

3–5 Years

Language/Literacy: Phonological Awareness

Note: Procedures are provided for individualized assessments of the following literacy skills: compound words (Week 11), syllables (Week 16), initial sounds of familiar words (Week 23), and blending the sounds of one-syllable words (body-coda and onset-rime in Week 30). Observation of a child’s progress in developing one or more of these skills can be used as a complement to assessment information or as an alternative to an assessment. See the section on Individualizing Children’s Learning Experiences in the *ELM Curriculum User Guide: 3–5 Years*

WHEN INTRODUCED AND EMPHASIZED: Weeks 1–6, 8–11, 13–18, 20–31, and 33–35

BEHAVIORS TO OBSERVE

- Identifying Sounds
- Recognizing, Naming, and Suggesting Words That Rhyme
- Forming and Segmenting Compound Words
- Segmenting Words into Syllables and Blending Syllables
- Identifying the Initial Sounds of Familiar Words
- *Blending the Two Initial Sounds (Body) with the Ending Sounds (Coda) of One-Syllable Words
- *Blending the Initial Sound (Onset) with the Remaining Sounds (Rime) of One-Syllable Words
- *Identifying Final Sounds

*This advanced skill may be pursued with children who have productively participated in activities focused on blending sounds in Weeks 24–30. See the section on Individualizing Children’s Experiences in the *ELM Curriculum User Guide: 3–5 Years*.

OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Identifying Sounds

In what ways does the child recognize and identify sounds when he/she:

- responds to the sound made by staff (Week 2, Day 2 group activity)?
- names both sounds that were made while his/her eyes were closed (Week 2, Day 4 center activity)?
- identifies sounds as quieter sounds or louder sounds while playing; identifies sounds heard while playing (any free play period after Week 1, Day 2)?

Recognizing, Naming, and Suggesting Words That Rhyme

What level of understanding of rhyming does the child show when he/she:

- recognizes and uses rhyming words during a mealtime conversation (any mealtime after Week 4, Day 2)?

- participates in a rhyming transition activity (any transition activity after Week 4, Day 2)?
- decides whether two words rhyme; explains how he/she knew the words did or did not rhyme (Week 5, Day 2 group activity)?
- matches cards that rhyme (Week 5, Day 4 center activity)?

Forming and Segmenting Compound Words

What level of understanding of compound words does the child show when he/she:

- talks about compound words at meals (strawberry, applesauce) or while brushing teeth (toothbrush, toothpaste) (any routine activities after Week 8, Day 2)?
- places two component word pictures together to form a compound word (Week 9, Day 2 group activity)?
- says the two words heard in the compound word; switches the two words to create a silly word (Week 10, Day 4 center activity)?

Segmenting Words into Syllables and Blending Syllables

What level of understanding of syllables does the child show when he/she:

- claps syllables in a name or word at lunch (any mealtime after Week 13, Day 2)?
- uses “robot talk” to segment words into syllables for each animal picture on animal syllable cards (Week 14, Day 4 center activity)?
- blends syllables into a word after staff says the word in “robot talk” (Week 15, Day 4 group activity)?

Identifying the Initial Sounds of Familiar Words

What level of understanding of initial sounds does the child show when he/she:

- recognizes that the pictured item in the initial sounds picture cards starts with the same sound as the child’s first name (transition activity after Week 17, Day 2)? Example: Leo and Liam leave the group when the staff member holds up a picture of a log.
- identifies or names the initial sound in a food item at mealtime (any mealtime after Week 17, Day 2)?
- sorts picture cards by initial sound (Week 18, Day 2 center activity)?
- says which two words in a group of three picture cards begin with the same initial sound; names the letter that represents the initial sound for the two words; finds items in the room that start with a specified initial sound (Week 20, Day 4 group activity)?

*Blending the Two Initial Sounds (Body) with the Ending Sounds (Coda) of One-Syllable Words

In what ways does the child show understanding of body-coda when he/she:

- blends the two initials sounds with the ending sound (any transition after Week 24, Day 2)?

- blends the two initial sounds with the ending sound to figure out a riddle (Week 24, Day 4 group activity)?

***Blending the Initial Sound (Onset) with the Remaining Sounds (Rime) of One-Syllable Words**

What level of understanding of onset and rime does the child show when he/she:

- blends a word that was segmented into its onset and rime (any free play period after Week 27, Day 2)? Example: Adult asks “Can you bring me a b-ook? Child says “book” and brings the adult a book.
- names the animal whose name has been segmented into onset and rime in a song (Week 29, Day 4 group activity)?

***Identifying Final Sounds**

In what ways does the child identify a final sound in a word when he/she:

- names the two words that end with the same final sound; names the letter that makes the final sound (Week 33, Day 4 group activity)?
- plays a funny game where someone asks for an item to be passed to him/her by making the sound at the end of the word and having others at the table guess which item the child wants (any mealtime after Week 33, Day 2)? Example: Child or adult says “Please pass the /n/. Do I want the corn or milk?” Child who is the focus of the observation says “corn” and passes the corn.

FOLLOW-UP LEARNING SUPPORTS

Reinforce

The following activities are designed to support the ongoing development of phonological awareness.

Identifying Sounds

- Invite children to listen to and identify quieter sounds inside and outside.
- Invite children to name sounds that are similar to the sound heard. Example: Child hears thunder. Staff member asks “What other sounds are loud like thunder?” Child responds “A door slamming.”

Recognizing, Naming, and Suggesting Words That Rhyme

- Encourage a child to make up a new nursery rhyme by substituting new words for current rhyming words. Example: “Sparkle, sparkle pretty snow, How I wonder where you go.”
- Invite a child to make up a silly rhyming song similar to “Willoughby, Wallaby, Woo.”
- Invite a child to draw pictures of three or more rhyming words.



Forming and Segmenting Compound Words

- Go on a scavenger hunt for items that are compound words. Help children find and name compound word items and identify the component words.
- Encourage children to name body parts that are compound words. Examples: eyelash, fingernail, and toenail.
- Place component word cards and compound word cards on the table at lunch and encourage the children to blend and segment the compound words. (ELM provides printable cards for the following compound words: cornbread, corndog, blueberry, strawberry, pancake, and watermelon.)
- Place the component word cards for brush and tooth and the compound picture card for toothbrush near the area where children brush their teeth. Encourage children to segment the word toothbrush or blend the words brush and tooth before or after brushing their teeth.

Segmenting Words into Syllables and Blending Syllables

- Use the animal syllable cards from the Week 13, Day 2 center activity at a transition time. Invite children to clap the syllables of each animal name.
- Encourage children to play a game with a partner where one child does “robot talk” and the other child blends the words back together as he/she repeats what was said in “robot talk.”
- Invite children to sort the names of children in your room by the number of syllables in each name.
- At lunch or snack, discuss the number of syllables in the name of each food; make a chart that sorts food names by number of syllables.

Identifying the Initial Sounds of Familiar Words

- While talking with a child, draw out the initial sound and ask what sound the child hears at the beginning of the word or invite the child to identify the letter that makes the initial sound.
- Write “B-I-N-G-O” on chart paper. Lead children in singing “B-I-N-G-O.” Cover the letter “B” with different letters and continue singing the song. Week 21, Day 4 provides an example with the letter S.
- Encourage a child to make new words by changing the initial sound. This may be done with word families, -at (bat, hat, mat, sat), -it (bit, fit, lit, mitt), or -ow (bow, cow, chow, now). Children may enjoy exploring the sounds of their own names by changing the initial sound (this is harder to do with names that begin with vowels).

***Blending the Two Initial Sounds (Body) with the Ending Sounds (Coda) of One-Syllable Words**

- Invite children to make-up riddles using body-coda. Examples can be found in the Week 24, Day 4 activity plan.
- Select a few words from a familiar book that can be segmented into body-coda. Read the book, segmenting the words as they are read, and inviting children to blend the body-coda into the words.
- Introduce letter picture cards by segmenting the words into body-coda.
- Say the names of children and staff in your room by separating the body and coda, and inviting children to say the name by blending body and coda.

***Blending the Initial Sound (Onset) with the Remaining Sounds (Rime) of One-Syllable Words**

- Make up new lyrics to “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” to include having a store. Invite children to add items to the store. Sing the song using onset-rime with the items in the store. Examples: p-en, c-up, b-owl, m-eat, b-ox, b-all, d-ice, c-an, and v-an.
- As a transition activity, invite children to the next activity by color of clothes. Instead of saying the color word, say the word as onset-rime. Examples: r-ed, gr-een, wh-ite, bl-ack, etc.
- Encourage a child to substitute a different letter for the first letter of his/her name and then blend the new onset with the rime. Example: Substitute “J” for “B” in Bill to make Jill.

***Identifying Final Sounds**

- Encourage a child to name words that end with the final sound of their name.
- Invite children to go on a scavenger hunt in the room to find items that end with a specific final sound. Example: Invite children to find items with the final sound /k/. Children might find a block, something black, or point to a sink.
- Invite children to draw or name items that have a final sound you say. Example: For the sound /ks/, children might draw or name items such as fox or ax (see Week 13, Day 4).

Reintroduce

The following activities are designed to support the development of phonological awareness among children who need additional support for developing sound skills. The activities are also appropriate for all children.

Identifying Sounds

- Repeat the Week 1, Day 1 group activity to support the concept of listening. Use new sounds from *General Sound Effects CD*.
- Use the Week 1, Day 2 group activity to review quieter and louder sounds. Remind children that it is harder to hear a quieter sound when a louder sound is being made.



Recognizing, Naming, and Suggesting Words That Rhyme

- Repeat the Week 4, Day 2 group activity. Remind children how to know if words do or do not rhyme. Say the “Humpty Dumpty” rhyme and emphasize the rhyming words.
- Repeat the Week 5, Day 2 group activity to provide children with practice in matching pairs of rhyming picture cards. This activity also can be used as a transition activity.
- Read a rhyming book, such as *Is Your Mama a Llama?* by Deborah Guarino, *Brown Bear, Brown Bear What Do You See* by Bill Martin, Jr.; or a Dr. Seuss book, such as *Fox in Socks*. Encourage children to complete the rhymes as they occur.

Forming and Segmenting Compound Words

- Repeat the Week 8, Day 2 group activity until the review of letter C. Remind children that two words are put together to make a compound word. Demonstrate with compound word cards how to blend component words to make a compound word. Encourage children to clap for the two component words that are being blended into a compound word. Omit clapping if this seems confusing to children.
- Use the component word cards from the Week 9, Day 2 group activity at a transition time. Invite children to blend the component cards to make a compound word before moving to their next activity.
- Repeat the first segment of the Week 10, Day 2 group activity to remind children how to identify two words in a compound word.

Segmenting Words into Syllables and Blending Syllables

- Repeat the Week 13, Day 2 group activity until the activity reviews the letter X. Remind children that each part of a word is a syllable. Clap slowly and deliberately for each syllable in a name. Practice dividing and clapping the syllables of the child’s name and classmates’ names.
- Play the game in the first segment of the Week 14, Day 2 group activity. Remind children that the word is divided into syllables.
- Repeat the first segment of the Week 15, Day 2 group activity. Support children in identifying a word you say in “robot talk.”

Identifying the Initial Sounds of Familiar Words

- Repeat the Week 17, Day 2 group activity, emphasizing the first segment that focuses on initial sounds. Remind children that the first sound we hear in a word is the word’s beginning sound. Encourage children to think of children in the room whose first names begin with the identified letter.
- Repeat the first segment of the Week 17, Day 4 group activity, clearly enunciating the initial sound.