

Vocabulary and Concepts for Your Child's Literacy Program

Your child is beginning his / her journey in learning to read and write. In the classroom, your child will learn that words are made of sounds and that sounds are written in different ways. This is the phonics approach to learning to read and write.

You can help your child begin this journey by helping them understand some words that will be used regularly in literacy activities:

| | | |
|-----------------|------------------|-----------------|
| First / Last | Long / Short | Syllable |
| Beginning / End | Same / Different | Word / Sentence |
| Middle | Sound / Letter | Rhyme |

What can I do at home?

1. Use objects around the house to demonstrate and discuss these words.

For example:

- Talk about people's long and short hair
- Talk about same and different socks

2. Use books, magazines and catalogues to demonstrate and discuss these words.

For example:

- Talk about what happened at the beginning of a story
- Look at what is on the first / last page of a catalogue

3. Talk about and show what these concepts mean.

For example:

- A keyboard has letters. You can see and read them.
- Animals make sounds. You can hear and say them.
- Nursery rhymes have words that rhyme.

4. Talk about written words in the environment.

For example:

- Look at signs in the neighborhood and see if they have words, sentences or letters on them. What are Syllables?

Syllables are a unit of sound in words. Short words may have one or two syllables (eg ta / ble = 2 syllables). Long words may have many syllables (eg u / ni / ver / si / ty = 5 syllables).

**Speak to your child's teacher if you have any questions
about this information handout.**

Syllables

Why does my child need to know about syllables?

Children who can identify syllables in words may be better able to identify sounds in words. Children who are beginning to read learn that words are made up of syllables and syllables are made up of sounds.

Older children also need to learn about syllables. Breaking a long word into syllables helps children to read or spell that word. Knowing about syllables helps older children to identify and write prefixes, suffixes and grammatical markers (eg unbelievable, tripped).

What can I do at home?

1. Name objects and people in the environment. Help your child clap out the syllables in each word. Here are some examples:
 - croc / o / dile = 3 claps
 - glass = 1 clap
 - ta / ble = 2 claps
 - mo / ney = 2 claps
 - cup / board = 2 claps
2. Help your child identify which words are long or short according to how many syllables they can hear.
3. Use objects, such as coins or bottle tops, to identify the syllables your child can hear. For example, “um / bre / lla” needs 3 coins.
4. Use body movements, such as jumping, to identify the syllables your child can hear. For example, “pop / corn” needs 2 jumps.
5. Say words that are made up to two separate words (eg hotdog, cupboard, popcorn, cowboy, earring). See if your child can identify the “little” words that make up the “big” word.
6. Say the syllables of longer words and see if your child can say the whole word. For example, “kang - a - roo” = “kangaroo”.

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about this information handout.**

Rhyme

What is Rhyme?

Rhymes are words that start with different sounds but end with the same group of sounds. For example, “cat – hat – bat” rhyme. Many children are used to hearing nursery rhymes and songs that rhyme.

Why does my child need to know about rhyme?

Rhyming allows children to “tune into” the ends of words. Children, who are beginning to read, learn that words that rhyme are often written with the same letters at the end. For example, “bat” and “cat” both end with “at”. Children who can rhyme can use this as a strategy to read and write words that sound the same at the end. For example, if they know how to write “cat”, and want to write “bat”, they already know the end sounds and letters that need to be used: “at”.

Developing readers learn that words can rhyme but are not necessarily written in the same way. For example, “hair” and “bear” rhyme but they have different letters to represent the same vowel sound.

What can I do at home?

1. Sing nursery rhymes with your child. Pick out the words that rhyme. For example, Jack and Jill, Hey Diddle Diddle, Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.
2. Make up limericks or silly songs with your child, using rhyming words.
3. Encourage your child to think of words that rhyme with a word you say. It doesn't matter if your child makes up a nonsense word. For example, words that rhyme with your child's name.
4. Say two words and help your child identify if the words rhyme. For example, Do “cat” and “mat” rhyme? Do “tree” and “toe” rhyme?
5. Say three words and help your child identify the word that does not rhyme. For example, “pot”, “cot”, “cat”.

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about this information handout.**

Phonemes

(Spoken Sounds): Beginner Reader

What is a Phoneme?

“Phoneme” is another word for “speech sound”. A phoneme is the smallest unit of speech. Phonemes are blended together to make a spoken word.

There are two types of phonemes: consonants, for example buh (b), ssss (s), wuh (w) and vowels, for example oh (o), uh (u). Some consonants have one sound, but are written with two letters. For example: th, ch, sh.

Why does my child need to know about Phonemes?

Beginner readers learn to:

- Identify individual phonemes in words. This is called “phonemic awareness” (ie: awareness of the spoken sounds).
- Relate these phonemes to letters (graphemes). This is called “phoneme-grapheme correspondence”.

What can I do at home for my beginner reader?

If your child is learning the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they make, they may be ready for these activities:

1. Teach the letter names of the alphabet and identify the sounds they make. Both are important. For example, “B” makes a “buh” sound.
2. Be consistent in using sounds, not letter names, when sounding out words in readers. For example, “cut” is sounded “kuh” “uh” “tuh”, not “see” “you” “tee”.
3. Teach your child to listen for the first sound in spoken words by emphasizing the first sound. For example, “dog” starts with ‘duh’.
4. Remember that words with two consonants at the beginning will be harder to read and spell than words with only one consonant sound at the beginning. For example, **trip** is a harder word than **tip**.
5. Separate the sounds in simple words and say these to your child. Help your child blend the sounds into a whole word. For example, say the sounds “buh” “ah” “tuh” and your child will say “bat”.

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about this information handout.**

Phonemes

(Spoken Sounds): Developing Reader

What is a Phoneme?

“Phoneme” is another word for “speech sound”. A phoneme is the smallest unit of speech. Phonemes are blended together to make a spoken word.

Sometimes, sounds correspond to the letters that are used to write them. For example, “cat” has three sounds: kuh, ah, tuh. At other times, sounds in words do not correspond to the letters used to write them. For example, “knight” has three sounds: nuh, eye, tuh. But it is written with 6 letters.

Why does my child need to know about Phonemes?

Developing readers learn to:

- Take away, add and exchange sounds within words to make new words.
- Relate phonemes to complex letter combinations.
- Detect two or more consonants when they appear together in words.
- Identify a wider range of vowel sounds in words.

What can I do at home for my developing reader?

If your child knows the letters and sounds of the alphabet and can read and spell simple words, they may be ready for these activities:

1. Teach your child to listen for the end sound in spoken words by emphasizing the end sound. For example, “dog” ends in ‘guh’.
2. Separate and emphasise the two consonant sounds in a blend. Blends occur when 2 or more consonants occur together in a word. For example: star, last, string, play.
3. Separate the sounds in words with consonant blends and say these to your child. Help your child blend the sounds into a whole word. For example, say the sounds “buh” “luh” “oo” and your child will say “blue”.
4. Ask your child to say a word without the first sound. For example, “Say ‘hat’ without the ‘huh”.
5. Ask your child to exchange a sound in a word. For example: “Say ‘pot’ but instead of ‘puh’, say ‘nnn’.”

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about this information handout.**