

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonological Awareness lessons. **Phonological awareness** allows children to recognize and work with the sounds of language. These activities are sometimes called ear exercises because the focus is on hearing the parts or sounds in words. Your child will not be seeing these words in print during the phonemic awareness lessons.

### **Why is Phonological Awareness Important?**

Phonological awareness is a strong predictor of reading success. It is especially important at the earliest stages of reading development and is a foundation for reading.

### **How Can You Support Phonological Awareness at Home?**

Throughout the school year, you will receive newsletters sharing ideas of games or “ear exercises” you can play with your child. Phonological awareness is simple to support at home - all you need is language! Help your child understand that the words they hear in speech are made up of parts and sounds.

You can begin building phonological awareness in your child by:

- ★ Reciting nursery rhymes
- ★ Reading books with rhyming words
- ★ Playing with alliteration (words that begin with the same sound)
  - Example: Seven silly sisters said surprise!
- ★ Reciting tongue twisters with a focus on individual sounds in words.
  - Example: How much wood would a woodchuck chuck, if a woodchuck could chuck wood?

We look forward to supporting you and your child in building foundational literacy skills this school year! In addition to the newsletters you will receive, you can find more support and information on our website and social media pages.

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Visit our website: <https://www.heggerty.org>

View lesson demonstrations: [Heggerty Phonemic Awareness - YouTube](#)

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonological Awareness lessons. Over the next 4 weeks, your child will be hearing **compound words**. A **compound word** is a word that is made up of two small words.

One of the reasons for teaching these skills is because, “The lack of phonemic awareness is the most powerful determinant of the failure to read.” (Marilyn Adams, 1990).

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**When having conversations with your child, consider using some of these activities with words and language that is familiar to them.**

- ★ Ask your child to listen for the sound they hear at the beginning of a word you say aloud.
  - What is the first sound we hear in the word room? Answer: /r/
  - What is the first sound we hear in the names of friends, pets, or family members?

- ★ Can you blend (put together) these small words to make one big word (a compound word)?

after - noon → afternoon

sun - shine → sunshine

- ★ Do these two words rhyme?

red, bed

cup, got

did, kid

\*Parent Note: If this is challenging for your child, share that rhyming words have the same sounds in the middle and at the end. You can say some pairs of rhyming words and have them repeat:

goat, boat   sun, fun   hat, cat

- ★ Can you segment (separate) this compound word into two smaller words?

Classroom → class - room

rainbow → rain - bow

- ★ Books to enjoy together: Listen for the rhyming words!

- *Rhyming Dust Bunnies* by Jan Thomas
- *Dog on a Frog?* By Kes Gray
- *Sheep in a Jeep* by Nancy Shaw
- *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin Jr and J. Archambault

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Dear parents and caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonological Awareness lessons. Over the next 4 weeks, your child will be working with **syllables**. A **syllable** is a part of a word with a vowel sound in it. For example, the word pencil has 2 syllables: *pen - cil*. Each part has one vowel sound.

Phonological awareness skills are crucial for reading and spelling success, because they are central in learning to read. [Reading Rockets](#) shares great information about this!

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**When having conversations with your child, consider using some of these activities with words and language that is familiar to them.**

- ★ Name Game: Choose a sound and ask your child to name people, places or things that begin with that sound.
  - Example: “Can you name some things that begin with the sound /m/?”
- ★ Categories: Think of a category (animals, sports, things at school). Ask your child to blend (put together) the syllables to make the word.
  - Example: “I am thinking of some pets, can you tell me what they are?”  
ham - ster → hamster      pup - py → puppy      kit - ten → kitten
- ★ Play “Which Word Rhymes With...”? Say, “which word rhymes with \_\_\_?” and then give two choices (a word that rhymes, and a word that does not rhyme). See examples below:
  - “Which word rhymes with late: date or done?”
  - “Which word rhymes with run: sad or sun?”
- ★ Be a Ninja: Say a word and have your child act like a ninja by “chopping” words into syllables. For example, say “Be a ninja! Chop ‘frozen’ into syllables!” (fro-zen). More words to chop:
  - strawberry → straw - ber - ry      computer → com- pu -ter      candle → can-dle
- ★ Books to enjoy together: Listen for rhyming words and see if your child can guess the rhyming word on each page!
  - *Little Red Rhyming Hood* by Sue Fliess
  - *Senorita Mariposa* by Ben Gundersheimer
  - *Mary Had a Little Jam and Other Silly Rhymes* by Bruce Lansky
  - *Rhyme Crime* by Jon Burgerman

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. Over the next 4 weeks, your child will be hearing 2 parts of a word and changing a sound at the beginning of words they hear. Your child has worked with larger parts of words (compound words and syllables), and now our lesson focus will shift to hearing 2 parts of a word, the first sound (**onset**) and the rest of the word (**rime**)

Daily phonemic awareness instruction is critical to becoming a successful reader. “Phonemic awareness is central to learning to read and spell.” (L. Ehri, 1984)

**Here are some fun activities to do together:**

- ★ Sing this rhyming song to the tune of, “If You’re Happy and You Know It” (Marilyn Adams, 1990)

- Did you ever see a (bear) in a (chair)?  
Did you ever see a (bear) in a (chair)?  
No, I never, no, I never, no, I never, no, I never  
No, I never saw a (bear) in a (chair).

*\*You can then replace (bear), (chair) with mouse, house; duck, truck; bug, rug; bee, tree, etc.*

- ★ Can you blend (put together) the first sound and the rest of the word?  
d - ig → dig                  b - ox → box                  w - ish → wish

Try this word game: (from Wiley Blevins)

Adult: “I am thinking of an animal. It’s a (b - ird). What am I thinking of?

Child: A bird

- ★ Can you segment (separate) a word into the first sound and the rest of the word?  
bus → b - us    name → n - ame    reach → r - each

- ★ Can you delete (or take away) the first sound from a word? Try it with your own name! Say your name aloud. Now say your name without the first sound. Some examples are below:

- Say Luke; without /l/, what’s left is -uke
- Say jam. Without /j/, what’s left is? -am
- Say gate. Without /g/, what’s left is? -ate

- ★ Books to read and enjoy together:

- *Please, Puppy, Please* by Spike Lee and Tonya Lewis Lee
- *A, My Name is Alice* by Jane Bayer
- *Llama, Llama Red Pajama* by Anna Dewdney

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. Your child has worked with larger parts of words (compound words, syllables, and onset-rime), and now over the next couple of weeks our lessons will shift to listening for individual sounds, or **phonemes**.

Phonemic awareness teaches students to hear individual sounds in words, and this supports the development of strong reading and writing skills. "Phonemic awareness has been shown to be a very powerful predictor of later reading achievement. In fact, it [phonemic awareness] is a better predictor than more global measures such as IQ or general language proficiency" (Griffith and Olson, 1992).

**Here are some fun activities to do together:**

- ★ Can you blend (put together) two sounds to make a word?  
m - ē → , me      ã - t → at      n - ò → no

- ★ Guess Who Game (from *Phonemic Awareness in Young Children*). Say, "Guess whose name I am going to say" and then say just the first sound of the name. Have your child guess the name based on that first sound.

- Example: "Guess whose name I am going to say... /d/, /d/, /d/..." and they would say "dad!"

*Try this game with names of family members, pets, and friends.*

- ★ When you say a word, you can add a sound to a word part to make a new word. Tell your child: "say -ate, add /g/ to the beginning and the word is..." and your child would say: "gate". Other words to use:
  - -eep, add /k/ to the beginning → keep
  - -et, add /j/ to the beginning → jet

- ★ When you say a word, you can also delete (or take away) the first sound. Say, "gate; without /g/, what's left is?" and your child would say: "ate". Other words to use:
  - Keep, without /k/ → -eep
  - Jet, without /j/ → -et
  - Pave, without /p/ → -ave

*For fun, try: "What is left if we delete or take away the first sound in your name?"*

- ★ Books to read and enjoy together:
  - *Naturally Me* by Crystal Swain-Bates
  - *One Duck Stuck* by Phyllis Root
  - *LMNO Peas* by Keith Baker

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. For the next eight weeks, your child will continue working on listening for individual sounds, or phonemes, in words. They will not only blend (put together) and segment (separate) phonemes, but will also work on **adding, deleting, and substituting** phonemes in words.

*"Of all the phonological skills, the ability to identify, manipulate and remember strings of speech sounds accounts for a significant portion of the difference between good readers and poor readers" (L.Moats, 2010).*

**Here are some fun activities to do together:**

- ★ I spy! Say to your child "I spy something around the room...see if you can guess it!". Tell them a word broken into its three sounds and have them blend it together to find what you spy! Below are some example words:
  - c - ä - t → cat      m - ö - p → mop      k - ĩ - d → kid      p - ě - t → pet
- ★ Be a Ninja: Say a word and have your child act like a ninja by "chopping" words into their individual sounds. Use words like the ones below:
  - rip → r - ĩ - p      mad → m - ä - d      hum → h - ů - m      jet → j - ě - t
- ★ Charades! Have your child add the beginning sound to a word and then act out the word it makes. For example, say, "un, add /r/ to the beginning and the word is.." and they would say "run!" and then act it out by running. Other words to use:
  - -it, add /s/ → sit      -op, add /h/ → hop      -ig, add /d/ → dig
- ★ When you say a word, you can delete (or take away) the first sound. Say, "run; without /r/, what's left is?" and your child would say: "un". Other words to use:
  - sit, without /s/ → -it      mad, without /m/ → -ad      dig, without /d/ → -ig
- ★ We can change the first sound in a word to make a new word. Tell your child: "Say my, change /m/ to /b/ and the word is?" and your child would say: "by". Other words to try:
  - By, change /b/ to /t/ and the word is → tie
  - Tie, change /t/ to /l/ and the word is → lie
- ★ Books to read and enjoy together:
  - *Giraffes Can't Dance* by Giles Andreae
  - *I Like Myself* by Karen Beaumont
  - *One Love* by Cecilia Marley

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. For the next five weeks, your child will continue practicing phonemic awareness by identifying and manipulating individual sounds in words with **digraphs** (two letters that make one sound) and **blends** (two consonants that go together but keep their individual sounds).

We know this practice is crucial, as “phonemic awareness is the most potent predictor of success in learning how to read” (Stanovich, 1994). See below for more ways to practice phonemic awareness with your child at home!

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**Here are some fun activities to do together:**

- ★ Tongue Twisters! Say the words below. Have your child repeat them back to you and then identify the beginning blend (first two sounds) of the words.
  - Float, flash, flag (fl)      Slow, sleep, slime (sl)      plum, plate, plane (pl)
- ★ I spy! Say to your child “I spy something around the room...see if you can guess it!”. Tell them a word broken into its sounds and have them blend it together to find what you spy! Below are some example words:
  - t-oa-s-t → toast      c-l-o-ck → clock      s-p-oo-n → spoon
- ★ Punch up the ending sound! Tell your child a word from the list below and have them punch their fist up in the air when they get to the last sound. See the [Final Sounds Hand Motion for Heggerty Phonemic Awareness](#) on YouTube for an example of how to do this.
  - boo**TH**      crun**CH**      wi**SH**      grow**TH**      swit**CH**
- ★ Draw it! Have your child add a sound to a word part to make a word. Then have them draw a picture of the word they made. For example, tell your child “say -og, add /d/ and the word is...” and your child would say “dog” and then draw a picture of a dog.
  - -ant, add /pl/ → plant      -eep, add /sh/ → sheep      -air, add /ch/ → chair
- ★ When you say a word, you can delete (or take away) the first sound. Say, “dog; without /d/, what’s left is?” and your child would say: “og”. Other words to use:
  - plant, without /pl/ → ant      sheep, without /sh/ → eep      chair, without /ch/ → air
- ★ Say the silly sentences and when your child hears the word that’s wrong, they can correct you by saying, “not \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_!” For example “I wanted to take a walk so I put on my foo” and they would say, “not foo, shoe!” Some other sentences to try:
  - I have a nose, mouth and eyes on my chase (Not chase, face!)
  - All of the water came out of my cup. I had a mill. (Not mill, spill!)

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. For the next two weeks, your child will start to practice breaking apart blends by adding and deleting the initial sound in a word with a **blend** (two consonants that go together but keep their individual sounds). This practice will continue your child on the path towards phonemic proficiency.

“Phonemic awareness training provides the foundation on which phonics instruction is built. Thus, children need solid phonemic awareness training for phonics instruction to be effective” (Blevins, 2017). See below for how you can continue to support your child with building phonemic awareness at home!

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**Here are some engaging activities to do together:**

- ★ Middle Sound Roller Coaster: Have your child make a roller coaster motion with their hands as they say the sounds in a word. Then have them repeat the middle sound they heard at the top of the rollercoaster (for an example of this, visit the [Medial Sounds Hand Motion for Heggerty Phonemic Awareness](#) video on our youtube channel)
  - Example words: sk**A**te cl**O**se gl**A**d sl**E**ep pl**U**s
- ★ Be a Ninja: Say a word and have your child act like a ninja by “chopping” words into their individual sounds. Use words like the ones below:
  - groom → g-r-oo-m pride → p-r-ī-d crush → c--r-ŭ-sh freeze → f-r-ee-z
- ★ Charades! Have your child add the beginning sound to a word and then act out the word it makes. For example, say, “rog, add /f/ to the beginning and the word is..” and they would say “frog!” and then act it out by hopping like a frog. Other words to use:
  - -rush, add /b/ → brush -rab, add /c/ → crab -roze, add /f/ → froze
- ★ When you say a word, you can delete (or take away) the first sound. Say, “ slack; without /s/, what’s left is?” and your child would say: “lack”. Other words to use:
  - crash, without /c/ → rash grant, without /g/ → rant brink, without /b/ → rick
- ★ We can change the first sound in a word to make a new word. Tell your child: “Say clock, change /cl/ to /fl/ and the word is?” and your child would say: “ flock”. Other words to try:
  - Flock, change /fl/ to /sh/ and the word is? shock
  - Shock, change /sh/ to /bl/ and the word is? Block
- ★ Books to read and enjoy together:
  - *Commotion in the Ocean* by Nayasha Williams
  - *Remarkably You* by Pat Zietlow Miller
  - *Little Blue Truck* by Alice Schertle

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Dear Parents and Caregivers,

At school your child is engaging in Heggerty Phonemic Awareness lessons. For the next six weeks, your child will continue practicing phonemic awareness by identifying and manipulating individual sounds in words. Your child will begin to add and delete the final sounds in words as well as work on substituting both final and medial sounds in words.

“The evidence is compelling: Toward the goal of efficient and effective reading instruction, explicit training of phonemic awareness is invaluable” (Adams, 1994). See below for ways to support your child at home in the final weeks of the school year!

**Here are some fun activities to do together:**

- ★ **Parking Lot Blending:** Use tape to make a parking lot on a piece of paper. Drive a toy car into each parking lot space for each sound in a word. Then have them go back and drive the car past all of the spaces as they blend the sounds together to make a word! Below are some words to use:
  - S-p-l-i-t → split                      s-c-r-ā-t-ch → scratch                      th-r-ō-t → throat
- ★ **Smack the sound:** Draw three boxes on a piece of paper. Say a word and have your child tell you where they hear the sound /sk/ in the word - the beginning, middle, or end. They can smack the first square for the beginning, second square for the middle, or third square if they hear it at the end. Say, “where do you hear the sound /sk/ in the word...”
  - Skate (beginning)                      mask (end)                      basket (middle)
- ★ **Charades!** Have your child add the final sound to a word and then act out the word it makes. For example, say, “by, add /k/ to the end and the word is..” and they would say “bike!” and then act it out by pretending to ride a bike. Other words to use:
  - Be, add /k/ → beak                      my, add /s/ → mice                      fee, add /d/ → feed
- ★ **When you say a word, you can delete (or take away) the ending sound.** Say, “make; without /k/, what’s left is?” and your child would say: “may”. Other words to use:
  - Seed, without /d/ → see                      state, without /t/ → stay                      keen, without /n/ → key
- ★ **We can change the last sound in a word to make a new word.** Tell your child: “say seat, change /t/ to /n/ and the word is?” and your child would say: “seen”. Other words to try:
  - Seen, change /n/ to /k/ and the word is? Seek
  - Seek, change /k/ to /d/ and the word is? Seed
- ★ **Books to read and enjoy together - as you read, stop and pick out different words to practice adding and deleting sounds:**
  - *What is Light?* By Markette Shepherd
  - *Alma and How She Got her Name* by Juana Martinez Neal
  - *Your Name is a Song* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow

