

## Phonological Awareness

**What is it?** A *listening* skill (not about reading or writing yet)

Being aware of the sounds and sound patterns in words such as rhyming patterns (eg cat/mat), syllables or 'beats' in words (eg Fa-ti-mah), the first sound in a word (eg Sam starts with sssss)

*Phonological awareness is one of the best early skills to develop in preschool children as they get ready for reading and writing.*

**Which skills should pre-schoolers have?**

### SYLLABLE BLENDING & SEGMENTATION

Involves blending the syllables of words together eg. tooth-brush = toothbrush, e-le-phant = elephant and segmenting spoken words into syllables or 'beats'

### RHYMING

Requires an awareness that rhyming words end with the same group of sounds eg. **big pig, red shed**

### BEGINNING – SOUND AWARENESS / ALLITERATION

Involves the 'beginning-sound' analysis skill eg. being aware of the first sound in a word

### BLENDING SOUNDS IN SHORT, FAMILIAR WORDS

These skills start with listening to two sound words 'pulled apart' such as o..ff (off), ea..t (eat), then three -sound words (eg. l..e..g). The activity then involves 'pushing the sounds back together' to make a word (*blending*) - *this is done as a listening and talking activity.*

### Ideas

Help children to be aware of syllables or 'beats' in words – **blending and segmenting**

Have fun with rhyme in songs, books and games. Encourage children to identify simple words that rhyme

Develop awareness of beginning sounds in words.

Talk to children about the sounds that our mouths make and the name of letters that link to each sound

Support children to blend together the sounds in short words (eg. u..p, m..a..t).



## Activities to try at home



- Hide objects in a sandpit or put some everyday things into a bag. Adults can pull apart the syllables when saying the word and play; "What's my word/object?" eg. tooth...brush (guess what I have in my bag?)
- Choose words from a favourite book. Try clapping/tapping out the 'beats' in the words. Eg ca-ter-pi-llar
- Jump your name – show the 'beats' in your child's name by doing a jump, step, clap or hop for each beat (Eg 'Jack-son', 'Fa-ti-mah')
- Choose books with a clear and simple rhyming pattern eg. 'Shark in the Park' and have fun sharing the book together. Make the rhyming words stand out! Eg **cat** on a **mat**; **pig** in a **wig**
- Make up fun rhyming words to go with your child's name eg. ; Lilly-pilly' "
- Point out the first sound in your child's name (eg. Mmm...Michael; Aaa...Ali). Find the first sound in other family names (Eg d.d dad; sss – Sam).
- Help children to recognize the first letter in their name that links to the sound
- Sort everyday objects into boxes that start with the same sound - begin with contrasting two different sounds eg. "Sss...sock, p.p...pig – do they start with the same sound?" Have a treasure hunt for objects that start with a particular sound.
- Play Simon Says: 'stretch' out the names of body parts or actions. Have the children listen carefully and identify which part to touch next or the action eg. touch your arrrrmm; put your hands uuuupppp.
- During daily routines try stretching out the sounds in your child's name or using the names of favourite toys eg. Go and wash your hands if I say your name – J.a.ck; Let's take this toy with us – 'Sssaaaamm'
- Model 'robot talk' during play and everyday routines – Eg 'I need a *hat* hhhhaat'.

