



Sound Awareness

Sound (phonological) awareness is the ability to **identify** and **manipulate** sounds within words. This includes skills such as counting syllables, identifying the last sound of a word and identifying rhyming words. Sound awareness skills are important as they support the development of speech, language and literacy.

Activity 1: Listening for Sounds

Encourage your child to listen for sounds throughout the day. These sounds don't need to be speech related. For example, listen for the car horn, the phone ringing or different animal noises.

Talk about the features of these sounds e.g. Are they loud or quiet? Are they stretchy (long) or bouncy (short)?

Play a copying game- see if your child can copy the sounds you make!

Activity 2: Syllable Counting

Identifying the number of syllables (parts) in a word e.g. Say "snowman has 2 parts, 'snow' and 'man' so I did 2 claps. Snow-man."

Model how many parts are in words. You could clap out greetings or places e.g. "He-llo Ja-mie" "Met-ro Cen-tre"

Point to pictures in their favourite books/films and ask them to try and count the parts too.

If this is tricky for your child that's okay- just show them how you would do it and provide a correct model!

Activity 3: Identifying Sounds

Identifying the first sound in words e.g. "Snowman starts with 'ssss'. Can you hear that? **S**nowman."

Fill a bag full of objects with the same first sound (e.g. **c**ap, **c**arrot, **k**ing). Practise identifying the first sound. When your child understands this, you can add other sounds to make it trickier (e.g. apple, fork) or ask them if they can think of anymore '**c**' words.

Play I-spy and take turns to guess from the first sound.

Remember the importance of modelling and emphasising the sounds!

Top Tips:

1. Focus on **sounds** rather than **letter names**. For example, say 'sss' rather than 'suh' or 'ess'.
2. Give lots of praise and positive reinforcement when your child gets something right. If they get something wrong, model the correct answer to them instead of using negative language (e.g. "no that's not right") or getting them to repeat themselves.
3. Try incorporating activities into games (e.g. lotto, snap, hide and seek pictures) or something your child is motivated by. The more enjoyable it is, the more likely they will want to do it again and will learn from tasks.
4. Sing lots of nursery rhymes together! Make it fun and remember to highlight the rhyming words.

The best way to work on sound awareness is to complete tasks for 10-15 minutes every day, or as regularly as possible. This method of 'little and often' will help keep your child interested and will help them learn through regular reinforcement!