

Phonological and Phonemic Awareness Pillar – Amber Nichols

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<https://youtu.be/gMZb2FyrCcg>

Amber Nichols: When looking at the research and what we know about the science of reading, we must intentionally focus on key components known as the five pillars of literacy. They include phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and reading comprehension. The first pillar we focus on for our earliest learners is phonemic awareness. Research shows it is the number one predictor for future reading success, and the foundation on which all other reading components build. Phonemic awareness is the ability to identify and manipulate individual sounds, phonemes, in spoken words. We do this in kindergarten with listening games, small group instruction, and using every opportunity we can to allow students to hear the sounds and words.

Teacher: This is your favorite. This is the time when I'm going to give you a word and you say a word that rhymes. Not shout, but say. Are you ready? Give me a word that rhymes with bird.

Students: [All giving suggestions at once]

Teacher: I heard some silly words. Third is a real word. Dird. What about the word shop?

Students: No.

Amber Nichols: From birth, students build vocabulary from oral language. Children need to hear words to make connections. Once students master phonemic awareness and hearing and manipulating phonemes, we can then apply that knowledge to reading and written language.

Teacher: We are going to play a zoo game.

Student: What?

Teacher: Okay, this is going to be so fun. We are going to look at animal cards and find the pictures of the animals that start with the same sound, and we're going to kick out the one that does not belong. Are you ready?

Student: Yeah.

Teacher: Okay. Butterfly. Say butterfly.

Students: Butterfly.

Teacher: Okay. Say Beaver.

Students: Beaver.

Teacher: Say Bear.

Students: Bear

Teacher: Say Zebra.

Students: Zebra.

Teacher: Which one does not belong?

Students: Zebra.

Teacher: Which one? Oh, have a seat. Tell me the name.

Students: Zebra.

Teacher: Is it zebra? Yeah. All right. Ready? Say no zoo for you.

Students: No zoo for you.

Teacher: All right, so they don't get to go to our zoo.

Amber Nichols: Phonemic awareness, instruction, and good, quality foundational reading skills instruction should be explicit, sequential, systematic, prescriptive, diagnostic and cumulative. Teachers should be assessing skills and reteaching for mastery.

Teacher: Now what we're going to do is we're going to do that part where we blend the sounds together, like in our head, belly, toe words. Show me...

Teacher and Students: Head, belly, toe.

Teacher: And we blend the sounds. Alright. Are you ready? ZZ, Augh, t. Head, belly, toe it.

Teacher and Students: ZZ, Augh, t. Zaught. Is that a real word or a silly word?

Student: Silly.

Teacher: Silly word.

Amber Nichols: Phonemic awareness strategies really allow students to play with the sounds they hear in words. It's about identifying phonemes and manipulating them in ways that we say

stretch or grow our brains. I like to share these games and activities we play with parents and caregivers so they can mimic these activities at home. Phonemic awareness activities, make great car games, before nighttime routine games, or even bathtime games.