



Milestones for Early Literacy

YOUNG LEARNING LLC



Welcome

Early literacy development plays a key role in preparing children to succeed as learners. We as parents, can (and should) strengthen these necessary skills before Kindergarten by preparing our children for learning to read. I have compiled a list of specific early literacy milestones in sequential order from most foundational to more advanced, along with suggestions on how to strengthen them. All of the activities suggested can be done using items around your house. I suggest blocks, coins, cheerios, M&Ms, etc. These milestones should be mastered between the ages of 3-5 and before children learn to read.



ENJOY!

Tavia Young

Founder, Young Learning

Counting Words in a Sentence

Practice by using blocks or counters to represent the number of physical objects. Once your child can do that accurately, replace the physical item with words.

suggestion

activity

“I want you to use these blocks (cheerios, coins, or another set of objects) to show me how many people you see in this room. For each person, you’re going to put 1 block in front of you. Try it. Great! There are 3 people, so you used 3 blocks. Can you show me how many bananas we have on the table? Great! There are 5 bananas, so you used 5 blocks! You can also do this with words and sentences: I am going to say some words and pull down a block for each word. Watch me.” Then, while pulling down a block for each word, say, “We walk”. After demonstrating how to pull down 1 object per word in a sentence, ask your child to do the same. If he is consistently successful, switch from using objects to clapping each word. Use the following simple to more complex sentences to continue practicing this skill: We run. My shoe. I like dogs. I like school. I see a dog. I see a bird. We have fun. That is a cat. That is a chair. My shirt is red. My school is fun. My hat is blue. My shoes are purple. My dog is happy. Sit at the table. Sit on the carpet. That dog is barking. That window is open.

Blending Syllables

Practice by saying words in parts, leaving 1 second in between each syllable. Then, ask your child to tell you the word you've said.

suggestion

activity

"I am going to say a name in parts to try to trick you. I want to see if you can tell me the name I'm saying." Say a family member or friend's name (So...phie, Grand...ma, Mar...tin) while leaving a second between each syllable. "Whose name did I say? Good! Now I'm going to say the name of something in this room and I want you to point to it." Say the names of different objects with different numbers of syllables (win...dow, chair, ta...ble, com...pu...ter, etc.) and see if your child can accurately point to the correct object.

Segmenting Syllables

The goal is to make sure your child can hear a word, then recognize the number of syllables in that word. Clapping words (ta...ble = 2 claps), finger tapping words (ta...ble = tap index and middle finger), and humming words are all ways to understand syllables.

suggestion

activity

“I am going to say a friend’s name and I want you to repeat his/her name while clapping it. If I say “Wendy”, you will say Wen...dy while clapping 2 times.” If your child has trouble with this, try humming a nursery rhyme to your child to see if he can guess the rhyme. Once this is mastered, switch roles and have your child hum a familiar rhyme to see if he can correctly hum the different syllables while you guess the rhyme!

Identifying Rhymes

Explain to your child that rhyming words are words that sound the same. This skill can be introduced and practiced using nursery rhymes and familiar rhyming books. Once rhyming words are easily identified, move on to giving your child 2 words aloud and have him tell you if they rhyme or not.

suggestion

activity

“Say this after me: ‘Rain, rain, go away.’ Good, now say this after me: ‘Come again another day!’” Make sure your child is able to say and hear each line. You may want to repeat the rhyme again. “Do you hear any words that sound the same (or rhyme)?” If your child does not recognize the rhyming words, whisper the nursery rhyme, then say the rhyming words louder. Continue to practice this skill with other nursery rhymes (Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star, Hickory Dickory Dock, etc.) then move on to identifying rhymes using words; “Do care and bear rhyme? Lamp/stamp? door/chair?” Once mastered, then say “I am going to say the name of a body part...head. Which one of these words rhymes with ‘head’ - does ‘red’ rhyme with head? (Y) Good! Does ‘said’ rhyme with head? (Y) Good! Does ‘shelf’ rhyme with head? (N) Great listening!” Continue with other familiar words to see if your child can identify rhymes.

Generating Rhymes

Remind your child that rhyming words sound the same. You can practice this skill by saying a word, then asking him to give a word that rhymes with yours. Do not be concerned if he gives you a nonsense (not real) word. The goal is for him to focus on the sounds of language and to generate words (real or nonsense) that have the same ending sounds.

suggestion

activity

“I am going to pretend I have a big bag and am going to say all of the pretend things that I have in my bag. When I stop, I want you to give me a word that rhymes with all of the items in my bag. Ready? dog, log, bog, fog, ____.” Continue practicing this skill by giving your child 3-4 words, then have him give you a word that rhymes. Once he is able to consistently generate a rhyming word following a sequence, try saying 1 word aloud and asking him to give you a word that rhymes. “I’m going to give you a word...eye. Now it’s your turn, you tell me a word that rhymes with eye.” You can give clues to words if he is unable to generate a rhyming word if needed. If a nonsense word is given but rhymes, acknowledge the rhyme then ask if he can give you a real word (if unable, no problem). If he is still struggling with generating rhymes, try saying a few silly sentences and have him finish one of them. Here are a few examples: A frog on a dog. A sheep in a jeep. A flea in a tree. A pig wearing a _____. A cat sleeping on a _____. A fish in a _____.

Onset-Rime Blending

The onset of word is the beginning consonant sound/s and the rime contains the letters that follow (usually the vowel and the final consonant/s). The goal of this skill is for your child to be able to blend the onset and rime into a 1 syllable word. This is the first step in learning to decode a 1 syllable word into phonemes.

suggestion

activity

Begin by placing 3 different objects (or pictures) in front of your child. The items you choose should have a 1 syllable name (van, frog, moon, lime, rope, soap, etc.) “I am going to say a word but in a different way and I want you to point to the object that I’m saying. Ready? My word is mmm....oon [hold the onset for a second then say rime, do not pause between the 2]. Great! You pointed to the correct object. What word was I saying?” If your child does well, give him 4-5 objects to choose from. If he struggles, only give 2 objects. *Use only words that begin with continuous sounds. The consonants that make continuous sounds are: r, s, f, l, z, v, n, & m.

Phoneme Segmentation

Phoneme segmentation is the ability to hear a word, then segment that word into individual sounds. The activities below start from easiest, most foundational skills needed to more advanced. The child should be able to identify beginning sounds first, before moving on to other sounds in words (medial and final).

suggestion

activity

- **Blending Sounds into Words:** This skill is very similar to the 'Number 6 - Onset-Rime Blending' milestone, but this time you will stretch the all of the sounds of the words aloud, then see if your child can identify/say the word you've stretched. "I want to see if you can tell me the word that I'm sounding out. I am going to say it slowly by stretching it out, then I want you to try to say it fast. Ready? ssshhhoopp - what word was I sounding out?" Continue for practice with the words not, lap, fish, shed, mom. If your child has trouble, stretch your arms open wide as you're saying the word slowly, then demonstrate bringing them in fast as you say the word normally.

- **Beginning Sound Identification:** "I am going to say some words very slowly like a snail and stretching them out. Listen to this word, sssaaattt. Could you tell that I was stretching the word 'sat' out?" If your child has trouble, use your arm to move slowly from left to right as you say the word. The gross motor movement will help as a visual. "Did you hear that first (or beginning) sound in the word sssaaattt? What was it? (sss) Great!"

Cont...

Phoneme Segmentation

activity continued

...Practice this particular skill using the following words that begin with continuous sounds: mop, zip, fit, lap, not, rut. The goal is for your child to be able to orally identify the initial sound in words. Once mastered, practice doing the same but have your child identify the ending sound in multiple words.

- **Segmenting Words into Sounds:** Gather counters or small objects to represent sounds (try to get items that are all the same – 3 green blocks, 3 grapes). “Now I am going to say a word slowly like a snail, I want you say the word fast, then you’ll pull down a block for each sound. For example, if I say mmmmaattt, you’ll say ‘mat’ then you’ll pull down 1 block for the /m/ sound, 1 block for the /a/ sound, and 1 block for the /t/ sound. Got it?” Give your child words with 2 & 3 sounds to practice segmenting (rot, fig, nap, wet, am, nip, if). If he has trouble hearing each individual sound, practice sweeping your left hand down your right arm (from right shoulder to wrist) as you say the word ‘rot,’ then tap your shoulder when you say /rrr/, tap the middle of your arm when you say /ooo/, then tap your wrist when you say /t/. This is a difficult skill and may need a good bit of practice!



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