

Understanding the Link:

Phonological Awareness & Speech Articulation

Parent Advice Sheet – Age 5

What Is Phonological Awareness?

Phonological awareness is the ability to hear and play with sounds in spoken language. It includes:

- Recognizing rhymes
- Breaking words into syllables
- Identifying beginning and ending sounds
- Blending sounds to make words

These skills are essential for learning to read and spell.

What Is Speech Articulation?

Speech articulation is how clearly a child pronounces sounds and words. At age 5, children are expected to:

- Say most speech sounds correctly
- Use clear pronunciation in everyday speech
- Be understood by familiar and unfamiliar listeners

How Are They Connected?

Phonological awareness and speech articulation are closely linked because:

- Children need to hear sounds clearly to play with them (e.g., rhyming, blending)
- If a child mispronounces sounds (e.g., says “tat” for “cat”), they may not recognize or manipulate those sounds in words
- Strong articulation helps children notice sound patterns, which supports early reading

For example: If a child can't say the /s/ sound clearly, they may struggle to hear and identify it in words like "sun," "sock," or "snake."

How You Can Help at Home

1. Listen & Repeat Sounds Together

- Say sounds slowly and clearly: "Let's say /b/ like in 'ball'"
- Repeat words with target sounds in playful ways

2. Use Rhymes & Songs

- Sing nursery rhymes and pause for your child to fill in the rhyming word
- Emphasize sounds in songs: "Baa Baa Black Sheep"

3. Play Sound Games

- "I Spy" with sounds: "I spy something that starts with /m/"
- Clap out syllables in words: "ba-na-na"

4. Practice Clear Speech

- Use a mirror to show how sounds are made
- Repeat your child's words correctly without pressure: Child: "I see a wabbit" You: "Yes, a rabbit is hopping!"

5. Read Books with Sound Play

- Choose books with rhymes, alliteration, and repetition
- Ask questions like "What sound does 'dog' start with?"

Fun Activities to Try

Activity	What to Do	Skills Practiced
Rhyme Time	Find words that rhyme with "cat" or "dog"	Rhyming, sound awareness
Mirror Talk	Say sounds while watching mouth movements	Articulation, sound clarity
Syllable Clapping	Clap out syllables in names or food items	Syllable awareness

Sound Sorting	Sort pictures or toys by beginning sound	Sound recognition
Sound Hunt in Books	Find words with target sounds while reading	Listening, articulation

Quick Tips

- Keep practice short and playful (5–10 minutes)
- Repeat and revisit sounds often
- Celebrate effort and progress
- If needed, ask your child’s teacher for specific sound targets