



Happy Talk's Top 10 Tips for Phonological Awareness

1. Listening to Sounds in the Environment



Play listening games with your child such as:

Listening walks- Going on a walk and talking about what sounds you can hear in the environment e.g., birds singing, car engine, lawn mower etc.

Animal sounds- Encouraging and modelling the sounds that animals make in play e.g., cow- "moo."

Instrumental sounds- Introduce your child to instrument sounds and make music with items around the house e.g., tapping a pan with a spoon, rice in a bottle etc.

2. Singing Songs and Nursery Rhymes

Singing songs and nursery rhymes is a fun way to help develop awareness of sounds, words, rhythm, and rhyme. It is a key skill for speech and language development. Try to sing the same songs daily so that your child is able to learn the rhythm and words. This will encourage your child to join in with you. You can add movement, gesture, and clap along to the song. Through singing songs and nursery rhymes, children also learn to speak with animated voices by changing their intonation.



3. Reading Stories



Children's stories are full of rhythm and rhyme to help engage and draw their attention to the spoken word. You can vary the intonation of your voice to make it more fun and interesting. Reading the same story over and over helps your child to remember what happens and to join in with you. It also develops narrative skills and helps your child to anticipate what will happen next and what word comes at the end of the sentence. These are all foundation skills required for your child when they are ready to learn to read and write.





4. Clapping Syllables



You can help your child develop their awareness of syllables within words by clapping, stamping, or tapping out the number of beats in a word. Children's own names, family and pet names are a good place to start. It's useful to begin with words with fewer number of syllables e.g. 'dad,' 'mummy,' 'Be-tha-ny,' and then increase to longer words with more syllables e.g. 'he-li-cop-ter,' 'hi-ppo-po-ta-mus.' This helps children who may miss out syllables within words e.g., banana- "nana."

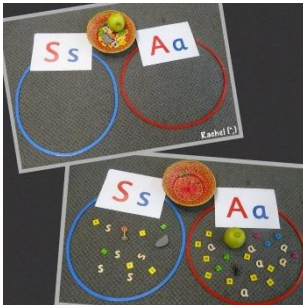
5. Counting Words in Sentences

You can help your child develop their awareness of words within a sentence by clapping/tapping out the individual words. For older children you can count how many words are in a spoken or written sentence. This helps a child to hear the individual words that make up the sentence and draws attention to the smaller function words within sentences such as 'the,' 'a,' 'an,' and 'is' which are harder to hear and learn.

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The car is red.



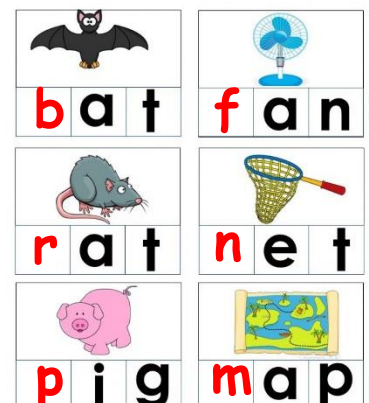
6. Listening and Sorting Sounds



You can help your child to listen to letter sounds and learn to put the same sounds together. The aim would be to build up to the point where they can listen to words with different sounds at the beginning and sort them into the ones which begin with the same sounds. You can start with a choice of just two sounds e.g., sun, sea, tea, tap, sink, tie - and sort into two piles, beginning with 's' or 't'.

7. What Sound is at the beginning?

Being able to isolate the sound at the beginning of words helps to develop your child's ability to segment words into their sounds. You can start with short consonant-vowel words e.g., 'car,' and consonant-vowel-consonant words e.g., 'van,' and tell your child what sound the word begins with. You can segment the initial sound from the rest of the word e.g., "bat begins with a 'b' sound. Listen, b-at, b-at, bat." I Spy is a good game to play to develop this skill as well as being fun for all the family! You can also think about the sound at the end of the word once your child is able to identify sounds at the beginning of words.





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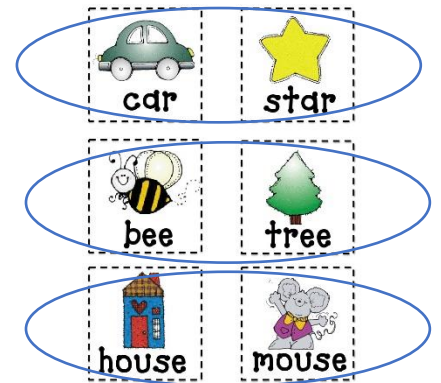
8. Alliteration



You can also develop your child's listening skills by asking them to listen to two words and identify if they begin with the same sound e.g., "do 'mat' and 'man' begin with the same sound?" "Do 'mat' and 'cat' begin with the same sound?" You can then model that 'mat' and 'man' start with a 'm' sound and 'cat' begins with a 'c' sound. Break up the first sound from the rest of the word to help them to hear the initial sound e.g., m-at, m-an, c-at.

9. Rhyming

As well as nursery rhymes and stories with rhyming words, you can develop your child's awareness of rhyming words by introducing rhyming pairs and talking about how the words sound the same at the end e.g., 'h-ouse' and 'm-ouse'. You can then ask them to listen to two words and see if they rhyme e.g., Do 'car' and 'star' rhyme? Do 'car' and 'bee' rhyme?







10. Segmenting and Blending



Being able to hear the sounds within words is an important skill to develop speech sound awareness. Use words that contain a consonant and a vowel e.g., 'car' or contain a consonant-vowel-consonant e.g., 'cat.' Break the sound up into its sounds e.g., 'c-ar' and 'c-a-t' and see if the child can work out what word you are saying. You will need to model this at first by breaking the word up and blending it for the child to hear e.g., 'c-ar, car.' Make sure you say the sounds without 'uh' on the end so 'c' does not become 'cuh.' This will make it difficult for your child to blend the sounds together to make a word as they will hear 'cuh-a-tuh' rather than 'c-a-t.'

Get in Touch!

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