

## **PA 1, MONDAY-**

### **INTRO**

**Whether you're a teacher who's on your way to school to work with kids and you're leaning into the science of reading movement, or you're on your way to tutor some great kids who are struggling with learning to read and spell well, or you're a parent who'd like to learn to better equip and inspire your children from home, the *On Your Way* podcast is for you.**

**I'm Dr. Christina Williams, and I'm your host.**

Today we're launching our first one-a-day-series. I'll be sharing five ways to promote phonemic awareness in small bits, so you can listen each day as you're making your way to work and become better equipped to provide bits of instruction and bite-size practice opportunities (with a focus on fun!) that a student just might be needing to gain some forward traction with literacy acquisition.

This week's focus is: phonemic awareness

In this five-part series, I'll share:

- 1) What phonemic awareness is,
- 2) Why phonemic awareness is important,
- 3) Many fun ways you can help your children build their awareness of phonemes, and
- 4) How phonemic awareness may impact reading and spelling success.

As we begin, today, I want you to know that demonstrating an awareness of sounds in words can be a little tricky—even for adults. If, especially during the upcoming lessons, you find that *you're* not quite hearing all the sounds in words, don't be concerned. Phonemic awareness is not necessarily a prerequisite for learning to read and spell well but is certainly supports the phonics instruction I will be sharing later. Phonemic awareness is a great predictor regarding kids' early reading and spelling development. When kids struggle with PA, they may struggle with learning to read—it may be an indicator that additional supports may be necessary—and it's better to learn this information sooner than later.

The English language is code-based. That means we have symbols we call letters (or graphemes) that represent sounds (or phonemes).

When working with phonemes, one doesn't even need to know the letters of our alphabet. Though promoting phoneme awareness is enhanced when we acknowledge the letters that represent the sounds, it is not required.

When focusing on building awareness of sounds in words, we can guide students to pay attention to, repeat, and even manipulate sounds in words. This practice equips children for reading and spelling success and strong academic achievement.

Here's how:

When kids can listen to a string of discrete sounds and slide them together and recognize a word they know, they are better prepared for making the sounds they see, according to the letters they're decoding in words on the page.

When a student hears /c/-/a/-/b/-/i/-/n/ and they slide those sounds together in their minds as they come to recognize the word *cabin*, they're better prepared to look at letters, say aloud the corresponding sounds, and then zip the sounds together to recognize—to understand—a word they know.

When kids can say the word *pancake* and can stretch that word apart noting each discrete sound like this: /p/-/a/-/n/-/c/-/ay/-/k/, they're better prepared to write the corresponding letters as they move from left to right across the page, and spell words they want to write.

When kids cannot discern the sounds in words, it becomes tremendously difficult to spell them accurately.

In the **next** series, we'll begin adding letters to the sounds we hear in words. That transition indicates that we'll be moving away from simply promoting an awareness of phonemes and into explicit phonics instruction, for phonics is the association of the sounds we hear with the letters and letter combinations that represent them.

When students are skillfully decoding and encoding words, leaning into the sounds, there is no further need for promoting phonemic awareness. We'll be leaning into the phonemes to read and spell, and as long as your students are assimilating the skills you're teaching, there is no need to dedicate additional precious time to phonemic awareness practice. The whole reason for noticing the sounds in words is to equip kids to navigate our code-based language. When they're doing that, drop the explicit instruction around phonemes.

To promote the greatest success when practicing the skills I'm sharing, I recommend the following:

1. schedule your practice for a time when your students will receive it best.
2. Smile a lot and provide lots of encouragement.
3. Name, aloud, what the kids are doing well.
4. Avoid saying things like, "You're so smart." When kids hear these words, they may be less inclined to try something risky for fear of losing their "smart" status.
5. Avoid saying, "No." When kids provide an inaccurate response, provide the correct response and a quick tip so they can get it right the next time.
6. When kids don't seem to get it, provide additional instruction and model correct responses to make clear how to successfully complete each task.
7. Monitor students' engagement. Quit the practice you're doing before they lose interest, so they will be eager to begin the next time.
8. Do not set timers or make bribes. This time should feel like it IS a reward. It should not require one.
9. Share your kids' successes. Have them show their skills to others. Genuine, heartfelt praise is pure glory!
10. Remember, do not worry if your kids are not really great at this. Just continue to play with the sounds in words in a way that makes your kids happy.

## **Building Block #1-**

### **Rhyming Words**

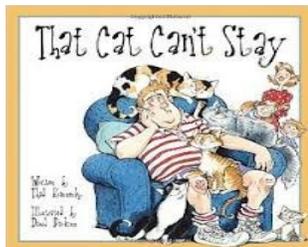
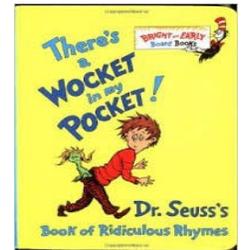
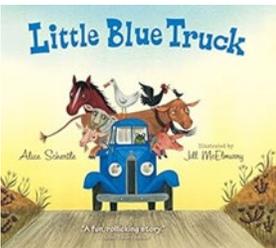
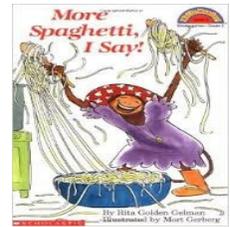
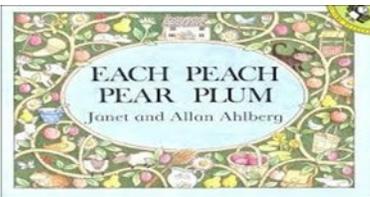
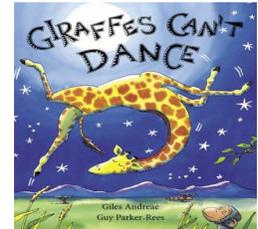
Today, we're going to have some fun with rhyming.

Rhyming words have the same sounds from the final voiced vowel in a word, on. We'll be working with perfect rhymes.

In the word horse, the o in /or/ contains the final vowel sound we hear, so horse rhymes with words ending with the sounds /orse/ like course and force.

In the would cry, the /I/ sound for the y is the final vowel sound, so words like die, guy, and imply all rhyme.

One fun way to build kids' awareness of phonemes is to read books with strong rhyming patterns.



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- Fill in the Omitted Word

Read the book and enjoy the rhythm and rhyme, but stop on occasion to observe whether your child can fill in the missing parts of the word you strategically omit. For example, in the Little Blue Truck by Alice Schertle, you might say,

“Neigh,” said the horse.

“Quack,” said the duck

“Beep,” said the friend-ly little blue tr\_\_\_\_\_.

Can your children fill in the correct word endings? If they can, you have some indication that they have a good sense of rhyme.

Read a rhyming book each day. If you're re-reading a book, try omitting different word endings—not the whole word, only the part that makes the rhyme.

You don't want to interrupt the reading so much that it feels disjointed, and the story becomes lost.

Dr. Seuss books (and others) feature crazy, made-up words, and you can too. We don't want all the words to be nonsense words, but certainly some of them can be. It's fun!

For additional practice, you can sing songs like:

“I'm a little tea pot  
short and stout.  
Here is my handle,  
Here is my sp\_\_\_\_\_.”

or, you could sing,

*Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star,*

But instead of singing all the words, you could say,

“Up above the world so high,  
Like a diamond in the sk\_\_\_\_\_.”

It's important that you share the beginning sounds of the target word, otherwise it could be a random guessing game about what word could fill the space. You must provide those initial sounds—all the way to the final vowel sound heard in the word.

There are lots of fun ways to promote an awareness of rhyming words, and I'm going to share some here. I hope you'll enjoy playing one of the following games across the next few days:

- The Plop Game

Here's a movement activity that my students love. I ask them to stand up and to march in place as I say lots of rhyming words. When they hear a word that does NOT rhyme with all the others, they are to plop down on the floor, right away. I might begin like this:

rub, tub, stub, flub, club, sub, dub, cub, rub, chub, feather, grub, hub . . .

(Hopefully, they plop down when they hear *feather!*)

If your children don't sit down when you say the nonrhyming word, YOU plop down and say, “Did you hear how \_\_\_\_\_ sounds really different from the other words I said? Listen again. (Say the words slowly, and really enunciate. You can even point to your mouth as you make the sounds to heighten kids' awareness of what your mouth is doing as you make them.

- Do These Words Rhyme?

Ask: “Do these words rhyme?”

Say one word, and then, another word.

Your children will simply say either yes, or no.

If they respond incorrectly, repeat the words, landing on the final sounds a little harder. Make the sounds in both words, and say, “Yes, they *do* rhyme. I can tell because...” or “They *don’t* rhyme. I can tell because... Now, you try the next one. Listen carefully to the ending sounds in each word.”

- Finish This Rhyme.

red/bed- blue/(\_\_\_\_)

*Kids say something that rhymes with blue, such as “glue”.*

In this example, you say two rhyming words, to offer some support, then you say another word (that’s easily matched for rhyming) and encourage your children to fill in a rhyming word.

- Clap, Clap \_\_\_\_- Slap, Slap \_\_\_\_

This game has some action, so it may be more engaging. Also, the more senses we involve, the more likely it is to stick with our kids. Clap your hands together twice and say a word. Then, slap your hands on your legs twice, and have your children fill in a rhyming word. Try to keep it going with out breating the beat. It might help to have a list of easily rhymed words nearby. I have provided one in the show notes. I can tell you from experience that it can be difficult to think of words on the fly.

clap, clap -- snow

slap, slap -- (\_\_\_\_\_)

*Kids say something thatrhymes with snow, such as “blow”.*

- What Rhymes with \_\_\_\_\_ and Starts with /\_\_\_\_\_/?

This one is fun too. You want to try to keep it going; to keep a steady beat. Again, that word list will be helpful.

- \_\_(action)\_\_ if These Words Rhyme. (smile, wink, high five, tap your head, blow a kiss, touch your toes, etc.)

Simply direct your students to do an action if the words you say rhyme. Sometimes the fun part is keeping them from doing something (like smiling) if the words rhyme.

You can integrate your students’ other interests by inviting them to do something like: Do a pirouette if these words rhyme. Do a roundhouse kick if these words rhyme. Say the number one in Spanish if these words rhyme. At bathtime, you could say, “If these words rhyme, wash your toes. Bubble: Trouble” If you’re outside, you could come up with many other things to do. Get creative.

There are lots of rhyming videos on the web, but I highly suggest you choose the videos that do not show word spellings, and you’ll also want to ensure they share the correct definition of rhymes. The top video on my most recent Google search is not one I’d recommend. Try the one I

provide in the show notes. It provides an accurate definition, and it focuses only on the sounds (not the spellings). It's also not terribly annoying. That sure helps!

This concludes our first Phonemic Awareness lesson featuring ways to enhance kids' rhyming skills.

Remember to:

Read books with rhyming patterns.

Play the plop game

Ask, "Do these words Rhyme?"

Play, "Finish this rhyme" red/bed-blue/(\_\_\_\_\_) or Clap, Clap \_\_- Slap, Slap \_\_\_\_

Ask, "What rhymes with \_\_\_ and starts with \_\_\_?"

And direct kids to do a motion (like "give me a high five") to signal when words rhyme.

## **OUTRO-**

***Hey, everyone. We hope you've enjoyed this episode of On Your Way with, me, Dr. Christina Williams. We'd love some feedback. Give us a "thumbs up" if you liked what you heard. Tell us, in the comments, what worked and please share what we could do to make these podcasts even better.***

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