

Linda Warren: Welcome back. We know that phonological awareness is an important outcome that is central to literacy development. What do we mean by phonological awareness? [Music]

Slide reads: Phonological Awareness: The ability to hear, identify and manipulate the sounds in spoken language.

Phonological awareness is a term that takes getting used to. However, the activities that build it are routine parts of a good quality preschool curriculum. Children develop phonological awareness as they listen to people talk, as they speak themselves, and through specific instruction. A beginning phonological awareness skill is alliteration. This occurs when children are able to recognize by listening that bug, bear, button, all start with "buh". Individual sounds are represented by letters. Hearing and discriminating "buh" leads to understanding the meaning of letter representation in print.

So phonological awareness is a key to making sense of alphabet letters. Research has shown that success in phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge is a predictor of whether a child will learn to read during the first two years of school. There are many fun ways for teachers to support children's development of phonological awareness. They can use rhyming in nursery rhymes, clapping games with words, listening to environmental sounds, and listening for sound differences in words. Children develop phonological awareness in a predictable but not rigid sequence.

This continuum of development is a helpful tool for teachers as they plan activities that support phonological awareness. Let's look at the continuum. The beginning stage involves listening attentively to words. Next, children begin to notice rhymes, then alliteration when words begin with the same sound. Then children can learn sentence segmenting, the understanding that separate words make up a sentence. The final stages in the continuum, onset/rime and phoneme segmenting typically develop in kindergarten. Susan and Carol, how have you explained the phonological awareness continuum to your protégés?

Carol Bellamy: Well, Linda, phonological awareness is such an important skill for our children to learn the beginning letter sounds, especially our English language learners. It's also a fun activity for children to fine-tune the hearing. Linda: Very important. Do you want to add something to that, Susan?

Susan Fordice: One of the ways that I've used to try to explain phonological awareness to my protégés is to have them think about something very concrete like the way a baby learns to walk. First they crawl and then they pull up to standing, and then they stand alone. And the, the way that children learn to talk is very similar.

They start out making - a little infant three to four months will make vowel sounds and then the next, they'll start, typically start doing consonant sounds. So when we look at the continuum, the first thing we want to teach our children in preschool is to rhyme, which has to be with vowel sounds. And then after they master the rhyming, or get a good grasp on the rhyming, then we want to start teaching the alliteration which has to do with the consonant sounds. And so by getting them to reflect on what they know about children, then they can begin to remember how that continuum works.

Linda: So understanding the continuum is really critical and we need to start early and and begin to understand how babies are following along that continuum in their skill development. And then, really realizing that it is an important pre-reading skill and especially for our English language learners. Thank you. Okay, now we are going to watch Lisa, a mentor-coach from a Migrant Head Start program in Utah. We'll see how she leads the children in a new song that promotes phonological awareness.

[Video begins] Narrator: Utah's Centro des la Familias serves families of migrant workers. Teacher Moncie Brown and mentor-coach Lisa Bedard use a variety of methods to develop phonological awareness. A primary method is engaging in conversation with children.

Moncie Brown: (Spanish)

Narrator: The use of rhyming songs is an effective method that children enjoy. Lisa Bedard: Okay, we have a new song called Willoby Wallaby Wee and it goes like this. Willoby Wallaby Wee, an elephant sat on me. Willoby Wallaby Woo, an elephant sat on you.

I like to model the our language philosophy for the children and implement English into their classroom. And it really helps them for me to come in and for them to see how how the songs work in English and how they are tied to the, to the language and literacy and doing rhyming songs and making it fun for the kids. Even though the kids, at first they probably didn't understand what these English songs were that we were singing, but then they got involved.

(To children:) Willoby Wallaby Woo, Pita, an elephant sat on ... Pisa: Pisa. >Lisa: Willoby Wallaby Worenzo, an elephant sat on ... Lorenzo: Lorenzo. Lisa: Lorenzo. Willoby Wallaby Wemily, an elephant sat on ...

Emily: Emily. Lisa: Willoby Wallaby Wisa, an elephant sat on .... >Children: Lisa. Lisa: Lisa. Line up at the door to get ready to go home, okay? Narrator: Lisa leads the children in clapping to convey syllables.

Lisa: Go line up. Okay let's try Isabell. Isabell's a harder one, if your name's Isabell you can go line up. Is a bell, Is a bell, Is a bell, that's a fun one to say isn't it? If your name is Lorenzo, you can go line up Spiderman. Lor en zo, Lor en zo, Lor en zo. If your name is Lupita, you can go line up. Lu pi ta, Lu pi ta. [Video ends]

Linda: We saw Lisa use effective phonological awareness practices as she involved the children in the song. Carol, what are some of the strengths you saw in this video?

Carol: Well, I saw the mentor use a nice clear voice to introduce the song nice and slowly to the children. She also used a prop. Props are always wonderful to keep the children engaged. The one thing she did that was really great, she used all the children's names, children love to hear their name. That was wonderful. The teacher was on the side observing so she could use that strategy as well. And also, it's important for the protégé to remind the mentor to send home the, excuse me, have the mentor send home the rhymes for the children.

Linda: That connection is really crucial, I'm glad you brought that up too. Susan, did you want to add something to that? I know you were talking about some resources when we initially had some discussions around this video.

Susan: Some suggestions that I had for strengthening mentor-coach's skills in in supporting the phonological awareness would be to, again, after they had the activity, to have a discussion with the protégé about what she liked and what she didn't like, or perhaps, what she thought would work differently or better -- use of reflective questioning and some guidance and perhaps give her some activities besides the Willoby Wallaby Wee that would work.

Some activities that we've tried in the past are "listen for that sound" where we'll hide a clock or something in the classroom and the teachers have the children look for that. We've also tried using a drum to do the syllabication and during transitions. I thought that she did a great job transitioning the kids to line up by clapping the syllables on their names, so that, that's a very important technique that can be used throughout the day too.

Linda: So the drumming is is really something that is particularly interesting and important to your program.

Susan: Yes, as a cultural program for Native Americans, drumming is a very important part of the celebrations and things that that they do, and so we use the Native American drum to do syllables. And one of the exciting things that you can do with that that's a little more difficult with clapping is you can get the accent on the syllables using the drum. And the kids, of course, love it.

Linda: Thank you. As we wrap this conversation up, I do want to mention that the Head Start Leader's Guide to Positive Child Outcomes really is an excellent resource, not only for the protégé but for the mentor-coach to begin to familiarize herself or himself with the many strategies that you can use to support phonological awareness. Okay, now we are going to give you some time to discuss phonological awareness and assessment with your facilitator. Stop the tape now and start the video again at the conclusion of your discussions.

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