



Quality ChildCare

For Registered Home-Based Providers

LEARNING TO GROW ★ WINDWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Vol. VIII, No. 5

10 Hallmarks of Quality Child Care

- ★ Build trusting relationships
- ★ Provide consistent care
- ★ Support children's health
- ★ Provide a safe environment
- ★ Provide positive guidance
- ★ **Provide a language-rich environment**
- ★ Foster curiosity and development through play
- ★ Individualize care and learning activities
- ★ Partner with parents
- ★ Pursue personal and professional growth

This Month's Hallmark of Quality Child Care

Providing a Language Rich Environment

Raising Future Readers

How do you raise a reader? This has been a question parents and early childhood educators have been asking for decades. The *National Early Literacy Panel Report* found that three skills strongly predict future reading achievement:

- Oral Language
- Phonological Awareness
- Alphabet Knowledge

Bonding with children through songs, books, and daily interactions help to build oral language, a strong foundation for literacy. This newsletter will discuss the other two important building blocks – *phonological awareness* and *alphabet knowledge*. These important skills help to give the children in your program the best possible start to becoming a proficient reader!

Phonological Awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate the parts of words and sentences such as:

- identifying rhyming words that have the same ending sound (e.g., ball/tall);
- recognizing words that have the same beginning sound (e.g., ball/bent);
- identifying the syllables in a word (e.g., tri-cy-cle);
- blending and segmenting beginning and ending sounds (e.g. b-all/t-all);
- segmenting a sentence into words (e.g., This-is-my-ball).

Alphabet Knowledge is the ability to recognize that letters are symbols that stand for something. It is understanding that each letter has a name and makes a different sound. Children develop alphabet knowledge when educators provide them meaningful opportunities to explore letter symbols and sounds.

In this newsletter, we will discuss the developmental progression of phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge. We will also share ideas to integrate phonological awareness and alphabet knowledge into daily experiences for infants, toddlers and preschoolers.



Infants

Babies begin to develop early literacy skills as they watch, listen, and explore everything around them. By 8 months of age, they begin to take turns in “conversations” by listening, responding, and babbling. As babies explore the world around them, they will begin to understand how objects work and that words have meaning.

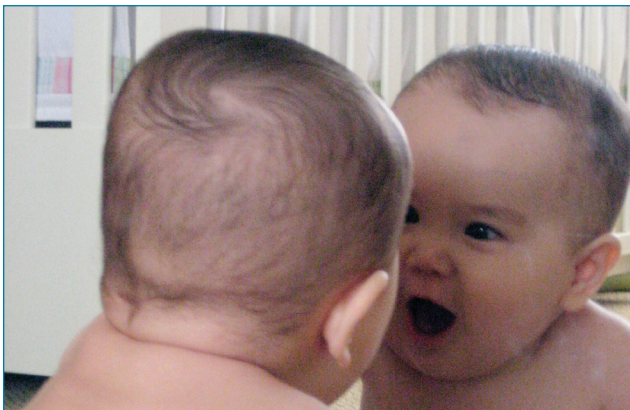
You can support phonological awareness with infants through:

- **Self-Talk or Mirror Talk**– talking to her about what you are doing (e.g., “I am mixing your yummy poi.”) or by labeling her actions throughout the day (e.g., “You’re holding the ball.”) Talking to the child is the best way for her to hear words and connect those words to what they mean.
- **Nursery Rhymes and Songs** – singing songs with rhymes such as *Twinkle Twinkle Little Star*, *Row Row Row Your Boat*, or *Humpty Dumpty*. These familiar songs often have rhymes that feature words that sound the same.

You can support alphabet knowledge with infants by:

- Providing different materials in a variety of textures.
- Allowing infants to grasp and mouth soft books or board books.

By exploring materials and books of differing texture, babies learn about the world. As you describe the shapes and textures, you help build vocabulary and an awareness of shape and form.



Toddlers

Toddlers demonstrate early literacy skills as their vocabulary increases. They are able to listen and understand the meaning of some words, and may have brief conversations with others. Toddlers often enjoy listening to stories by looking and pointing at the pictures in books.

You can support phonological awareness in toddlers by building on the infant strategies listed in this newsletter and by:

- **Reading Rhyming Books** over and over. Through repetition, the children can finish the rhyme. For example, “Brown Bear Brown Bear what do you see? I see a Yellow Duck looking at __.”
- **Making up silly sentences** using the first letter of the children’s names. For example, “Silly Sarah spilled spots on a snake!”

Calling attention to the ending sounds in rhyming books or the same initial sounds helps develop phonological awareness.

You can support alphabet knowledge in toddlers by building on the infant strategies listed in this newsletter and by:

- Exploring tactile alphabet books and singing the alphabet song;
- Providing sensory experiences with alphabets such as alphabet magnets, sandpaper letters, and letters written with sidewalk chalk.

Toddlers develop alphabet knowledge when they are able to explore alphabets through sensory experiences.

Preschoolers

Preschoolers hear and play with sounds in words through singing and by playing rhyming games. They are developing an awareness that words have syllables. By age 4, children are beginning to recognize some letter symbols and the sounds that they represent. They begin to understand that print has meaning and may use emergent writing such as scribbling to represent words.

You can support phonological awareness in preschoolers with the following strategies:

- **Rhythm and Rhyme** – Say a nursery rhyme and stomp to the rhythm together. This helps bring awareness to the ending sound of rhyming words and emphasizes words as you stomp it out.
- **Syllable Clap** – Clap out the syllables during your morning greeting. For example, sing “Good morning, good morning, good morning to Makana!” Then say, “Clap his name with me. Ma-ka-na. His name has 3 syllables!” This helps children understand that words are broken into units of sound.
- **Word Stretch** – Have children guess which word you are saying when you stretch it out by individual sounds, emphasizing that words are made up of individual sounds. For example, say, “aaa...t.” “Put it together to make at.” Now switch roles by having a child stretch a word while you guess what it is!

*Hint: Start with words with 2 sounds, then work your way up to longer sounds.



You can support alphabet knowledge in preschoolers with the following strategies:

- Modeling the letter names and sounds. For example, “The letter B has a line with two bumps and is called the letter ‘B’. It sounds like /b/b/b.”
- Calling attention to words and letters in the environment. For example, “That sign says STOP. ‘Stop’ starts with the letter ‘S’. Whose name also starts with ‘S’ and has the sound /s/? That’s right, Sarah!”
- Hunting for letters by having the children find a letter in a page of a book (ensure that the print is large enough to easily spot the letter).

In order for children to be successful readers, adults must first model the phonological and alphabet concepts, and provide opportunities for you and the children to practice together as well as independently. This helps to provide the best results in raising successful readers!



Training Opportunity

6 Essential Steps to Fun and Effective Phonological Awareness Instruction

This online training offers a certificate for 1 training hour at EdWeb.net.

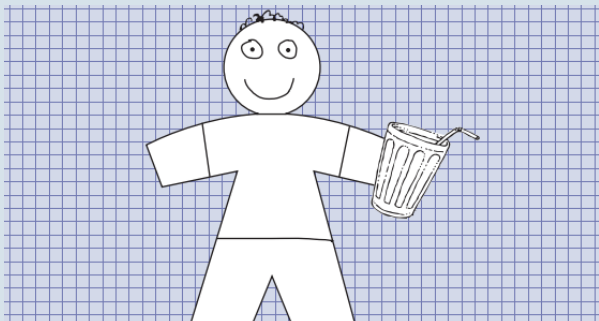
<https://home.edweb.net/webinar/lwt20210603/>



Featured Activity

Popular Pals

Adapted from: Florida Center for Reading Research and Florida DOE



What You Need:

- Popular Pal cut-out (See *Insert*)
- Scissors
- Glue
- Crayons or markers
- *Optional: Items for decorating (e.g., yarn for hair, googly eyes, buttons, etc.)

What to do:

1. Help your child cut out the Popular Pal cut-out found in this packet.
2. Let her decorate it using crayons or optional decorative items.
3. Help her come up with an *alliterative name phrase* in which the first sound is the same (e.g., “Happy Holly”). You may also use “likes” to extend the alliteration (e.g., “Happy Holly likes hamsters.”).
4. Write the name phrase on a strip of paper and display it with the decorated cut out.

Citations

National Early Literacy Panel. (2008). *Developing early literacy: Report of the National Early Literacy Panel*. Washington, DC: National Institute for Literacy.

National Center on Early Childhood Development, Teaching and Learning. *Phonological Awareness*. Retrieved from <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/no-search/dtl-pla-phonological-awareness.pdf>

Suggested Books

Discover these books and more at the Hawai'i State Public Library www.librarieshawaii.org

Infants and Toddlers

Can You Say It, Too? Tweet! Tweet!

by Nosy Crow

This interactive lift-the-flap book shows different birds and the sounds they make. The simple text makes it the perfect first book for imitating sounds.



Are You a Cow? by Sandra Boynton

A wacky chicken narrates this hilarious rhyming story. As readers answer the chicken's questions, they'll gain animal recognition skills as well as the importance of being ourselves.



Preschoolers

Some Smug Slug

by Pamela Duncan Edwards

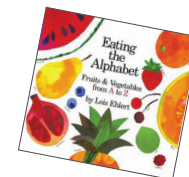
This alliterative tale about a slug who must climb a slippery slope will have children laughing out loud as they listen to the initial sounds of words in the story. Don't forget to look for the hidden “S” on every page!



Eating the Alphabet

by Lois Ehlert

A deliciously fun alphabet book featuring fruits and vegetables from around the world. This is the perfect book for preschoolers learning upper- and lowercase letters while learning about a mouth-watering arrangement of foods.



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Learning to Grow Quality Child Care for Registered Home-Based Providers is a project of University of Hawai'i, Windward Community College with funding from the Hawai'i Department of Human Services ★ 808-462-4700 ★ www.learningtogrowhawaii.org

