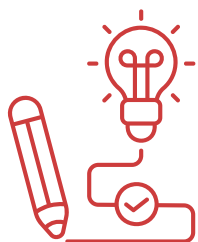


Phonological and Phonemic Awareness: The Foundation of Early Reading Success



Phonological and phonemic awareness (PA) are foundational for early reading. Phonemic awareness—**manipulating individual sounds in words**—is a strong predictor of long-term reading success. These skills support **decoding, spelling, and fluency**.

Key practices for effective instruction

- **Use explicit instruction:**
 - Clearly explain, model, and practice sound-based tasks.
 - Provide verbal prompts, examples, and corrective feedback.
- **Incorporate multimodal techniques:** Engage students with finger tapping, hand signals, stretching sounds, and word boxes to blend and segment words.
- **Connect PA to phonics:** Teach PA alongside letter-sound correspondence. This integrated approach improves decoding and word reading.
- **Keep it short and consistent:** Use 15–20 minute daily sessions. Short, regular lessons are more effective than longer, infrequent ones.
- **Adapt by student needs:**
 - General education: Whole-class instruction combining sound and letter knowledge.
 - At-risk, multilingual learners, and students with disabilities: Small groups or 1:1; focus on explicit, code-based, and visual/verbal support.



What to watch for

- **Avoid isolated skill drills:** PA should not be taught in isolation. Always link it to reading and writing activities.
- **Monitor progress:** Use assessments to identify needs and tailor instruction—especially for at-risk readers.
- **Stay trained and supported:** High-quality professional development ensures teachers can confidently deliver effective PA instruction.



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The Kentucky Reading Research Center is a partnership between the University of Louisville and the Kentucky Department of Education. Established through Kentucky Revised Statute 164.0207, the center supports educators in implementing evidence-based reading programs and promotes literacy development across the Commonwealth.



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Tips by student group

- **Multilingual learners:** May excel with phonemic tasks—use small groups, visual cues, and verbal modeling.
- **Students with disabilities:** Benefit from individualized instruction (180 minutes or more per week) with code-based focus.
- **At-risk students:** Gain most from explicit, multimodal small-group instruction (90 minutes or more per week).

Classroom takeaway



Phonological and phonemic awareness instruction should be explicit, multimodal, connected to print, and tailored to your learners. These strategies are not just helpful—they're essential for building skilled readers.



Learn more

The information provided in this summary is based on findings from ***The Effects of Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Interventions: A Systematic Review***. Access the full report and other resources [here](#).



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