

Defining the Ph Words

PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS:

- A general appreciation of the sounds of speech as distinct from their meaning (e.g., noticing alliteration, being aware of rhyming).
- Includes the understanding that sentences are made of words, words are made of syllables, and syllables are made of sounds or phonemes.
- Phonological awareness is a broad term that includes phonemic awareness.
- It involves both large and small sound units.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS:

- A finer-grained understanding that words can be divided into a sequence of phonemes.
- Refers to only the smallest sound units (phonemes).
- Children who have strong phonemic awareness can hear the individual sounds of words. They can omit sounds, add sounds, or even substitute sounds.

PHONICS:

- Phonics tasks involve print. Phonics refers to letter-sound correspondence—the knowledge of how letters represent sounds.
- An abstract process that focuses on associating written symbols (graphemes) with auditory sounds (phonemes).

The terms “phonological awareness” and “phonemic awareness” are at times used interchangeably but do have distinct definitions. The term “phonological sensitivity” is also used in some of the literature. I have chosen to use the term “phonological awareness” as it encompasses the skills that fall under phonemic awareness. The important concept to grasp is that phonological awareness is distinct from phonics.