



# WAYS TO PRACTICE AT HOME

## PHONEMIC AWARENESS



- 1) **Nursery Rhymes** - Read nursery rhymes to your child and have them help you guess the rhyming word in each sentence.
- 2) **Dr. Seuss Books** - Dr. Seuss books are great to read to your child because they are full of rhymes. Read them to your child and have them help you guess the rhyming words.
- 3) **Guess that Beginning Sound** - During car trips think of different words to tell your child. See if they can guess what beginning sound they start with.
- 4) **Make a list** - Make a pretend shopping list with your child with items that can only begin with a certain sound (C - carrots, corn, cake).
- 5) **Penny Push** - Give your child 5 pennies. Place a picture on the table. Have them push up a penny for each sound they hear in the word.
- 6) **Heads, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes** - Give your child with 1 - 4 sounds (I, to, cat, dogs) and have them stand and touch their head, shoulders, knees, and toes as they are saying the sounds in the word.
- 7) **Bean Bag Toss** - Hand your child 5 bean bags. Give them a word. Have them toss a bean bag in a bucket for each sound they hear in the word. For each bean bag they make in the bucket, they get a point.
- 8) **Phoneme Jump** - Place a green, yellow, and red mat on the floor and give your child a word. Have them jump to each mat for each sound they hear in the word.
- 9) **Silly Putty** - Give your child some silly putty and a word. Have them stretch the silly putty for each sound they hear in the word.
- 10) **Down By the Bay** - Sing the song "Down by the Bay" and have your child come up with their own rhyme at the end ("Have you ever seen a bee drinking some tea").



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## PHONICS



- 1) **Story time** - When reading to your child talk about words, letters, and sounds. For example, ask your child, "What words do you see on this page that start with the same letter as your name?" Or, ask, "What is the beginning sound in the word 'car'?" Or, point out, "Look, that word has the chunk /ip/ in it. What sounds does that chunk make?"
- 2) **Magnetic Letters** - Keep magnetic letters on your fridge and take turns spelling secret words for each other to see.
- 3) **Fun Words** - Make words in fun ways with clay, play dough, or sand and talk about the sounds that make up the words.
- 4) **Neighborhood Words** - Look for letters or words in your house or neighborhood. Point out the letters you see and the sounds they make as you read words on signs, labels, menus and the TV.
- 5) **Wonderful Writer** - Writing can help develop phonics skills so have your child write grocery lists, letters, or birthday cards.
- 6) **Word Games** - Play word games such as Boggle jr., Scrabble jr., Spill and Spell, or What's Gnu.
- 7) **Educational TV** - If your child is going to watch TV, have them watch shows on PBS like "Between the Lions", "Super Why", or "The Electric Company."
- 8) **Letter Hunt** - Card rides can be long, so play the letter hunt game. Start by having everyone in the car look for a word on signs that begin with the letter "A." Once you find it, move on to the letter "B." See if you can go through the entire alphabet.  
Made by Ashley Stevens, Reading Specialist
- 9) **Weird Words** - Lots of times there are irregular words you encounter when reading. When those words pop up in reading talk to your child about them and make them aware that not all words follow phonics rules.
- 10) **Computer Games** - Use computer software that focuses on developing phonics and emergent literacy skills. Seek out online games as well. PBS Kids is a great resource for free phonics games.



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## FLUENCY



- 1) **Choral Reading:** Read a story with your child in unison.
- 2) **Echo Reading:** Read a sentence or line of a book and then have your child repeat the sentence or line.
- 3) **Partner Reading:** Take turns reading each page with your child.
- 4) **Repeated Readings:** Encourage your child to read one of their favorite books multiple times. Each time it will become easier and easier for them to read.
- 5) **Reading Along:** Purchase or borrow books from the library that have CDs or cassettes that go along with the book. Have your child follow along with the recording as they read to themselves.
- 6) **Record your Reading:** Have your child tape record their reading and then review it. Ask "Did I read with expression?", "Was I reading smoothly?", "Did I go too fast or too slow?", "Did I pay attention to punctuation?", "Did I say the words correctly?", etc.
- 7) **Make it a Family Affair:** Encourage your child to read to brothers or sisters. Bring books along to family events and have them ask relatives to read aloud to them a book that they have been practicing.
- 8) **Fluency Phrases:** Ask your teacher for a set of fluency phrases and have your child practice these phrases using expression, a good rate, smoothness, and heeding punctuation.
- 9) **Poetry:** Encourage your child to borrow poetry books to practice reading. Poetry with help with phrasing and expression.
- 10) **Make Some Music!** : Print off some of your child's favorite songs and have them practice reading those songs. They can even sing them when they're practicing!



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## VOCABULARY



- 1) **Concentration** - Write your child's vocabulary words on index cards and the definitions on another index card. Flip all of them over and have them flip over two at a time. If they match, they get to keep them. If they don't flip the cards back over and try again.
- 2) **Draw a Picture** - Have your child use their artistic talents to draw a picture of each of their vocabulary words. Then have them write a sentence to accompany the illustration.
- 3) **Create a Story** - Encourage your child to write a short story containing all of their vocabulary words.
- 4) **Guess that Word** - During a car ride or down time, pick a vocabulary word but don't tell your child. Describe the word and see if your child can guess it. Then switch roles and have them select a word for you to guess.
- 5) **Charades** - Make it a family fun night and take turns acting out each of your child's vocabulary words and see if the family can guess which one it is.
- 6) **Word Scrambler** - Take your child's vocabulary words and scramble the letters in each one. See if they can unscramble the word and discover what the word is.
- 7) **Tic-Tac-Toe** - Make a tic-tac-toe board with your child's vocabulary words in each space. In order to put an "X" or "O", you or your child must say the definition of the word.
- 8) **Three Questions** - Instead of just regurgitating a definition, help your child make more meaning with their vocabulary words by asking 3 questions: "What is it? What is it like? What are some examples?"
- 9) **Worn Words** - Instead of allowing your child to just say "good" or "bad", encourage them to use bigger words such as "fantastic, excellent" or "dreadful, ghastly."
- 10) **Idioms** - Use idioms with your child and explain what they mean ("Who let the cat out of the bag" means who told the secret).



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## COMPREHENSION



- 1) **Road Trips** - Place a bin of books in your car for long road trips. Encourage your child to read during your trip and ask them questions about the book as they are reading it.
- 2) **Understanding the Meaning** - Children with rich vocabularies understand stories better. Expose your child to new words by taking them on field trips (Museums, Aquarium, etc).
- 3) **"Yes" or "No" Questions** - Instead of asking "yes" or "no" questions, ask your child "Who, what, when, where why" questions. Sharing ideas helps your child to think more deeply about what they are reading.
- 4) **Read Out Loud** - This makes your child read slower and gives them more time to process what they read. It also benefits your child to hear those words out loud.
- 5) **Just Right Books** - Make sure your child is reading books at their instructional level. Reading books that are too easy makes your child become uninterested, while on the other hand if they are too hard, your child will be focusing too much on the words instead of focusing on the story.
- 6) **Think Aloud** - As you read with your child, stop and discuss your thinking out loud with your child. That means explain pictures, ideas, questions, and connections that go through your head. By doing this, you model what good readers do as they read a text.
- 7) **Be a Chef!** - Books are not the only way to boost comprehension skills; use recipes instead! Pick out a complex recipe and work through it with your child to make it.
- 8) **Board Games** - Reading the rules of a board game and playing it helps to foster comprehension and understanding. Instead of explaining the game to your child, have them read the rules and explain it to you.
- 9) **Bob the Builder** - Bought a new bookshelf? Have your child help you read the directions and put it together. They will have to pay careful attention to what the directions are saying in order to put it together correctly.
- 10) **Be a Detective** - Have your child practice supporting their answers by going back in the text and searching for the answers. Adorn them with a cute little hat and magnifying glass and they can be a real reading detective!