A Phonological Awareness Hierarchy: An Update

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(with contributions from K. Corcoran and L. Johns-Middleton in 2005)
Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is concerned with the awareness of any size unit of sound (word, syllable, onset, rime, phoneme) of spoken language.

(Richgels, 2001)
Phonologic Awareness (Ciera, 2001)

- Focus is much broader than phonemic awareness
- Includes identifying and manipulating larger parts of spoken language such as words, syllables, as well as phonemes
- Includes awareness of other aspects of sound, such as rhyming and intonation
- Includes playing with sound separate from meaning (Armbruster, Lehr & Osborn, 2001)
Definition

- Phonological Awareness – refers to explicit knowledge of the underlying sound structure of language.
- “The ability to recognize that a spoken word consists of smaller components such as syllables and phonemes and that these units can be manipulated.” (Lombardino, Bedford, Fortier, Carter, & Brandi, 1997)
Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear, identify, and manipulate individual phonemes in spoken words.

(The Partnership for Reading, 2001)
Phonological awareness skills and early reading abilities are highly correlated (van Kleeck, Gilliam, & McFadden, 1998).

Reading requires that the reader associate the written language system to the phonemes of spoken language. Therefore, the reader must be aware that the spoken language system can be divided into smaller units or phonemes...the reader must be phonemically aware (Yopp, 1992).
The SLP & Literacy

Literacy is an essential prerequisite for social well-being, academic achievement and lifetime opportunities. It is the role and responsibility of the SLP to help all individuals become competent, literate, language users.

(ASHA, 2001)
The SLP’s Role

- Prevent reading problems by fostering language acquisition & emergent literacy

- Identify children at risk for literacy problems

- Provide intervention to children as well as assistance to classroom teachers & parents

(ASHA, 2001)
Why Use Literature?

- develops listening skills
- builds vocabulary
- promotes a print-rich environment
- fosters an interest in books & reading
- builds book knowledge
- provides opportunities for social interaction with oral & written language*
- provides opportunities for language learning in a contextualized, meaningful context*

*(Waldowski, 2003)*
Levels of Phonemic Awareness

I. Rhythm and Rhyme-ability to recognize, complete, and produce word patterns and detect spoken syllables

II. Parts of a Word-ability to blend, segment, and delete syllables

III. Sequencing of Sounds-ability to recognize initial and final sounds

IV. Separation of Sounds-ability to segment sounds in words & blend and delete sounds

V. Manipulation of Sounds-ability to add and/or substitute sounds

(Fitzpatrick, 1997; Yopp & Yopp, 2000)
Instruction progresses in the following order at these sound unit levels:

A. Syllables
B. Rhyming with onset-rime
C. Sound-symbol associations & Alliteration
D. Phonemes

Within these sound unit levels, instruction progresses in the following order in terms of tasks or operations:

A. Blending
B. Segmenting
C. Counting
D. Deleting
Hierarchy of Operations:

*Move from whole to part*
(Word~Syllable~Phoneme)

- Matching (easiest)
  - Isolating
  - Substituting
- Blending
  - Segmenting
  - Deleting (difficult)

*Yopp & Yopp, 2000*
What Research Tells Us About Fostering Phonological Awareness

- Explicit, systematic instruction important
- Focus on small set of skills (blend/segment)
- Occurs within authentic reading & writing contexts & class curric.
- Total instruc: 5-18 hrs.
- Strongest effects occur during preschool/kdg.
- P.A. skills causally related to word decoding & spelling
- Close collaboration between SLP & teacher
- Instruction works best in small groups
- Identify students at risk early & tailor instruction
Systematic Refers to…

- Instruction that is organized in a logical order from easier to more difficult skills in these sound unit levels:
  1. Syllable Awareness
  2. Rhyming with Onset-Rime
  3. Sound-Symbol Identification/Alliteration
  4. Phoneme Awareness
Easiest to More Difficult Tasks
Within Each Skill…

- Blending
- Segmenting
- Counting
- Deleting
In Explicit Instruction...

- The sequence moves from a focus on meaning (which the child initially does) to a focus on form, and then integrate the two.

- (Justice & Kaderavek, 2004)
Sharing Books and Stories to Promote Language and Literacy

A Volume in the Emergent and Early Literacy Series

Anne van Kleeck, Editor

Plural Publishing, 2006
Video examples
Examples of Deletion at the Phoneme and Word Level

- Deleting initial sounds in words: couch without the /k/ = ouch
- Deleting final sounds in words: make without the /k/ = may
- Deleting sounds within words: crane without the /r/ = cane
- Deleting parts of words: “say cupcake without the cup”—word level
Level 1: Rhythm and Rhyme

Operation: Sound matching
Description: alliteration and rhyme
Objective: Child will hear and identify word patterns

Operation: Segmentation
Description: sentences into words, words to phonemes
Objectives: Child will count words in a sentence, Child will count syllables in a sentence
Time to Rhyme

**Level I: Rhythm & Rhyme**

**Operation:** Sound Matching

**Directions:** Read sentences to children. Have the children say the missing rhyming word. May provide picture choices.

I like to have fun & play in the _____(sun).

Would you rather eat a bone or an ice cream _____(cone)?

Around the hive, what do you see? A black & yellow bumble _____(bee).
The Name Game

**Level I: Rhythm & Rhyme**

**Operation:** Segmentation (words to syllables)

**Directions:** Sing the name chant, inserting each child’s name. Segment each child’s name into syllables.

*Clap, Clap, Clap your name. (Sar-ah, Sar-ah)*
*Tap, Tap, Tap your name.*
*Snap, Snap, Snap your name.*
*Stomp, Stomp, Stomp your name.*
Suitcase of Sounds

Level I: Rhythm & Rhyme

Operation: Sound Matching

Directions: Write each child’s name on suitcase tag pattern. Have the child “pack” their suitcase with three items that start with the first sound in their name. Write the names of the items on a suitcase pattern.

- Example: Matthew will pack money, mittens, & a movie.
Level 2: Parts of a Word

Operation: blending (by the child)

Description: onsets and rimes phonemes

Objectives: Child will blend onsets and rimes to form words.
Child will blend individual phonemes to form words.
The Smushy Song

**Level II**: Parts of a Word

**Operation**: Blending (onsets & rimes)

**Directions**: Sing the following chant, inserting words of choice.

*First you have a ____ (/k/),
Then comes the ____ (/at/),
Smush’em together
And then you have ____ (/kat/).*
Butterfly Blending

**Level II: Parts of a Word**

**Operation**: Blending (phonemes)

**Directions**: Attach pictures of words on a butterfly pattern. Display on a board. Say each individual phoneme of a word. Have the child blend the phonemes to say the word. Have the child place the matching butterfly in a jar.
Level 3: Sequencing of Sounds

Operation: Isolation (by the child)

Description: syllables phonemes

Objectives: Child will i.d. the initial/final syllable of a word.

Child will i.d. the I/M/F phoneme of a word.
What Sound Do You Hear?

Level III: Sequencing of Sounds
Operation: Isolation

Directions: Sing the following song to have the children identify initial, medial, or final phonemes of words.

Song: Sing to “Farmer in the Dell”

What sound is first, /d/ is first,
What sound is first, /d/ is first,
When you hear _____ (dog), When I hear dog,
What sound is first? /d/ is first.
Level 4: Separation of Sounds

Operation: Segmentation (by the child)

Description: words to phonemes

Objectives: Child will count individual phonemes in a word.
Child will i.d. individual phonemes in a word.
Eat Your Words

Level IV: Separation of Sounds
Operation: Segmentation (words to phonemes)

Directions: Give each child approximately 20 goldfish snacks. Say words containing 2-4+ phonemes (use words from current classroom theme or literature). Have the children make a line of fish, one for each phoneme in the word.

(Fitzpatrick, 1997)
Turtle Walk

**Level IV**: Separation of Sounds

**Operation**: Segmentation (words to phonemes)

**Directions**: Say a word from classroom theme or literature. Tell the children to walk and talk like turtles (slowly) as they say the word. Have children take one slow step for each phoneme in the word.

**Example**: The word is “Star”. S-t-a-r.
Level 5: Manipulation of Sounds

Operations: Substitution
Deletion

Description: syllables and phonemes

Objectives: Child will substitute I/M/F phoneme of a word.
Child will omit I/F syllable of a word.
Child will omit I/M/F phoneme of a word.
Level V: Manipulation of sounds

Operation: Substitution

Directions: Sing the song substituting various sounds. (Tippity-to-tah, Pippity-po-pah)

Song: Sing to “Zippity-do-dah”

Bippity-bo-bah, bippity-bay,
My oh my what a wonderful day.
Plenty of sunshine coming my way,
Bippity-bo-bah, bippity-bay.

(Fitzpatrick, 1997)
Disappearing Sounds

- **Level V**: Manipulation of Sounds
- **Operation**: Deletion

**Directions**: Write words on cards, one phoneme per card (for syllable level, use one picture per syllable). Have each child hold a different syllable/phoneme. Have the children say the word. Use a “magic wand” to make the desired syllable/phoneme disappear. Have the children say the remaining syllable/word.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Syllable Level</th>
<th>Initial Phoneme Deletion</th>
<th>Final Phoneme deletion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cowboy</td>
<td>meat/eat</td>
<td>lamp/lamb</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rainbow</td>
<td>tape/ape</td>
<td>bone/bow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Phonemic Awareness Activities: Playing with Sounds

**Sound Isolation Activities** - Encourages children to think about sounds in words and listen for sounds at the beginning, middle, or end of a word.

  **Tune:** "Old MacDonald Had a Farm"

  **Beginning sounds:** What's the sound that starts these words: Turtle, time, and teeth? (wait for response) /t/ is the sound that starts these words: turtle, time, and teeth. With a /t/, /t/ here and a /t/, /t/ there, here a /t/, there a /t/ everywhere a /t/, /t/. /t/ is the sound that starts these words turtle, time, and teeth.

**Sound Matching Activities** - Letter sounds are emphasized, not the letter name. Teacher says phoneme sound not the letter name.

  **Tune:** "Jimmy Cracked Corn and I Don’t Care"

  Who has a (phoneme sound) to share with us? Who has a (phoneme sound) to share with us? Who has a (phoneme sound) to share with us? It must begin with the ___ sound. Elicit responses from the children then sing: (Child's response) is a word that starts with ___ (Child's response) is a word that starts with ___ (Child's response) is a word that starts with ___. (Child's response) starts with the (phoneme) sound. (Use children's names to motivate).

**Blending Activities** - Children blend isolated sounds to form words.

  **Game:** What am I thinking of?

  The teacher states that he/she is thinking of an animal (or anything theme related) then gives a clue which is the separate sound in the word making sure each sound is
articulated separately. The children blend the sounds together to guess what the teacher is thinking.

**Sound Addition or Substitution Activities** - By adding or substituting sounds in words, children begin to focus on sounds.

Tune: "I've Been Working on the Railroad" (starting with the section, "Someone's in the Kitchen with Dinah")
I have a song that we can sing. I have a song that we can sing. I have a song that we can sing. It goes something like this: Fe-fi-Fiddly-i-o: Fe-fi-Fiddly-i-o-o-o-o-o, Fe-fi-Fiddly-i-o-o-o-o-o. Now try it with the /z/ sound.

**Segmentation or Analysis Activities** - Isolating the sounds in a spoken word. One of the more difficult phonemic awareness tasks to perform. It is highly related to later success in decoding words.

Tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star"
This works best with words that have no more than 3 sounds (phonemes). Listen, listen to my word. Then tell me all the sounds you heard: (example: say "race" slowly) /r/ is one sound, /a/ is two, /s/ is last in race, it's true! Thanks for listening to my words, and telling all the sounds you heard!

References


Additional Resources:


*commercially available
A Classroom Curriculum: Phonemic Awareness in Young Children

M. Adams, B. Foorman, I. Lundberg, & T. Beeler

(2003), Brookes Publishing
Sharing Books and Stories to Promote Language and Literacy

A Volume in the Emergent and Early Literacy Series

Anne van Kleeck

Plural Publishing, 2006
Assessments:

1. **Dynamic Screening for Phonological Awareness (DSPA)**: Ages: 4-6  Grades: PreK-1
   The DSPA is a dynamic screening instrument to help identify young children who qualify for phonological awareness intervention.  www.linguasystems.com.


   The Phonological Awareness Profile is an individually-administered, criterion-referenced test designed to diagnose deficits in phonological processing and phoneme/grapheme correspondence.  www.linguasystems.com.
   This test assesses all the pre-reading skills that are early indicators of reading success. Use it to identify children who lack explicit phonological knowledge and have difficulty acquiring sound/symbol correspondences in words.

7. The Phonological Awareness Test 2 Computerized Scoring Software Ages: 5-9

   Grades: K-3. The TOPA-2+, a revision of the popular Test of Phonological Awareness, is a group-administered, norm-referenced measure of phonological awareness for children ages 5 through 8 years. www.linguasystems.com.
Software:

1. **Sounds Abound Interactive Software**: Ages: 4-9  Grades: PreK-4.
   Teach the skills critical to reading success: phonological awareness and manipulation of phonemes. This best-selling software focuses on rhyming, syllables, phonemes, and letters.
