

P H O N E M I C A W A R E N E S S

Sound Steps

A one-minute sound warm-up and two simple listening games for children who are building confidence with the sounds in spoken words.

U S E I T T H I S W A Y

Keep it short, spoken, and successful.

Choose one small part of the pack. Say the words aloud rather than showing the child the print. Play for a few minutes, stop while it still feels good, and return another day.

/m/ /a/ /p/

map

tap · move · smile

I N S I D E T H I S P A C K

1-minute sound warm-up

Two game levels: Sound Match for early listeners, and Sound Switch for children ready to change sounds in simple words. Use with one child or a small group.

QUICK DAILY WARM-UP

The 1-minute sound check-in

Set a timer for one minute. Choose one column. Keep the pace calm, offer a model when needed, and finish with one word the child can do confidently.

PUT IT TOGETHER

Say the sounds. Ask for the word.

/s/ /u/ /n/
/m/ /a/ /p/
/f/ /i/ /sh/
/t/ /e/ /d/

PULL IT APART

Say the word. Ask for each sound.

moon
tap
leaf
ship

FIRST SOUND

Say the word. Ask what sound starts it.

bus
rain
fish
moon

LAST SOUND

Say the word. Ask what sound ends it.

sun
leaf
map
dish

HELPFUL PROMPT

"Listen to the sounds, not the letters." If a word has three sounds, use three counters or taps. Avoid adding an extra "uh" sound after a consonant.

A GENTLE ADJUSTMENT

If a child becomes stuck, slow down the word, say the answer together, then offer one easier word. This is practice, not a test.

GAME 1 • EARLY LISTENERS

Sound Match

Listen for the first sound. The adult reads a card aloud. The child listens, says the first sound, and lays that card on the matching sound mat.

SET UP TWO SOUND MATS

Use **two sheets of paper, plates, or small mats**, one labelled /m/ and one labelled /s/. These are shared sorting spots, not one mat or letter tent for each card. Put the cards in one pile between them.

/m/

sun



Adult says "sun."
Child hears /s/.

/s/
sun card goes here

0 1
Make the mats

Place the two labelled mats side by side, with the card pile between them.

0 2
Read one card aloud

Keep the print facing the adult so the child is listening, not reading.

0 3
Match and say

The child lays the card on a mat, then says the first sound and the word.

/ M / OR / S /

sun

Adult says: sun

/ M / OR / S /

moon

Adult says: moon

/ M / OR / S /

sock

Adult says: sock

/ M / OR / S /

map

Adult says: map

/ M / OR / S /

sand

Adult says: sand

/ M / OR / S /

mouse

Adult says: mouse

/ F / OR / B /

fish

Adult says: fish

/ F / OR / B /

bus

Adult says: bus

/ F / OR / B /

fan

Adult says: fan

Small group option: Give each child a sound home. Read one card. Everyone listens, then the child holding the matching home explains why the card belongs there.

GAME 2 • READY FOR A STRETCH

Sound Switch

Say the first word aloud. Ask the child to change one sound and say the new word. Use counters or fingers to keep the sounds visible in the child's mind. These cards are for the adult to read aloud.

0 1

Say the word

For example: "Say cat." Let the child repeat it and tap each sound.

0 2

Name the change

"Change the first sound /c/ to /m/."
Keep the rest of the word the same.

0 3

Say the new word

Ask, "What word did you make?"
Model it together if needed.

CHANGE FIRST SOUND

cat → mat

Change /c/ to /m/

CHANGE FIRST SOUND

sat → rat

Change /s/ to /r/

CHANGE FIRST SOUND

fin → pin

Change /f/ to /p/

CHANGE LAST SOUND

map → mat

Change /p/ to /t/

CHANGE LAST SOUND

sun → sum

Change /n/ to /m/

CHANGE LAST SOUND

sit → sip

Change /t/ to /p/

TAKE AWAY A SOUND

smile → mile

Take away /s/

TAKE AWAY A SOUND

plane → lane

Take away /p/

TAKE AWAY A SOUND

stop → top

Take away /s/

KEEP THE GAME USEFUL

Only use cards your child can say easily. If sound changes feel frustrating, return to Sound Match or the warm-up for a few days. Every child can move at a different pace.