EDMONTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Phonological Awareness Tip Sheet

Grade 1 Language and Literacy Project

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"Before children learn to read print, they need to become aware of how the sounds in words work. They must understand that words are made up of speech sounds, or phonemes. Phonemes are the smallest parts of sound in a spoken word that make a difference in the word's meaning." (National Institute for Literacy 2006, Pg. 1).

What is phonological awareness?
Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize that words are made up of a variety of sound units including syllables and individual sounds. It forms the basis for word recognition and it is critical in building the link between the sound patterns we hear in words and how they are represented in print.

Children first begin to develop phonological awareness at a very early age when they learn to appreciate the beauty and rhythm of language by listening to books, nursery rhymes and other poems that are based on rhyme or alliteration.

What is phonemic awareness?
Phonemic awareness is one aspect of phonological awareness and it is an important predictor in developing reading skills. It is the ability to notice, think about and work with the individual sounds in spoken words. It includes activities that require manipulating sounds such as segmenting a word into its individual sounds, blending sounds together to form a word, or changing sounds within a word to create new words.

How are phonological awareness and phonemic awareness taught?
Phonological awareness and phonemic awareness can be embedded into classroom activities and worked on throughout the day. There is a strong connection to vocabulary learning and they are most effective when practised frequently throughout the day, every day. Phonemic awareness activities that teach skills to isolate, blend or segment individual sounds in words, are linked to learning to read and write.

Skills within phonemic awareness can be worked on with activities such as:

- isolating beginning sounds
- identifying the beginning, middle or final sounds in words
- blending sounds together to form words
- breaking words into individual sounds
- substituting a sound to form a new word

References

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