Ten Things you can do to Develop Phonological Awareness

What is phonological awareness?
A critical phase for emergent readers happens when they become consciously aware that language is an object, something that may be analyzed and manipulated by them in different ways: to rhyme, to play word games, and to talk about. We refer to this as phonological awareness.

Phonological awareness refers to a range of understandings related to the sounds of words and word parts, including identifying and manipulating larger parts of spoken language such as words, syllables, and onsets and rimes. It also includes phonemic awareness (understanding sounds within words) as well as other aspects of spoken language such as rhyming and syllabication.

How does phonological awareness develop?

Ten things you can do to develop phonological awareness:

1. Rhyming

Does it rhyme? (use at least one word from the text to generate rhyming pairs)
Do smell and bell rhyme?
What about my and by?
What about sand and band?
What about flower and fall?
Continue as time permits
Have students stand up if it rhymes and stay seated if it doesn’t rhyme. For pairs that rhyme, challenge students to identify other words that rhyme with the pair. Alternatively, students can also say “Rhyme time” with jazz hands if it rhymes and keep their hands still if it doesn’t rhyme.

Rhyme time – What’s a word that rhymes with dad? mean? that?
Rhyme time variation: Who has a word (played with the “Mary Had a Little Lamb” jingle)

Who has a word that rhymes with________, rhymes with ________, rhymes with ________?  
Who has a word that rhymes with ________? Oh Yes! the word is ________.

_______ (child’s name) ______ has ________ which rhymes with ________, rhymes with ________, rhymes with ________. __ (name) ___ has _____ which rhymes with _______. _______ and _______ they rhyme!

It starts with....rhyming game

I know rhyming words have the same ending sound. The ending sound in the word bag is /ag/.
If I put fl in front of ag I get fl—ag, flag!

Repeat the rhyme:
It starts with _____ and rhymes with ____.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Starts with</th>
<th>Rhymes with</th>
<th>Target word</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pl</td>
<td>Chant</td>
<td>plant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sw</td>
<td>Pitch</td>
<td>switch</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cr</td>
<td>Smash</td>
<td>crash</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sh</td>
<td>Park</td>
<td>shark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fl</td>
<td>Boat</td>
<td>float</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Sound Matching

Sound Matching Song: (Sung to “Jimmy Cracked Corn and I Don’t Care”)  
*say the phoneme sounds, not the letter names*

Who has a /ch/ word to share with us?
Who has a /ch/ word to share with us?
It must start with the /ch/ sound!
Chick is the word that starts with /ch/  
Chick is the word that starts with /ch/  
Chick is the word that starts with /ch/  
Chick starts with the /ch/ sound.

Repeat for END –ck sound, use the word trick from the poem to model.
3. **Word to Word Matching**

*Teacher decides how students are going to show whether they think they start with the same sound – thumbs up/thumbs down, stand up/sit down, jazz hands/quiet hands*

Do to and tap begin with the same sound?
Do to and dog begin with the same sound?
Continue with other target sounds.

4. **Odd Word Out**

**Focus on beginnings**
What word starts with a different sound: so, sun, mouse, and silly?
What word starts with a different sound: to, run, toe, time?
Continue with other target sounds.

**Focus on endings**
What word ends with a different sound: hum, yum, band, plum?
What word ends with a different sound: roar, box, four, car?
*Continue with other target ending sounds.*

**Focus on medial sounds**
What word has a different sound in the middle:
mouse, rain, pain, grain?
afraid, picture, brain, chain?
corn, horn, fork, row?

5. **Sound Isolation**

What is the beginning sound in the word jam? (/j/) jar? gap? for?
What is the ending sound in the word jug? (/g/) hug? elf? beef? deaf?
What is the ending sound in the word blue? (/ue/) cue? argue?
What is the beginning sound in the word turn? (/t/). tug? gap? for?
*Remember that students are identifying the sound, not the letter.

**Sound Isolation Song (Sing to the tune of “Old MacDonald”)**
“What is the sound that begins these words? Family and friend and feeling?
(Children respond with /f/).

/f/ is the sound that begins these words: family and friend and feeling.
With a /f/ /f/ here, and a /f/ /f/ there,
Here a /f/, there a /f/, everywhere a /f/ /f/

What’s a word that starts with….?
Identify the words in the poem that start with the target sounds. See if students can generate other words that start with the same target sound.

6. Phoneme Blending

Francisco the Frog Phoneme Blending – Use the frog puppet. Frogs can only speak one phoneme at a time – you can call this frog talk.
What word would we have if we put these sounds together:
/f/ /i/ /sh/? (puppet is doing the talking) Students stay fish. That’s right /f/ /i/ /sh/ are the sounds in fish.

Continue with the following words:
be (/b/ /e/)
if (/i/ /f/)
will (w/i/ll)
goldfish (/g/ /o/ /l/ /d/ /f/ /i/ /sh/)

Bubblegum Blending
Students pretend to put a piece of bubblegum in their mouths. They then stretch it, one small motion for each sound (i.e. /b/a/t/ would be three small motions). Students then do a long motion or stretching of the gum to put them together.
/w/i/ /n/d/

Continue with the following words:
bent /b/e/n/t/
clouds /c/l/ou/d/s/
hats /h/a/t/s/

Drive Through Blending (phonemic awareness and phonics)
Letters in a word are written out, somewhat spaced apart. A car “drives” through as students read and blend the isolated sounds.

7. Phoneme Segmentation

Show me with your fingers: How many sounds do you hear in the word can?
Think in your head, what are those sounds? Who wants to try writing the sounds in the word can on our segmenting board (student comes and writes can on the segmenting board where
there are three boxes; note that writing the sounds down moves this from a phonemic awareness activity to a phonics activity

Continue segmenting with the following words
on (2)
star (3)
flag (4)
stripe (5)

**Pound and Sound (can be segmenting and blending – first they segment, then they blend it back together)**
Felt squares are placed on the board. Students pound out each sound on the felt square.

8. **Phoneme Deletion**

   Say the word spring without the /sp/. (ring)
   How without the /h/
   Coming without the /ing/
   Flower without the /fl/
   Blooming without the /ing/
   Can without the /c/

   *Remember you are saying the sound not the letter.*

9. **Missing Phoneme**

   Identification of a missing sound can be played through a "What's missing?" guessing game. The teacher says two words for comparison and asks the children to identify the missing element:
   "Listen: spring - ring. What's missing in “ring” that you can hear in “spring”?”

   "Listen: how - ow. What's missing in “ow” that you can hear in “how”?”
   "Listen: blooming - bloom. What's missing in “bloom” that you can hear in “blooming”?”
   "Listen: can - an. What's missing in “an” that you can hear in “can”?”

10. **Phoneme Isolation**

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