

Understanding Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

Phonological and phonemic awareness skills develop on a continuum over many years and are a critical component of reading. Without these foundational skills, children will not be able to decode written English (or any language that uses a phonetic alphabet). Children should be given lots of opportunities to practice these skills through the preschool and elementary years.

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Word
Awareness

Syllable
Awareness

Onset-Rime
Awareness

Phonemic
Awareness

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

Phonological awareness is an umbrella term that covers a variety of skills needed to hear the different chunks of sounds in speech. This ranges from the ability to distinguish individual words in a sentence, syllables in a word, rhymes, sounds in a word, as well as the ability to isolate the position of different sounds within a word. It also covers the ability to segment and blend these chunks of sounds.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Phonemic awareness is a subset of phonological awareness. It refers to the ability to recognize and manipulate individual phonemes. Phonemes are the individual sounds of a language. This involves isolating the individual sounds within words, moving the sounds around, substituting them, and blending them back together again.

Poem

Activity: Learn the Poem

Sing or chant this song as a group many times until the children have learned it. Show them how to use a pointer (or their finger) to point to each word as they sing.

Activity: Isolate the Words

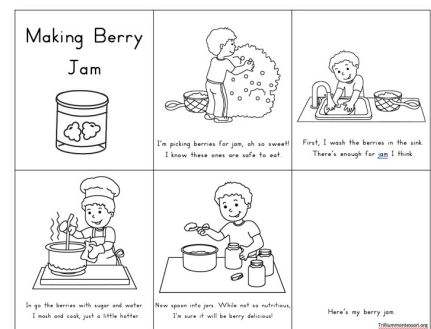
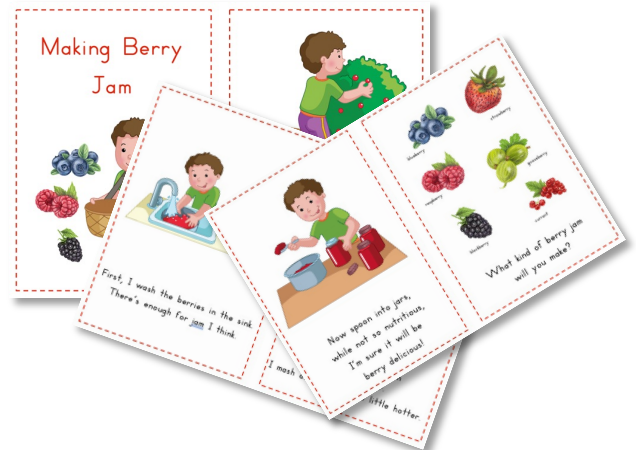
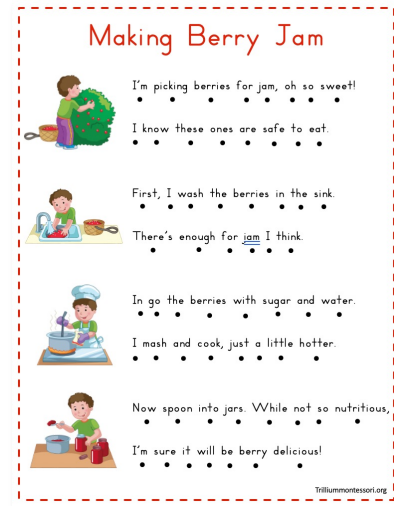
Read one of the sequencing sentence cards and have the child place a block or other object on the table for each word they hear in the sentence.

Activity: Substitute Words

Read one of the sequencing sentence cards and omit the last word. Have the child suggest alternative words to use.

Extension: Sequencing

Sequence the cards or bind the cards together to make into an early reader. Children can color, cut and sequence the cards to make their own booklet.



Rhyming Riddles



Activity

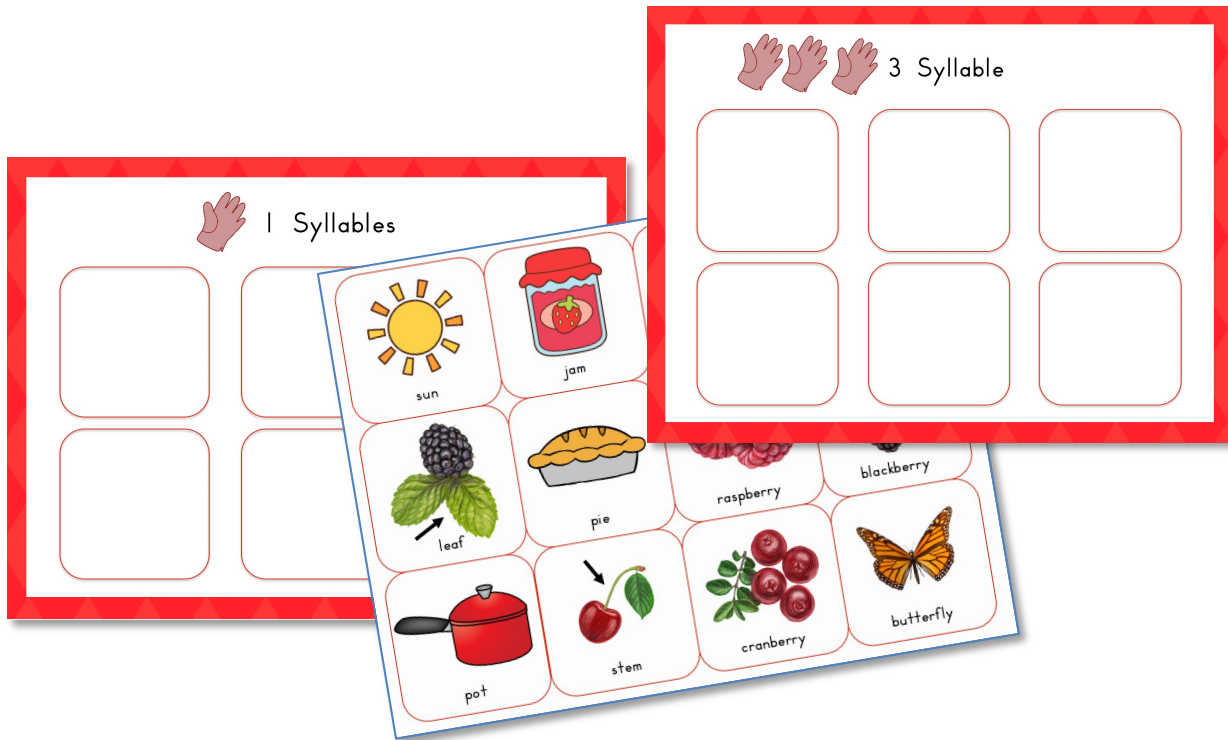
Line up the picture cards and name each image to ensure that the child knows what it is.

Read a riddle card and have the child complete the rhyme. If they can't, offer a clue by saying the first sound (this is called the onset) and have them complete the word (the rest of the word is called the rime).

If the child's ear is not ready for rhyming yet, you can provide the rhyming word. For example: "I rhyme with free. I am a tree. Free, tree. They rhyme." Using this vocabulary is a simple way to introduce the concept of rhyming.

Skill: Segmenting Syllables

Syllable Sorting



Activity

Read the word and clap the syllables. Have the child place the card on the correct mat.

1 Syllable: sun, leaf, pot, jam, pie, stem

2 Syllables: raspberry, cranberry, butterfly, blueberry, strawberry, blackberry

Beginning Sound Matching



Activity

Line up the mats. Say the name of the picture on each mat as you place it down, enunciating its initial sound as you do so. Pick up a picture card, find the mat with the matching beginning sound. You may want to place a color-coding dot on the mat and the back of the corresponding picture card to provide a control of error.

Variation: Use the picture cards in your I-Spy basket. Distribute the cards among a small group of children, naming each card and emphasizing the initial sound as you do so. Say “I spy something that starts with the sound....” and have child identify it.

Phoneme isolation is a more advanced skill than many people realize. The child needs to be able to chunk the sounds in words quite well in order to hear an isolated phoneme (sound). An important note about this stage: we will be matching phonemes (sounds) only and not letters.

NOTE: Some of the words in this themed set begin with blends. I do not recommend using these words with children who are just beginning to isolate initial phonemes.

Ending Sounds: I Spy Bingo



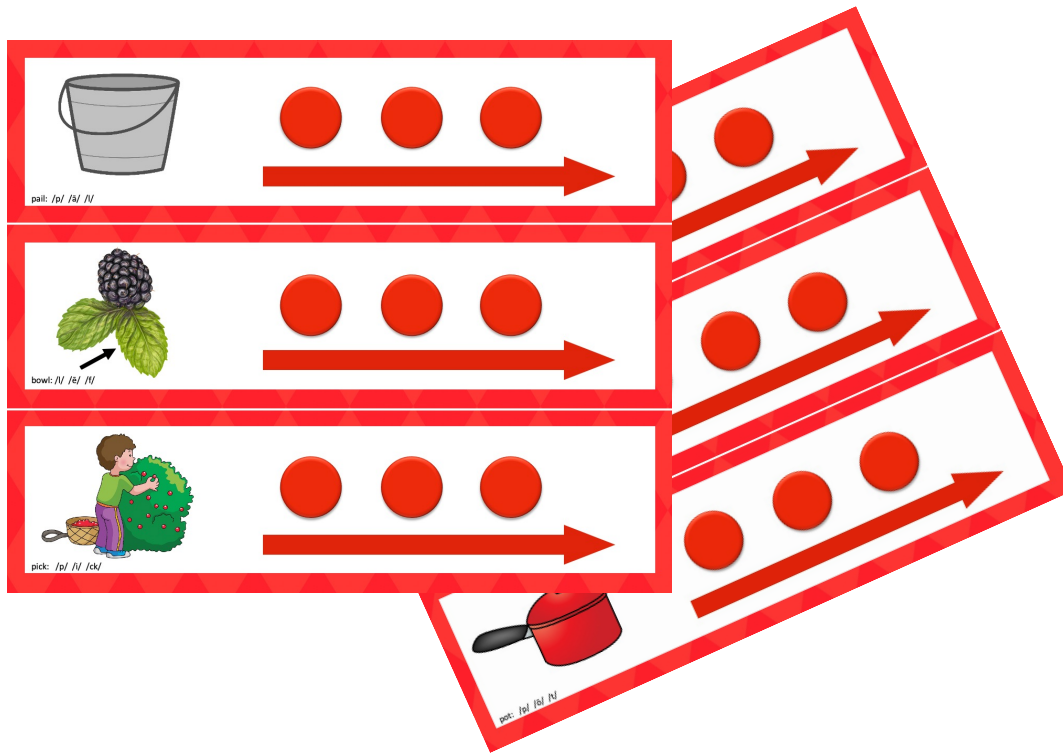
Activity

Four bingo mats have been provided but I prefer to play this game with just one or two children at a time. You will need some sort of tokens to cover the pictures. Pompoms, buttons, shells, and bingo chips will work well.

Identify each picture and its ending sound with the players to ensure they know what they are. Draw a card and read the instructions. The players have to find the correct picture and cover it with a token. Show them the card so they can see if they covered the correct picture. Our Bingo ritual is to say “Did you get it right?” in a singsong voice as the caller shows the card. We always allow the players to correct their work if they didn’t get it right. Continue with all the cards until the board is covered. When the board is covered, the players may call out “Bingo!”

These boards are designed such that all players will complete the board at the same time. This allows you to play the game without having any winners. If you want to make it a little more competitive, you can call out Bingo when you complete a row or column.

Point and Slide Cards



Activity

Say the name of the picture. Then, touch the dots as you say each sound in isolation. Slide your finger across the arrow and say the complete word again. If desired, use tokens such as beads or pompoms instead of pointing.

Important note: Again, we are working with SOUNDS ONLY, not letters. Many of the words used have many letters but consist of only 2-3 sounds.

Skill: Phoneme Substitution

What's the New Word?



Activity

Phoneme manipulation is the most advanced phonological awareness skill.

Distribute the picture cards among a group of children, or line them up along the bottom of a rug or table. Read one of the label cards. Have the child identify the correct picture. Place the picture and label card along the top of the table/rug.

E.g. "Mouth. Change /th/ to /s/. What's the new word?" Child says "Mouse" and finds the picture of the mouse.

12 cards are provided, four each for substituting the **beginning**, **end**, and **middle** sounds.

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