Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and manipulate the sounds that comprise spoken words. It is understanding that language is composed of small units of soundsphonemes.

The level of phonemic awareness is a strong predictor of success in learning to read and write.

Competent readers and writers can:

- · identify and generate rhymes
- scan through words and sequence the sounds made by letters or chunks of letters (cat=c/a/t or spot=sp-ot))
- hear sounds in sequence in words and reproduce them in print

Competent readers and writers know how to:

- generate new words from a known word
- connect sounds or spelling patterns in words they do not know
- decode printed words when reading
- · encode spoken words when spelling

Teaching phonemic awareness enables a child to hear sounds in words and gives the child the ability to alter and rearrange sounds to create new words.

In an effective balanced literacy program, teachers

- ✓ children clap syllables.
- use sound/symbol boxes (Elkonin boxes) to demonstrate the sounds contained in a word.
- engage students in daily literature and writing activities.
- ✓ read rhyming text aloud.
- ✓ play with the sounds of language (alliteration, i.e., "The big boy bounced" and rhyme, i.e., "the cat sat on the mat").
- ✓ do shared writing frequently.
- encourage children to listen to, sing, and create rhyming songs.
- have students practice segmenting onset and rhymes (c-at).
- provide a center equipped with letter tiles/magnetic letters so children can develop letters/sound relationships.

Intervention activities must be reinforced daily: whole group, small group, and individually. By using a variety of manipulatives and teacher- generated materials, the teacher can focus the children's attention to various aspects of sound and print.

Macomb Intermediate School District Early Literacy Committee