

Edition 2

Phonological and Phonemic Awareness

Research tells us that phonemic awareness is one of the biggest predictors of reading success.

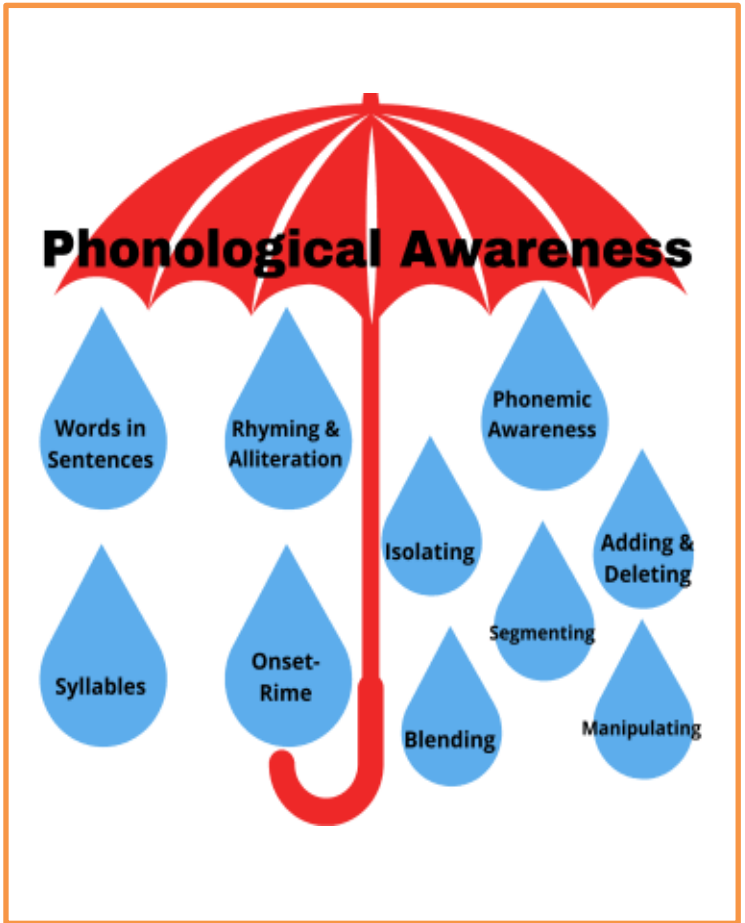
Phonemes are the smallest discernible unit of sound in speech. Phonemic awareness is knowledge of, and capacity to manipulate, individual phonemes in spoken words.

In Prep at G.S.S. there has been a big focus on the development of children’s phonological and phonemic awareness skills. Two of the major skills focussed on are:-

1. Phoneme blending. This is where children develop the skill to hear separate sounds and blend them together to say the word. Children begin to learn this skill orally but are then taught to use this skill in connection with graphemes (letters that represent sounds). Children say the sounds and blend the sounds to read words (decoding).
2. Phoneme segmenting. This is the above skill in reverse. Children listen to a word and then break the word up into its sounds. This is required for spelling words (encoding).

The development of these skills can be supported by you at home through word play.

- Try breaking down the sounds in a word and telling your child you don’t know what the word is. Ask them to repeat it in ‘robot talk’ (for example /d/o/g/), and then ask them what word you are saying. This helps practice the skill of blending.
- Try this in reverse. Ask your child for help with spelling a word, but not with letter names. Say “Can you tell me the sounds in ‘butter’? b/u/tt/er



Our analysis indicted that the ability to perceive and manipulate phonemes (in both segmenting and blending tasks) is the aspect of phonemic awareness that is most strongly predictive of later reading and spelling success.

Castles & Coltheart (2004)

Click on the link below video clip to find out more about Phonemic Awareness

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iloZoh7EpGo&t=5s>