

EARLY LITERACY STRATEGIES

As students progress through Kindergarten and First Grade, they must master some basic skills.

1. **Phonemic Awareness:** This is the ability to hear the individual sounds in words. Children must be able to segment them (pull them apart) as well as blend them.

Activities:

Syllable War: You and your child look around you and see who can find the object with the most syllables. Telephone = 3 syllables, television = 4 syllables). Whoever finds the object with the most syllables wins!

I Spy: Look around you and say “I spy something that begins with the sound /b/. Then your child looks around to find the object beginning with that sound. This game can be played with ending sounds or rhyming words (I spy something that rhymes with...).

Robot Speak: Tell your child a word (this could be used in I Spy as well), but say it one sound at a time. “I’m looking at a mmm, aaa, tttt. What am I looking at?” The child must blend the sounds given into a word – “Mat.”

Silly Songs: Many silly children’s songs incorporate phonemic awareness. The Name Game (or Banana Song) is a perfect example:

Katie, Katie, bo-batie,
Banana-fana fo-fatie
Mee-Mi-mo-matie
Katie

Jeff, Jeff, bo-beff
Banana-fana fo-feff
Mee-Mi mo-meff
Jeff

2. Phonics: Phonics simply refers to the sound each letter (or combination of letters) makes. (b = /b/, sh = /sh/). In reading, students must instantly match the sound to each letter they see (phonics), then blend those sounds together to make a word (Phonemic Awareness).

Activities:

I Spy can be played to reinforce phonics skills as well. “I spy something that starts with the letter w.”

Finding the Alphabet: Look around your surroundings and try to find words or objects that begin with all of the letters in the alphabet (I see an apple for a. I see a box for b, I see...).

Recognizing print around them: Teach your child about the print that surrounds them every day. Billboard signs, restaurant and store signs and logos, traffic signs (S-T-O-P spells Stop!)

3. Overall Language: As children grow up, they need to be exposed to as much language as they can. This will help them develop new vocabulary as well as strengthen language understanding in general.

Activities:

Read to your Child: Read, Read, Read! Research shows that the general conversation of college graduates is not as rich as that of children’s books! Reading to your children will expose them to great vocabulary as well as ideas and experiences.

TV: What? TV? Yes, two television shows I can think of are excellent opportunities for vocabulary development. Martha Speaks and Super Word Girl are both shows on GA Public Television. They will introduce three or so vocabulary words, use them and provide examples through the show, then revisit them at the end. They are actually entertaining and educational!

Talk to your Child: Never forget to talk to your child. Ask how his or her day was. Push for details. Have them describe things they’ve seen. These interactions will help develop their language, and they will also develop a positive relationship with you.