

# TACTILE & KINESTHETIC STRATEGIES FOR TEACHING PHONEMIC AWARENESS IN PRE-K

## Activities by Phonemic Awareness Skill:

### INITIAL & FINAL PHONEME MATCHING AND ISOLATING

Any of the activities in this section can be used to teach initial or final sound concepts

### I-SPY FIRST SOUNDS WITH REAL OBJECTS



Collect 5-7 objects from around the classroom. Say, "I spy something that starts with the sound /f/."

Model how to hold the /f/ sound as you check each item for the first sound. For example, "/f/ turtle. Does that match? /f/ baby. Does that match? /f/ fish. Does that match? Yes!"

### MYSTERY BAG OF SOUNDS



Fill a bag with objects that begin (or end) with the sounds you are targeting. Make sure there is one item per child in your class in the bag. One child begins by reaching in with eyes closed and pulls out an object. The child says the first sound (or last, depending on how you are playing) of that object and places it in the middle of the circle. The bag gets passed around the circle until every child has had a turn and the bag is empty.

These games are designed to be taught as purely phonemic awareness games, before the alphabetic principle is introduced. The games are either adapted from *Teaching Reading Sourcebook* or original to the author.

Many studies show the importance of explicitly teaching phonemic awareness to young children (Ehri, 2001).

These games offer a developmentally appropriate way to do so that removes worksheets and tabletop activities (Miles, 2015).

## DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN INITIAL AND FINAL SOUND

### CROSS THE BRIDGE - FIRST AND LAST SOUNDS



Each child is given a picture of an animal (some that work well are: cat, dog, goat, worm, bird, pig). Build a bridge out of hollow blocks, or it could be modified to be a "tunnel" and children could crawl under a table or through chairs. The teacher pretends to be a grumpy guardian of the bridge, such as a troll, for example. In order to cross the bridge, the child must say the code, which is the first sound of their animal. Once all of the animals have crossed the bridge, they must cross back safely. To get back across, they have to say the last sound of their animal.

It is important to tell children at the beginning that this is a fun game and if they need help, their friends and teachers will help this. This helps alleviate any concerns children might have of getting "eaten" by the troll.

The verbotonal movements from Sounds in Motion are a wonderful addition to these games if you are already trained in that method; however, the games are successful on their own as well.

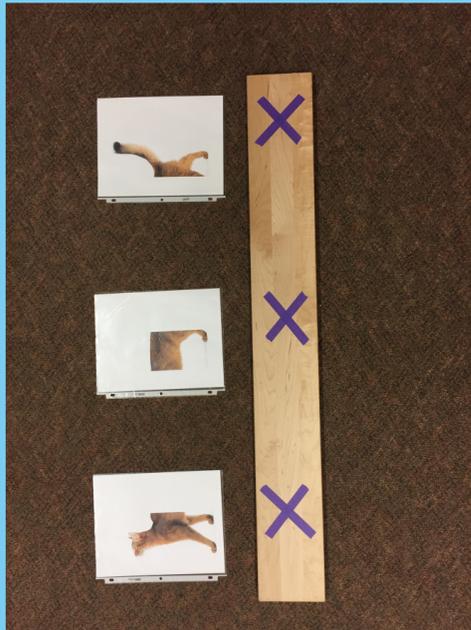
## BLENDING & SEGMENTING

### ROBOT SIMON SAYS WITH SEGMENTED SOUNDS

Review the rules of Simon Says (when I say "Simon Says, you do what I say." Explain that you are going to speak all of the words in a robot voice, where all of the sounds are separate. The children's job is to figure out what the teacher is saying and then do that motion. For example, "Simon says, touch your /n/ /o/ /z/." Children should touch their nose. For this game, it is usually too tricky to never say "Simon Says" and try to get children out. They are working on blending the phonemes in their minds so it is too much of a cognitive load to ask them to also inhibit their action. Once children get good at blending, you can invite children to be clue giver, with some scaffolding.

## BLENDING & SEGMENTING CONTINUED

### WALK THE PLANK



This is a variation on the idea of an Elkonin box. To set up, you can simply make tape Xs on the rug, use hollow blocks, find another way to clearly mark separate steps. Children are given a word segment and then blend

Children speak one phoneme per step. After they say all of the individual phonemes, they say the fully blended word. For example, if the child is given the word "cat," they would say /k/ on the first step, then /a/ on the middle step, then /t/ on the final step. Then they would say, "cat."

One way to scaffold this at the beginning is to print segmented pictures of the target word. This is a cat, segmented into the head, middle body, and tail. These pictures are placed next to the corresponding X, which supports children to remember which part of the word they are supposed to be saying.

### COLLABORATIVE WORD BUILDING IN GIANT ELKONIN BOXES



Using tape, create boxes or spaces for children to step into on the floor. Give a word that children will be segmenting together (for PreK, it helps to have the real object. In this case, it's a book). Assign one child as the first sound, one as the middle, and one as the last (or however many sounds you are working with). Make sure each child knows their sound. When you point to a child, they have to step forward and say their sound. Practice going faster and faster until the group of children are blending the word as a team.

In our preliminary studies, when PreK children were first taught phonemic awareness skills via the games in this series, and were then introduced to the alphabetic principle later in the year, they were able to successfully transfer their knowledge of segmenting and blending to reading and writing pseudowords.

## References

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