



## Presentation

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

## Teaching Phonological Awareness in Preschool

June 2007

**Topic:** Preschool Language and Literacy

**Practice:** Teach Phonological Awareness

### Highlights

- Ms. Johnson learns that her preschool students need phonological awareness skills
- Definition of phonological awareness and list of the skills involved
- Building phonological awareness skills along a developmental continuum from simple to advanced skills, leading to sound-symbol relationships
- Practical strategies for building phonological awareness
- Teaching tips
- Coaching teachers in phonological awareness

### Full Transcript

#### Slide #1

Welcome to the overview on teaching phonological awareness in preschool

#### Slide #2

Here are a few tips before we get started...

Use the slide titles in the "outline" to jump to a specific section.

Click on the "script" tab to follow along with the narration.

Use the controls at the bottom to easily stop and start the presentation.

Download any related files in the "attachments" folder. And show or hide the navigation using the windows icon.

#### Slide #3:

Ms. Johnson teaches 4-year-olds at a preschool in an urban area where over 80% of families are living at the poverty level.

She knows her students are at risk for becoming poor readers, so she focuses on teaching the alphabet and on reading storybooks.

#### Slide #4:

That's why Ms. Johnson was surprised to learn that many of her "graduated" students are now struggling with reading in elementary school.

What went wrong?

She knew her students were eager to learn, and she understood they needed a strong foundation-- but she didn't realized the importance of teaching core literacy skills at the pre-school level.

#### Slide #5:

That's when students need to develop phonological awareness—the understanding that words are made up of smaller sounds, as well as the ability to recognize and manipulate those sounds.

Slide #6:

Ms. Johnson's school hired a team of early reading professionals to help her teachers build phonological awareness among their students.

The coaches worked side-by-side with teachers each week to:

- model instruction
- observe teachers practicing what they learned
- and help teachers reflect on their new knowledge and teaching strategies

Slide #7:

As a result, Ms. Johnson learned how children develop language skills from the moment they're born, and she began to utilize similar sound recognition skills in her reading time.

Slide #8:

For example, after reading a story about farm animals, she asked the children to recall the names of animals in the story.

When one student recalled a cow, Ms. J. said,

“Listen carefully to the word: /k/ /ow/.

What's the first sound you hear in /k/ /ow/?”

The students answered back, /k/.

Slide #9:

Another student mentioned the pig. Ms. J. asked, “What sound does pig begin with?” When one student said /b/, Ms. Johnson responded:

“Listen again, /p/ /ig/. When you say /p/ - feel the air on your hand. Put your hand up and say it

with me, /p/ /ig/. Can you can feel the /p/ sound?”

Slide #10:

Her reading coach congratulated Ms. Johnson on the lesson. She had just taught phonological awareness to her students—a skill that is essential to learning how to read.

Slide #11:

What is Phonological Awareness?

Slide #12:

Words are made up of syllables and individual sounds—or phonemes.

Children are better prepared for reading instruction if they are able to focus on the sounds that make up language.

Slide #13:

Students with solid phonological awareness can:

- break words apart into syllables
- distinguish between sounds
- detect and produce rhyme
- detect and isolate sounds in a word
- and, blend and segment sounds in words

Slide #14:

Four-year-olds, especially those at risk for developing reading difficulties, need instruction and practice to develop phonological awareness before they get to kindergarten.

Yet, at least one-third of all four-year olds don't have these skills.

And children who enter first grade as poor readers often:

- Have problems with phonological processing
- Enter first grade with little phonemic awareness
- And have an 88% probability of remaining poor readers at the end of fourth grade.

Slide #15:

We also know that **good** readers:

- Are rhyming at about age 4
- Can combine different sounds to make words by first grade
- And can break words into distinct parts or segments by first grade.

Slide #16:

Children need to know that words are made up of sounds, and they need to blend and segment these sounds before they can learn the relationship between sounds and letters in print.

Slide #17:

When developing phonological awareness with preschoolers, it's important to think in terms of a continuum, from simple to more advanced skills.

Slide #18:

Students should move from:

- Syllable Segmenting and Blending to
- Onset-Rime Segmenting and Blending to
- Phoneme Segmenting, Blending and Manipulation.

Slide #19:

The first of these skills involves recognition that words are made up of syllables, and that the syllable sounds blend together when reading words, as in:

To-day, or, News-pa-per

Slide #20:

Onset refers to the initial sound, where Rime is the vowel and all the sounds that follow, as in /l/ /ee/ /f/ or /k/ /at/

4-year olds need to learn how to segment and blend these “sub-syllable” building blocks.

Slide #21:

Phonemes are even more granular—they are the individual sounds each letter makes, as in: /b/ /i/ /g/

Children learn that by changing a phoneme, the meaning of the word changes. They learn that a cat is not a bat, and a box is not a fox!

Slide #22:

With mastery of phonological awareness, children can learn to connect sounds with letter symbols.

And once they know the sounds and their symbols, children can apply these skills when making and reading words.

Slide #23:

Let’s take a look at some practical ways to put phonological awareness into action.

Slide #24:

First, remember that teaching phonological awareness should be fun!

Ms. Johnson always knew that children like to play with sounds, but her coach helped her understand how to use sound play to build awareness of the ways sounds make words.

Slide #25:

Now, Ms. J helps her students recognize syllables, onsets and rimes, and phonemes throughout the day—at story time, during transitions, and even on the playground.

Slide #26:

In fact, it's a good idea to separate playing with sounds from working with letters or printed text.

That way, students see sound awareness as a natural part of language before they begin to decode text.

Slide #27:

It's also important to scaffold instruction.

Early on, students will need help recognizing the various sound forms—from syllables to phonemes.

But, as they progress and gain confidence, students will begin to recognize these building blocks on their own.

Slide #28:

This is a good time to stretch their vocabulary with words that are familiar to them but have complex new sounds.

It's also a good time to introduce new words with multiple syllables, such as “Um-brel-la”, or “Basket-ball”.

Slide #29:

Here are a few more tips for teaching phonological awareness:

- Plan phonological awareness lessons and activities in your daily schedule
- Use Informal phonological awareness instruction as part of the daily routine—whenever you have the chance to point out word sounds
- Keep lessons brief—just 5 or 10 minutes.
- And small groups are best for listening to each child.

### Slide #30:

Many teachers were never formally taught about phonological awareness and may feel awkward teaching these skills.

That's why coaching and other types of teacher supports are so important.

### Slide #31:

When teaching these skills to teachers, keep these tips in mind:

First, modeling for teachers is a great way to build phonological teaching skills.

Second, practice builds confidence.

And third, reflection about what they've learned helps teachers reinforce their new skills.

### Slide #32:

Modeling provides the foundation.

Early on, teachers might not see how these skills connect to learning to read.

But, when they see the coach working with the class, and as students have fun learning to recognize sounds, it all begins to make sense.

### Slide #33:

When modeling is combined with practice—guided and supported by coaches and colleagues—that's when teachers learn how to integrate skill practice into the daily routine.

### Slide #34:

Finally, reflection helps teachers place Phonological Awareness teaching skills into the larger context of their overall instructional approach.



### Slide #35:

Ms. Johnson has come to understand that students need to develop phonological awareness skills even before they reach kindergarten, and that most children can benefit from phonological training regardless of their developmental level.

Now that phonological awareness is a part of her preschool classroom, Ms. J. has heard that her former students are among the strongest readers in kindergarten!

### Slide #36:

To learn more about teaching Phonological Awareness in Preschool, please explore the additional resources on the [Doing What Works](#) website.