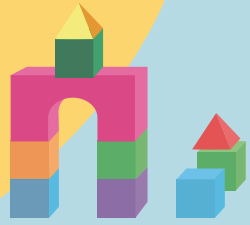


Building Phonological Awareness in Preschool Children



What is phonological awareness?

Phonological Awareness is the ability to identify and manipulate units of sounds in spoken words. (e.g., What rhymes with )

Why is phonological awareness important?

Research shows that it strongly predicts children's later literacy skills. The more a child is aware of sounds in spoken words, the better the child will be in reading and writing¹.



How do we build phonological awareness in children?

Teachers can teach **phonological awareness** through:

- Games (e.g., "I spy" objects with the beginning sound /c/)
- Rhymes and Songs (e.g., Clap to the words in "Jack and Jill")

Phonological awareness needs to be taught explicitly.

Teachers can:

- clearly tell children the skill they will learn
- model how to use the skill
- provide opportunities for children to acquire the skill.



An example of teaching phonological awareness explicitly is **direct teaching**.

Direct teaching is a fast-paced, explicit and repetitive mode of teaching.

For children with needs in phonological awareness, direct teaching can be considered and carried out in a small group.

Keen to know more about direct teaching and how to teach phonological awareness explicitly?



View a short video of how a local preschool educator has done so.



Look through the strategies in the NEL Educators' Guide for Language and Literacy.



¹ Spira, E.G., Bracken, S.S., & Fischel, J.E. (2005). Predicting improvement after first-grade reading difficulties: The effects of oral language, emergent literacy and behavior skills. *Developmental Psychology*, 41(1), 225-234.