words that rhyme have the same **middle** and **end** sounds!"*

- ★ Give your child a word and have them repeat it back to you. Then, add a sound to the beginning and see if they can tell you the new word.

Say *ax* → add /w/ to the beginning and the word is? → *wax*

Say *ash* → add /d/ to the beginning and the word is? → *dash*

Say *end* → add /l/ to the beginning and the word is? → *lend*

Note: /*/, indicates you should say the letter **sound**.

- ★ Give your child a word and have them repeat it back to you. Then, take away the first sound and see if they can tell you the word or word part that remains.

Say *red* → without /r/ what's left is? → *ed*

Say *pond* → without /p/ what's left is? → *ond*

Say *sick* → without /s/ what's left is? → *ick*

- ★ **Switch-A-Roo!** Give your child a word and have them repeat it back. Then, change the first sound to a new sound and see if they can tell you the new word.

Say *me* → change /m/ to /h/ and the word is? → *he*

Say *low* → change /l/ to /r/ and the word is? → *row*

Say *dock* → change /d/ to /s/ and the word is? → *sock*

- ★ Books to enjoy together: Look for these books at the library that support rhyme awareness!
 - *Rhyming Dust Bunnies* by Jan Thomas
 - *I Ain't Gonna Paint No More* by Karen Beaumont



Make it Multi-sensory! Use legos, blocks, or tiles to represent the onset and the rime! For example, sit next to your child at a table, say "/at/" while placing a lego in front of you. Say, "add /c/ to the beginning" while placing another lego in front. Have your child tell you the new word /cat/. Also, check out our lesson videos to see hand motions that can support these skills: [Heggerty Phonemic Awareness - YouTube](#)

WEEKS 8 - 10: PHONEMES



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. Your child has spent several weeks working with larger parts of words (compound words, syllables, and onset-rime). Our lessons will now shift to listening for individual sounds, or **phonemes** in words. Phonemic awareness teaches students to hear individual sounds in words, and this supports the development of strong reading and writing skills. “Phonemic awareness has been shown to be a very powerful predictor of later reading achievement. In fact, it [phonemic awareness] is a better predictor than more global measures such as IQ or general language proficiency” (Griffith and Olson, 1992).

Phonemic awareness activities take place orally and are about having fun with language play. Therefore, there is no need for any writing or reading during this practice.

Consider using the following activities at home with your child:

- ★ **Wacky Words!** Give your child a nonsense “wacky” word and have them generate another nonsense word that rhymes with it. Say, “Tell me a wacky word that rhymes with zork?” Your child would then generate a nonsense word like →lork, bork, etc.

Try rhyming with these words too:
gax - vob - zunk - tark - foop - sout

*Give your child praise for real words too!
Generating nonsense words can be tricky.*

- ★ Can you blend (put together) three sounds to make a word? Say the sounds n - ě - t, your child will repeat those sounds back and then tell you the whole word, Child: n - ě - t →net.

h - ǒ - p → hop

s - ä - t → sat

b - ī - k → bike

- ★ Can you segment (separate) these words into their individual sounds? Say the word map, your child will repeat the word and then segment the word into individual sounds, Child: map → m - ä - p .

rope → r - ō - p
name → n - ā - m
feed → f - ē - d

*TIP: If your child is having difficulty, try this: “ Can you tell me the **3 sounds** you hear in this word?”*

- ★ Books to enjoy together: Look for these books at the library to have more fun with “Wacky Words”!
 - *Runny Babbit* by Shel Silverstein
 - *Cock-A-Doodle-Moo* by Bernard Most

 **Make it Multi-sensory!** For blending, have your child use a pop-it and push down one bubble for each sound they hear in the word. Then, have your child blend the sounds together to “say it fast” like a word. For segmenting, students can do the opposite. Have your child repeat the whole word, then push down one bubble for each sound they hear. For more options, view our lesson videos to see how using hand motions can support your child: [Heggerty Phonemic Awareness - YouTube](#)

WEEKS 11-14: BLENDS AND DIGRAPHS



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. For the next four weeks, your child will continue practicing phonemic awareness by identifying and manipulating individual sounds in words with **digraphs** (two letters that make one sound) i.e. th, sh, ch, ck and **blends** (two consonants that go together but keep their individual sounds) i.e. st, pr, cl, mp. Your child will be working with blends and digraphs at the beginning and end of words. We know this practice is crucial, as “phonemic awareness is the most potent predictor of success in learning how to read” (Stanovich, 1994).

Phonemic awareness activities take place orally and are about having fun with language play. Therefore, there is no need for any writing or reading during this practice.

Consider using the following activities at home with your child:

- ★ **Punch it Up!** Give your child a word from the list below and have them punch both fists up in the air when they say the middle (vowel) sound.

brUsh shOck tEEth chOse glOss flAke

- ★ Can you blend (put together) these sounds to make a word? Say the sounds, sh - ē - t, your child will repeat those sounds back and then tell you the whole word, Child: sh - ē - t → sheet.

ch - ě - s → chess
th - ũ - m - p → thump
sh - ī - n → shine

Extension: See if your child can tell you if the word contained a digraph, blend, or both!

- ★ Can you segment (separate) these words into their individual sounds? Say the word chop, your child will repeat the word and then segment the word into individual sounds, Child: chop → ch - ǒ - p.

float → f - l - ō - t shake → sh - ā - k chest → ch - ě - s - t

- ★ Books to enjoy together: Look for these books at the library that support phonological awareness!
 - *Llama Llama Red Pajama* by Anna Dewdney
 - *Billy Milly Short and Silly* by Eve B. Feldmen
 - *Wemberley Worried* by Kevin Hankes



Make it Multi-sensory! Use legos, blocks or pop-its to represent the sounds when blending and segmenting! For example, using legos, have your child touch or slide down one lego piece to represent each sound they hear. For blending, have your child slide their finger quickly under the legos (sounds) to read the word. Or using a popit, have your child push in one bubble for each sound in the word. View our lesson demonstrations to see how our fun hand motions can support your child as well. [Heggerty Phonemic Awareness - YouTube](https://www.heggerty.org)

WEEKS 15-18: BLENDS



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. For the next four weeks, your child will start to practice breaking apart blends by adding and deleting the initial sound in a word. Your child has learned that a **blend** is: *two consonants that go together but keep their individual sounds*. This practice will continue your child on the path towards phonemic proficiency. Research tells us that, "The lack of phonemic awareness is the **most** powerful determinant of the failure to read." (Marilyn Adams, 1990).

Phonemic awareness activities take place orally and are about having fun with language play. Therefore, there is no need for any writing or reading during this practice.

Consider using the following activities at home with your child:

- ★ Give your child a word and have them repeat it back to you. Then, add a sound to the beginning and see if they can tell you the new word.

Say race → add /b/ to the beginning and the word is? → brace
Say car → add /s/ to the beginning and the word is? → scar
Say lash → add /f/ to the beginning and the word is? → flash

Note: /*/, indicates you should say the letter **sound**.

- ★ Give your child a word and have them repeat it back to you. Then, take away the first sound and see if they can tell you the new word.

Say blink → without /b/ what's left is? → link
Say crane → without /c/ what's left is? → rain
Say space → without /s/ what's left is? → pace

Extension: See if your child can tell you the blend used in the word.

- ★ Books to enjoy together: Look for these books at the library that support phonological awareness!
 - *Room on the Broom* by Julia Donaldson
 - *Some Smug Slug* by Pamela Duncan
 - *Double Trouble in Walla Walla* by Andrew Clements



Make it Multi-sensory! Legos or blocks can work great to support this skill! For example, use blocks to build the sounds of a word. Add or remove a block (sound) at the beginning to give your child visual support for what is happening with the sounds in that word. View our lesson demonstrations to see how our fun hand motions can support your child as well. [Heggerty Phonemic Awareness - YouTube](#)

WEEKS 19 - 24: FINAL SOUND MANIPULATION



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. According to Dr. David Kilpatrick, “To be a fluent reader, one must display phonemic proficiency, which is best demonstrated via instant responses to advanced phoneme activities of phoneme deletion and/or substitution” (*Equipped for Reading Success*, 2016). For the next four weeks, your child will continue strengthening their phonemic awareness by identifying and manipulating individual sounds in words. Your child will begin to add, delete and substitute (change) the final sound in words.

Phonemic awareness activities take place orally and are about having fun with language play. Therefore, there is no need for any writing or reading during this practice. Just have fun with the sounds in words!

Consider using the following activities at home with your child:

- ★ **Middle Sound Rollercoaster!** Have your child make a roller coaster motion with their hands as they say the sounds in a word. Then have them repeat the middle sound they heard at the top of the rollercoaster. Say to your child: Say seat, child repeats whole word and then uses their hand to isolate first, middle, and last sound. Use the visual below and remind your child to start their roller coaster on the left, go up the hill, and finish on the right to mimic how we read print.



Have your child try to identify these other middle vowel teams:
tEEth sprAIn stEAm mOOd

- ★ Give your child a word and have them repeat it back to you. Then, add a sound to the end and see if they can tell you the new word.

Say car → add /d/ to the end and the word is? → card
 Say sir → add ch/ to the end and the word is? → search
 Say stor → add /m/ to the end and the word is? → storm

Note: /*/, indicates you should say the letter **sound**.

- ★ Give your child a word and have them repeat it back to you. Then, take away the last sound and see if they can tell you the new word.

Say torch → without /ch/ what's left is? → tore
 Say paste → without /t/ what's left is? → pace
 Say storm → without /m/ what's left is? → store

- ★ **Switch-A-Roo!** Give your child a word and have them repeat it back. Then, change the last sound to a new sound and see if they can tell you the new word.

Say bark → change /k/ to /n/ and the word is? → barn
 Say curve → change /v/ to /l/ and the word is? → curl
 Say write → change /t/ to /z/ and the word is? → rise

- ★ Books to enjoy together: Look for these books at the library that support phonological awareness!

- *Giraffe and a Half* by Shel Silverstein
- *One Duck Stuck* by Phyllis Root



Make it Multi-sensory! View our lesson demonstrations to see how our hand motions can support these phonemic awareness tasks! [Heggerty Phonemic Awareness - YouTube](#)

WEEKS 25-27: MEDIAL PHONEMES AND ADVANCED VOWELS



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. For the next three weeks, your child will continue practicing phonemic awareness by identifying and manipulating individual sounds in words. Your child will be working with adding or deleting sounds within words and work with more advanced vowel patterns. According to Louisa Moats, "Students who cannot read words well usually or typically demonstrate weaknesses in phoneme awareness."

Phonemic awareness activities take place orally and are about having fun with language play! Therefore, there is no need for any writing or reading during this practice. Just have fun with the sounds in words!

Consider using the following activities at home with your child:

- ★ Can you blend (put together) these sounds to make a word? Say these sounds, s - m - oo - th, your child will repeat those sounds back and then tell you the whole word, Child: s - m - oo - th → smooth.

th - r - ō - t → throat

c - l - ē - t → cleat

sh - ä - d - ō → shadow

- ★ Can you segment (separate) these words into their individual sounds? Say the word great, your child will repeat the word and then segment the word into individual sounds, Child: great → g - r - ā - t

grease → g - r - ē - s

croak → c - r - ō - k

feed → f - ē - d

- ★ Give your child a word and have them repeat it back to you. Then, add a sound to the middle of a word and see if they can tell you the new word.

Say sock → add /t/ after /s/ and the word is? → stock

Say bake → add /r/ after /b/ and the word is? → brake

Say bank → add /l/ after /b/ and the word is? → blank

- ★ Give your child a word and have them repeat it back to you. Then, take away a sound and see if they can tell you the new word.

Say spoon → without /p/ what's left is? → soon

Say sway → without /w/ what's left is? → say

Say blend → without /l/ what's left is? → bend

- ★ Books to enjoy together: Look for these books at the library that support syllable awareness!

- *Alligators All Around* by Maurice Sendack
- *All About Arthur, (an absolutely absurd ape)?* by Eric Carle



Make it Multi-sensory! Legos or blocks can work great to support this skill! For example, use 1 block to represent each sound of a word. Add or remove a block (sound) where instructed to give your child visual support for what is happening with the sounds in that word. View our lesson demonstrations to see how our hand motions can also support your child with blending and segmenting. [Heggerty Phonemic Awareness - YouTube](#)

WEEKS 28-35: MULTI-SYLLABIC WORDS



Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. For the next seven weeks, your child will continue practicing phonemic awareness by identifying and manipulating individual sounds in words. Additionally, they will also now be working with larger words with three or more syllables. Research tells us, “a child’s vocabulary grows by about 3000 words each year” (Shaywitz, 2003). Working with more complex language patterns not only fosters phonological awareness but also helps to expose and familiarize students to new language which contributes to building ones vocabulary.

Phonemic awareness activities take place orally and are about having fun with language play. Therefore, there is no need for any writing or reading during this practice. Just have fun with the sounds in words!

Consider using the following activities at home with your child:

- ★ Can you blend (put together) these syllables to make a word? Say these syllables: *op - er - ate*. Your child will repeat those sounds back and then tell you the whole word, Child: *op - er - ate* → operate.

vid - ē - o → video ē - nor - mous → enormous tram - po - line → trampoline

- ★ Can you segment (separate) these words into their individual sounds? Say the word *great*. Your child will repeat the word and then segment the word into individual sounds, Child: *great* → g - r - ā - t

capital → cap - ĭ - tal honestly → hon - est - ly excellent → ex - cel - ent

- ★ Give your child a word and have them repeat it back to you. Then, add a sound to the end of a word and see if they can tell you the new word.

Say *may* → add /d/ at the end and the word is? → *made*
 Say *way* → add /k/ at the end and the word is? → *wake*
 Say *tray* → add /n/ at the end and the word is? → *train*

- ★ Give your child a word and have them repeat it back to you. Then, take away the first sound and see if they can tell you what’s left.

Say *rooster* → without /r/ what’s left is? → *ooster*
 Say *summer* → without /s/ what’s left is? → *ummer*
 Say *butterfly* → without /b/ what’s left is? → *utterfly*

- ★ Books to enjoy together: Look for these books at the library with lots of multi-syllabic word practice!
 - *A Particular Cow* by Mem Fox
 - *The North Star* by Peter H. Reynolds



Make it Multi-sensory! View our lesson demonstrations to see how our hand motions can support these blending, segmenting, and manipulation tasks! [Heggerty Phonemic Awareness - YouTube](https://www.heggerty.org)