



Slideshow

FULL DETAILS AND TRANSCRIPT

Phonological Awareness All Day Long

Syracuse City School District, New York • June 2007

Topic: Preschool Language and Literacy

Practice: Teach Phonological Awareness

Highlights

- Importance of focusing on sounds and integrating instruction into daily classroom activities
- Value of explicit instruction and immediate corrective feedback
- Importance of giving children opportunities to practice skills
- Examples of rhyming, syllables, and phonemic awareness instruction
- Advantages of working with small groups
- How to maximize learning using visual and physical cues
- Examples of large motor activities
- Using materials, such as board games and phonics phones
- Examples of informal approaches to instruction during snack time, transitions, and outdoors

About the Site

Syracuse City School District

Syracuse, NY

Demographics

- 93% Children living in poverty
- 79% Non-Caucasian
- 22% Special Needs
- 15% English Language Learners

Site Highlights

- Developmental continuum of phonological awareness that guides planning and differentiation of instruction based on children's skill levels
- Phonological awareness instruction integrated throughout the day into classroom activities, routines, and thematic units
- Explicit and contextualized instruction
- Teacher training in interactive and dialogic reading focused on increasing vocabulary, oral language, and comprehension
- Intensive and ongoing professional development with on-site mentoring by literacy coaches and a focus on individual class needs
- Coach-teacher partnerships that involve teachers in a feedback process focused on inquiry and improvement based on classroom observations and self-reflection

Full Transcript

Phonological Awareness All Day Long

McKinley-Brighton School

Meet Kimberly Riley, a preschool teacher at the McKinley-Brighton School in Syracuse, New York. See how she and other teachers at the school integrate phonological awareness instruction into daily classroom activities with small groups of children, the whole class, and individual students.

Slide #1: Focus on Sound

Kimberly makes sound the focus of children's learning all day, every day. She teaches phonological awareness during planned small group lessons and integrates informal learning into daily activities such as circle time, dramatic play, transitions, and outdoor time. Children's learning is reinforced

with a variety of instructional approaches throughout the day.

Audio:

Phonological awareness is all day, all day, every day. Large groups, small groups, individually—it depends on what the need is. I do have a time set aside every day that's our phonological awareness time, but that is just such a small part of it. And that's just most of the explicit goals. But, you know, even as adults, I may say it this time and somebody might not get it. But if I get them in small groups going over the same thing, somebody else might pick up. And then some other children, you have to wait until they are one on one, and you'll point it out, and they'll get it. It's a constant, all day long, just trying to reinforce the skills.

Slide #2: Time for Explicit Instruction

Teachers at McKinley-Brighton set aside time each day to explicitly teach phonological awareness. They plan activities along a developmental skill continuum that includes: segmenting sentences, dividing words into syllables, rhyming, identifying beginning and ending sounds of words, blending and segmenting onset-rime, and manipulating phonemes. Children practice these skills with peers and teachers.

Audio:

Well, when I say explicit, I mean that, for instance, if I'm doing rhyming, and my style for teaching rhyming while we're in group is, I'll do a lot of think alouds. And I'll think about, oh, you know, these two words "cat" and "hat." Wow, I just noticed they both have the same ending sound. I hear the "at" in both. And I'm like thinking my process through and showing the kids what it is and then during the day there's opportunities right there for them to do it. I'll have some kind of activity for them to do. And then in all the areas of the classroom there're all kinds of things.

A lot of times they don't make the connection and that's where the explicit parts come in, just to make that connection for them and to show them. And they go, "Oh, okay." And then as they keep repeating it and then they practice on their own, they start to master it. And then they turn around and start to teach their peers, which really means they've got it down because they're showing their peers.

Slide #3: Time for Explicit Instruction

To help him focus attention and differentiate sounds, the teacher asks this boy to distinguish between sounds made by the contents of different colored balls when they are shaken. Teachers also ask children to listen to the differences between the spoken sounds of individual letters such as /l/ and /m/ or the initial sounds in words such as ball and tall.

Audio:

We've put objects in containers where they can't see them and shake it and they have to describe: is it a loud sound, is it a hard sound.

Slide #4: Rhyming Sounds

Games are a great way to provide children with explicit instruction that is fun and challenging. Practice helps children build confidence in what they know. In this game, one child takes on the role of "teacher of the moment" and asks the other children to match the picture card she is holding, man, with the picture on their game boards that rhymes, fan.

Audio:

They really like it when we have a helper of the day and it's their job...is to actually tell the other children the sound. So that's a transition we do, so they have to get up. And as they choose a child, that child comes and they tell the child the sound, and the child tells them. And they tell them if it's right and if they have to fix it or they give them the teacher of the moment.

Slide #5: Syllables and Word Parts

Children like to be active learners. Clapping out syllables with the teacher helps them learn parts of words. Kimberly uses multiple ways to practice identifying the number of syllables in words, including counting on fingers and making a one-to-one correspondence by jumping from hoop to hoop or playing hopscotch.

Audio:

We do a lot of clapping out the parts of a word like when we have to go "table," we'll go "ta-ble." And they'll count it out. We do it more than one way giving them just to reinforce it. So it's like, "ta-ble, ta-ble," and I clap my hands and they may have to put a one, two that corresponds, like "ta-ble."

Slide #6: Manipulating Phonemes

These girls are having fun blending and segmenting phonemes. The teacher has asked them to blend the word dog using a kinesthetic approach: touch the wrist for the initial sound /d/, the elbow for the middle sound /o/, and the shoulder for the ending sound /g/. The cards on the table show another type of practice with onset-rime. This pre-K class has already progressed to learning letters and letter-sound relationships.

Audio:

We have a set aside time that is supposedly just set for that, you'll find that's where our explicit instruction goes on. And we integrate and it's every area of the classroom and we give children opportunity to practice, you know, with teachers and amongst their peers.

Slide #7: Small Groups are Essential

Small group activities help teachers hear the individual responses of children. This is a good time to assess the skill level of each child and provide immediate reinforcement or corrective feedback. Monitoring progress enables teachers to differentiate instruction and address each child's needs through everyday interactions.

Audio:

When it comes time to look for phonological awareness skills I kind of look at my class. We do have a variety of assessments that we use to figure out what the child is needing. And I group children because we do a lot of small group work and then...so if Johnny and Suzie, if they're needing more language listening to words, listening to sounds, differentiating between tones, we'll do more of those type of activities—listening to things and differentiating between the sounds. Whereas somebody else needs more work with rhymes, then I'll make another group that that is what their focus is. And it's always changing. It changes often. The advantages of working in the small group is your attention is less divided. I can focus in on the child that's there always—the one child in the class who knows everything and will let you know right away. And there's always the one that's quiet and you don't always know what's on the quiet one's mind or where they're getting confused. So in small group I have a better opportunity of zeroing in and realizing, oh, giving them a little bit more of my one-on-one time and catch things that I might have missed in a larger group.

Slide #8: Maximizing Learning

It is important to help children form sounds accurately. While teaching children to hear and say phonemes, Kimberly uses visual and physical cues such as pointing to the shape her mouth makes when saying a sound. Corrective feedback is most effective when given as soon as an error occurs. This helps children avoid repeating mistakes. Kimberly also gives her students strategies for checking their own responses and those of peers.

Audio:

There was one child in particular that I had an idea, “Okay, this child understands what I’m doing,” and once I got into small group I realized it wasn’t that he knew what he was doing, he knew how to follow everybody else. So once I got into small group I could catch where exactly the mistake might have been or where the misunderstanding fell in place, I can correct it right then. I can, “Oh, you know,” or just redirect them, “Oh, maybe you should try it this way.” We try to work on that, “Check your answers. Are you sure that’s what it is?” And then they’ll check. I try to give them a strategy, at least two strategies, so once they get the answer—and then when you check yourself, check yourself two ways to make sure you have the right answers.

Slide #9: Children’s Active Involvement

Active learning happens regularly in Kimberly’s classroom. Large motor games provide opportunities to practice manipulating words and phonemes. During circle time, these children are thumping their hands each time they hear the sound /s/. Sometimes Kimberly has the children jump on their mats to count syllables or to indicate when they hear a specific initial, middle, or ending sound.

Audio:

Children learn phonological awareness skills not only explicitly from me telling them but just as they go around and they practice it in different areas of the classroom. And they can learn it through stories, songs, chants. A lot of times they hear it and don’t realize what they’re hearing. And that’s where we come in and kind of point it out to them. And then they go and they practice it on their own. We know they know it when it clicks to them and they say to their friend, “Oh, you know, ‘cat’ and ‘bat,’ they rhyme!” And then somebody else will say, “And ‘hat’ rhymes.” So you say, Okay, they got it on that continuum. And then it’s time to move on to another thing.

I have some dice and you can use them for multiple things. They come with little cards and I’ve used them for just...like putting a picture, you can roll the dice and whatever picture shows, they can do

the syllables, they can jump that many times if they hear the sounds or as you move on you could put letters either matching upper case or lower case or a letter with a picture. So which one starts with that sound? Those are my favorite ones. You always use a few more than others.

Slide #10: Using Instructional Materials

Instructional materials focus attention, hold interest, and stimulate active participation. Teachers can use a variety of materials for explicit instruction with sounds. This boy uses a magnetic board to sort pictures that end with the same sound. Kimberly uses the same board to teach sound-symbol relationships.

Audio:

One of my favorite ones is the sound and letter time, which is pretty much four activities in one. We used it today in class when we were doing the syllables for the words and we've got little picture cards that are magnetic that we put on the board and they count how many sounds. So it's just a graphic organizer for them to learn the words and they also have one for beginning sounds, ending sounds, and rhyming words.

Slide #11: Listening to the Spoken Word

This phonics phone helps children hear spoken sounds clearly. This tool can be shaped so children can listen to each other talk or hear themselves speak and say specific sounds. Teachers at McKinley-Brighton use these phones to focus children's attention on an isolated sound or word and to play sound identification games.

Audio:

For phonological awareness I have my phonics phone, which we have—you say the word and the child can hear the sound or you can switch it around and they'll say it to their friend and let their friend hear the sound in their ear.

Slide #12: Helping Each Other with Sounds

Peer interaction is an important part of this classroom. Children work together during planned learning activities as well as during play times. Talking and listening is the key to developing

phonological awareness skills, improving oral language, and building comprehension.

Audio:

So a lot of times when we're going over the sounds, it's just a way of them hearing it a little better. And, you know, at first you try and have to watch your mouth and see how you're saying it and show them how you form your lips. And then another time when we're going over it we'll let them listen and listen to their friends.

Slide #13: Anytime and Anywhere!

Children are eager to learn anytime and anywhere—not only during times planned by the teacher. Teachable moments happen—if the teacher is listening carefully and is ready to step in with a prompt when an opportunity to extend learning appears.

Audio:

My assistant was doing calendar time with them and she was doing a rhyme on the chart. And the children noticed the transition had to find the letter "t." So as they were pointing out the "t"s, you know, she showed them how to point to the "t"s and they were doing it. And then later on, afterwards the children had breakfast table. You could hear them amongst themselves looking at their milk, finding "t"s on their milk and on the table, where it's labeled they were finding the letter "t." So that's an example of how it goes throughout the day.

Slide #14: Teaching During Transitions

Transitions are great opportunities for teaching. At McKinley-Brighton, the teachers use phonological awareness challenges to smooth transitions. Teachers might ask the children who have two syllables in their names to wash their hands and line up for lunch, or challenge children to segment their names into beginning, middle, and ending sounds before going to the gym.

Audio:

We will do phonological awareness during transitions. We've pointed, we've found letters, or they were told a letter and they will give us the sound, and they could go and wash their hands. We've done activities where you have...you tell your name and the beginning sounds of your name, we group the friends so all the friends whose names start with the "p" sound go wash their hands and

they'll go wash their hands.

Slide #15: Bringing Learning to the Outdoors

When children go outdoors, playing and learning are well integrated. The teacher might take children on a sound walk or play jumping or running games that require phoneme identification. Outdoor equipment lends itself to teaching phonological awareness skills—climbing structures can be used to count syllables; blending activities can be played while swinging; and beach balls can be used to segment color names into sounds.

Audio:

Doing phonological awareness on the playground, we use big beach balls and we could take the colors—like, it's a multicolored beach ball, and when you roll the ball and your friend stops it and you point to the color. And you have the...you know, it depends on what you want to do with the syllables. You could do the color, you could do what sound the color starts with or something, or you can make up a word that rhymes with it—they have to figure out or do a nonsense word for "orange." Like I said, we do hopscotch, we can do that outside also.

Field trips, we did a field trip...it was the sounds, listening to the sounds in the night. Like when we would go to the zoo we would do like sounds you hear on a bus or the sounds outside. The differences between when you go outside or when your mom takes you to the library. Is it the same? Do you talk the same? Or are you using the same voice quality as you would in the classroom?

Slide #16: Feeling Good About Language Skills

Teachers and children need to feel successful. Teachers experience success with phonological awareness when they understand the continuum of skill development, implement lessons that focus children's attention on sounds, and see evidence that children have learned.

Children succeed when they have mastered the foundational skills of reading and learned to apply these skills independent of the teacher.

Audio:

Children are only going to learn a certain percentage of what they hear. But it's once they hear it and they've got that experience and they start to use it and manipulate it and play with the language, that it becomes internal. They internalize the information and are able to use it independently. And that's pretty much a lot of what my goal is, to get them to that mastery level

where they can do things independently.

There are just so many things that you just don't realize that you do until you look at the research and the describing how it should look. And I'm like, "Hey, I've done that for years." So it's not as... it sounds harder than it is. It's really easy to integrate into these children's lives and they do carry it on home.