

## 2. Phonological Awareness

Demonstrate understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds.

### 2a. Research and Theory

#### What is Phonological Awareness?

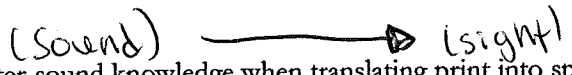
Phonological Awareness is the ability to hear, recognize and play with the sounds in our oral language. It is a hearing/listening skill. Phonological Awareness is an umbrella term that involves the ability to work with the sounds of language at the word, syllable and phoneme level. It includes rhyming, alliteration, sentence and syllable blending and segmenting.

#### What is Phonemic Awareness?

Phonemic Awareness is the most complex phonological awareness skill. It is the understanding that spoken words consist of a sequence of speech sounds and an awareness of the individual sounds or phonemes. It is the ability to attend to the sounds of language as being separate from the meaning of language.

Phonemic Awareness is the ability to segment words into sounds, blend them back together and manipulate the sounds to make new words.

#### What is Phonics?



Phonics is the ability to apply letter-sound knowledge when translating print into speech. Phonics provides readers with a tool to unlock or decode the pronunciation of written words. Phonemic Awareness skills precede phonics skills because children must first develop an understanding of how spoken language maps to written language. Phonemic Awareness bridges the spoken word (oral) to the written word (print).

#### Why are Phonological Awareness, Phonemic Awareness and Phonics so important to the developing literacy learner?

- Approximately 20% of children will have difficulty with phonological awareness upon entering school and will eventually struggle with figuring out how sounds work in print (phonics, decoding, spelling).
- Without phonemic awareness, a child may be able to learn letter-sound relationships by rote, but will not be able to use and coordinate letter-sound knowledge to read or spell new words.
- Phonemic awareness plays a critical role in the development of skills required in the manipulation of phonemes and the application of phonics to reading and spelling.
- Current research suggests that the greatest impact on phonemic awareness development is achieved when there is a combination of interaction with print and explicit attention to the sound structure in spoken words. Teachers making the underlying sound structure explicit when at the same time referring to the print. (Cunningham et al., 1998)

[Adapted from Vacca & Vacca et al, 2012]