

Delays & Disorders Explained – Phonemic Awareness –

A GUIDE FOR CAREGIVERS



WHAT IS PHONEMIC AWARENESS?

Phonemic awareness is a fundamental skill and is an important pre-cursor to reading, writing and spelling.

- It involves the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds, called phonemes, within spoken words.
- Skills of rhyming, sound isolation, sound sequencing, manipulation and blending are all aspects of phonemic awareness.

WHAT ARE THE COMMON SIGNS?

For parents, it is important to know that phonemic awareness is a pre-reading skill that helps lay the foundation for reading and writing.

Signs of Phonemic Awareness in children may include:

- The ability to recognize and produce rhyming words.
- Identifying the beginning or ending sounds in words.
- Blending sounds together to form words.
- Engaging in activities like clapping out syllables in words.
- Recognizing that "cat" and "hot" share the same ending sound.
- Segmenting sounds in words like "sun" (s-u-n).

These activities indicate a developing phonemic awareness.

WHAT DOES THERAPY FOR PHONEMIC AWARENESS INVOLVE?

Phonemic Awareness is a crucial pre-cursor of literacy development, as it helps children understand the relationship between sounds and letters, which is essential for reading and spelling.

If a child struggles with phonemic awareness, early intervention is essential. **Speech-Language Pathologists** and **literacy instructors** can provide targeted therapy to strengthen these skills.

Therapy may involve activities such as:

- Identifying rhyming words.
- Blending sounds to form words.
- Segmenting words into individual sounds.
- Manipulating sounds to create new words.

With practice and support, most children can develop strong phonemic awareness skills, which will serve as a solid foundation for successful reading and writing skills.

WHAT CAN BE PRACTICED AT HOME?

Parents can support their child's Phonemic Awareness by:

- Reading books together.
- Playing rhyming games.
- Encouraging them to identify and manipulate sounds within words.
- Playing word and sound games.
- Searching for particular sounds out in the community (i.e., M for McDonald's)

These activities help children become more aware of the sounds that make up language.

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