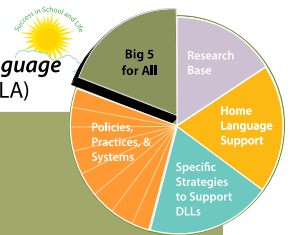


# The Big 5 *The Big Picture*

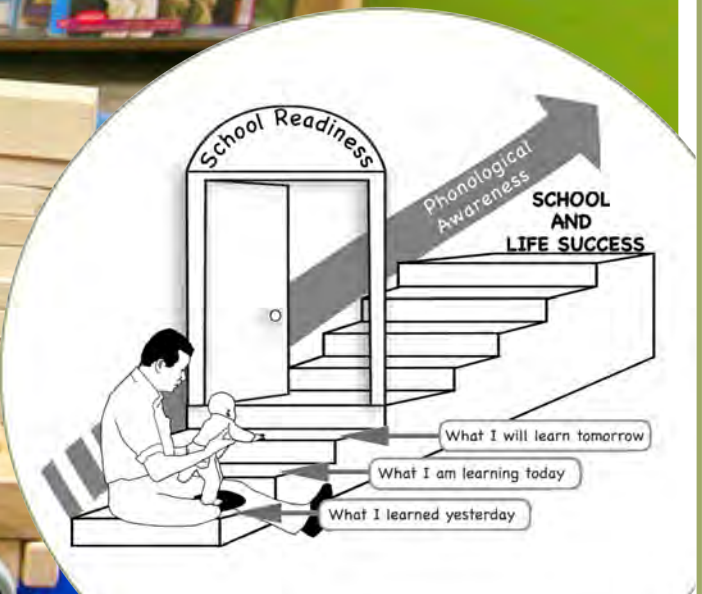
## Phonological Awareness

Planned Language  
Approach (PLA)



1. Alphabet Knowledge and Early Writing
2. Background Knowledge
3. Book Knowledge and Print Concepts
4. Oral Language and Vocabulary
5. **Phonological Awareness**

“Ba-ba-da,” babbles 8-month-old Marisol in delight. Her father repeats, “Yes, Da-da” back to her, enjoying making sounds with his daughter. The home visitor Marie shares the family’s excitement at the baby’s first sounds. She explains that the baby will use these sounds to make words soon. Three-year-old Tonio is also playing with sound, rhyming, and making up silly words. “Truck, duck, muck muck,” he says, laughing. Marie joins in the fun, “Stuck duck, stuck truck, stuck in the muck. Bad luck!”



# What is Phonological Awareness?

Phonological awareness refers to all aspects of sound and sound patterns. Skills related to phonological awareness include the following:

- ▶ The awareness of the sounds and sound patterns of language, such as:
  - ▶ Words, syllables, rhymes, and individual sounds (phonemes) in English
- ▶ The ability to hear, identify, make, and work with the sounds and sound patterns of spoken language, such as:
  - ▶ Listening to and noticing the sounds of a language
  - ▶ Playing with sound patterns by repeating sounds, rhyming, singing, or chanting
  - ▶ Identifying parts of words that sound the same, such as “air-plane” and “air-port”
  - ▶ Blending different sounds together, such as blending “air” and “plane” into “airplane”
  - ▶ Breaking up sounds (or segmenting sounds), such as breaking “today” into “to” and “day”



### **Phonological Awareness and reading**

Phonological awareness in English helps children learn to read English because they are learning the sounds associated with words and letters. This relationship may not be true for all languages (e.g., logographic languages, such as Chinese).



### **Supporting Phonological Awareness in languages you know well**

In order to lead phonological awareness activities, adults must know the sounds and sound combinations of a language very well. They should only lead phonological awareness activities in languages in which they are fluent.





# Children develop and use Phonological Awareness

Children develop and use phonological awareness when they:

- ▶ Make and use the sounds of spoken language (including infant babbling)
- ▶ Play with the sounds of words by:
  - ▶ Repeating sounds
  - ▶ Blending or stringing sounds together
  - ▶ Making up nonsense words made of different sounds
  - ▶ Rhyming sounds or words
- ▶ Sing, chant, or say simple rhymes and songs, including those that have motions
- ▶ Hear books and songs that have rhyming words or interesting sounds (e.g., Plop! Cowabunga! Ho! Ho!)
- ▶ Practice and recognize words that sound the same:
  - ▶ At the *end* (rhymes)

m-y

b-y

cr-y

tr-y

- ▶ At the *beginning* (alliteration)

b-all

b-at

b-oy



- ▶ Manipulate sounds in the following ways (by preschoolers and kindergarteners):

- ▶ Blending sounds to make syllables and words:

- Compound words—  
blending **air**  
and **plane**  
to make  
**airplane**

- Syllables—

blending **pan-da** to make **panda**

- Individual sounds—blending **b-a-t** to make **bat**

- ▶ Segmenting (dividing) by breaking words into smaller units:

- Compound words into two words—**airplane** into the words **air** and **plane**

- Syllables—dividing the word **panda** into **pan-da**

- Sounds within words—dividing the word **bat** into **bbb** and **attt**



## Why Phonological Awareness matters

“Understanding the basic alphabetic principle requires knowing that spoken language can be analyzed into strings of separable words, and words, in turn, into sequences of syllables and phonemes within syllables” (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998, p. 51).

- ▶ “Through daily exposure to human and environmental sounds, infants gradually become aware of how sounds are made and how they vary. This awareness is a necessary [beginning] to hearing and making the sounds of the alphabet” (Birckmayer, Kennedy, & Stonehouse, 2010, p. 34).
- ▶ “Phonological awareness is critical for learning to read any alphabetic writing system. And research shows that difficulty with phoneme awareness and other phonological skills is a predictor of poor reading and spelling development” (Moats & Tolman, introduction).
- ▶ “Instruction in phonemic and phonological awareness should be playful as teachers read stories, tell stories, play word games, and use rhymes and riddles. Instruction in the area should be purposeful and planned” (Morrow, 2014, p. 166).



# How does Phonological Awareness develop?

Alicia is a dual language learner (DLL). She is learning both Spanish and English at home and is learning English at school. Both are phonological languages. Therefore, sound activities done in either language support her phonological awareness. See how Alicia's phonological awareness develops throughout her early childhood and supports her school readiness.

## INFANT/TODDLER

Infants and toddlers develop phonological awareness by listening and imitating all the sounds they hear in their environment. Children pay attention to the sounds that adults make as the adults talk, read, and sing to them in ways that are playful, engaging, and rich with different sounds.

- From birth, Alicia turns her head when she hears a voice. Soon she recognizes familiar voices and environmental sounds. She can discriminate between different sounds.
- By 6 months, Alicia repeats strings of speech sounds (babbling) with similar rhythms and cadences of Spanish and English.

## PRESCHOOL

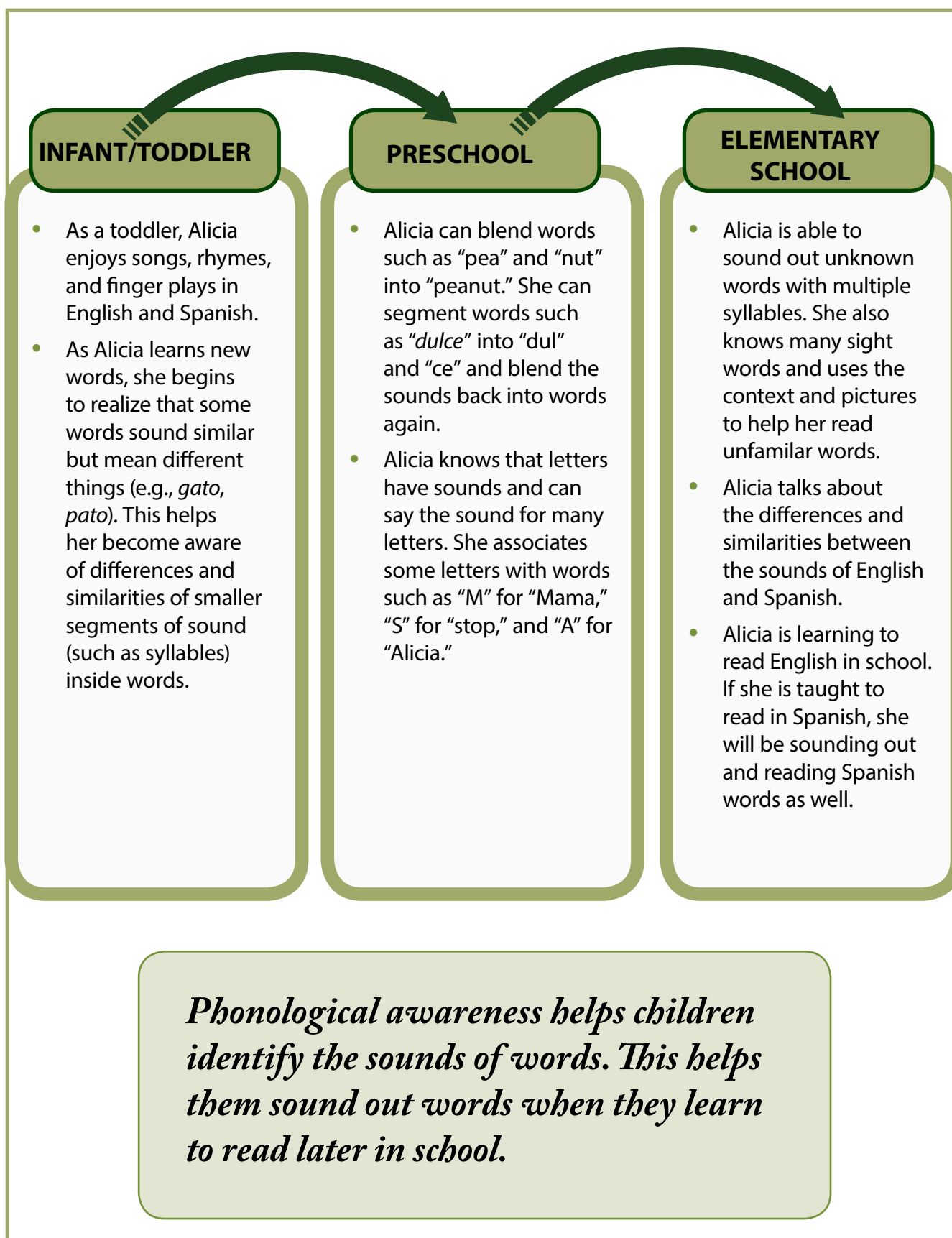
Preschoolers work with alliteration, rhymes, syllables and individual sounds (phonemes). They use these new skills to play with language.

- Alicia shows interest in both the meaning and sound of new words. She enjoys trying to say tongue twisters like "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers" and "*Como poco coco como, poco coco compro* (Since I eat little coconut, little coconut I buy)."  
She plays intentionally with parts of words, substituting sounds to invent new or nonsense words.
- Alicia recites her favorite nursery rhymes, poems, and songs, and creates her own rhymes, in English and Spanish. She recognizes when familiar words start with the same first sound such as "Alicia" and "Alejandro."

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Children continue to develop their phonological awareness skills through first and second grade. Those with a strong foundation in phonological and phonemic awareness use the knowledge that words are made up of sounds to decode new words. Phonics skills, such as decoding, are important for children to learn to read well.

- Alicia knows that words are made up of individual speech sounds (phonemes). She is skilled at segmenting and blending sounds in words.
- Alicia knows the sounds for all the letters of the English and Spanish alphabets (phonics). She can recognize consonant sounds such as /k/ and /s/.





## Dual language learners, and Phonological Awareness

- ▶ DLLs listen to, learn, and use sounds in two languages. Phonological awareness skills developed in one language can transfer to another language, especially if the languages have similar sounds and sound systems. If the two languages are quite different, DLLs may need more practice and support in making and using the sounds of English.
- ▶ Some evidence states that developing phonological awareness in the language that is most familiar to a child, and in which they have the most vocabulary, can be especially helpful (Schickedanz & Collins, 2013).
- ▶ Phonological awareness in languages such as Chinese develops differently than in English, since Chinese does not match letters and sounds.
- ▶ Home visitors, teachers, and caregivers should use their own strongest language during phonological awareness activities. It is very important that children engage in phonological awareness activities with a fluent speaker of the language.
- ▶ Families should be encouraged to share favorite nursery rhymes, songs, and chants with their children. Emphasize how much this helps children learn both languages.

### Spotlight on languages!

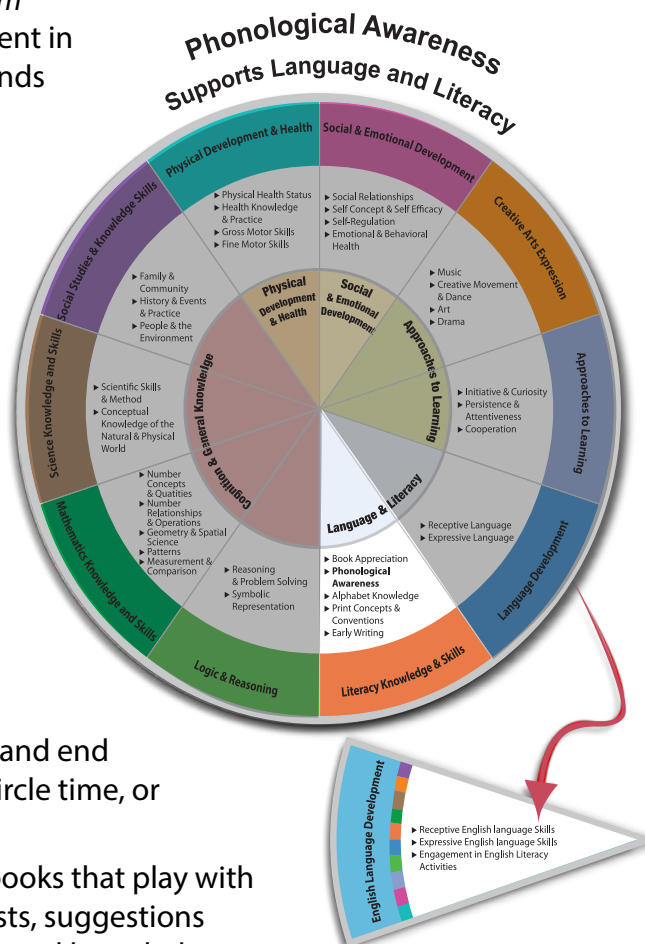
Different languages have different phonologies, or sound systems. For example, Spanish includes a trilled “r” sound that does not exist in English. Also, in Loq and some other languages the tone of voice can change the meaning of a word (this is not the case in English). English includes some sounds that do not exist in other languages too. Different languages have different sounds, and use them in different ways—this is part of what makes each language unique.



# Supporting Phonological Awareness

*Play with language every day in every way from birth through preschool! Create an environment in which children and adults play with the sounds throughout the day.*

- ▶ Involve families by:
  - ▶ Inviting families to share their lullabies, rhymes, word games, songs, and stories with the children in the classroom and at home
  - ▶ Sharing rhymes, word games, songs, and stories that are used in the center with families
  - ▶ Asking families to help you choose new sound play activities that their children will enjoy
- ▶ Use songs and rhymes during transitions—at the at the beginning and end of the day, at snack or mealtime, at circle time, or between center activities.
- ▶ Choose fun and interesting picture books that play with sound based on the children's interests, suggestions from families, and your own interests and knowledge.
- ▶ Emphasize interesting, rhyming, or repeating sounds when you read by using a dramatic voice and funny faces.
- ▶ Have rhymes and songs that toddlers and preschoolers can chant repeatedly throughout the year, allowing them to change, match, and substitute sounds. Many children may especially enjoy chants with motions.
- ▶ Support small group sound play in preschool by:
  - ▶ Creating small groups of two to three children based on children's interests and needs
  - ▶ Inviting children to short, small group activities of 10-15 minutes or less



- ▶ Engaging children in sound play, chanting, singing, rhyming, or other phonological awareness activities
- ▶ Keeping activities fun and engaging because rote instruction or drilling is not the best way to support phonological awareness from ages 0-5
- ▶ Making small groups interesting, interactive, and enjoyable



“*Listening and speaking provide children with a sense of words and sentences, build sensitivity to the sound system so that children can acquire phonological awareness and phonics, and are the means by which children demonstrate their understandings of words and written materials*” (Strickland, 2004, p. 87).

## Phonological Awareness in action for infants and toddlers

Jhumur supports Santiago and the other toddlers in her class to develop early phonological awareness. She is always looking for opportunities to play with sounds. Jhumur has collected some musical instruments, rhyming books, and other objects that help the children make and play with sounds. She integrates this type of play into the whole day.

### Babbling back and forth

Santiago's mother brought his baby sister, Ana, to the toddler room today. Nine-month-old Ana is gazing at and babbling with her mother. She is practicing some of the sounds of the language that she hears around her. Ana's mother returns her gaze and looks right at Ana as she repeats the sounds. "Ma-ma-ma-ah-ah," her mother replies, "and A-na!" Ana and her mother make sounds back and forth for several minutes. Jhumur shares with the mother how impressed she is with Ana's sounds. "Wow! Ana is already making so many sounds. She loves it when you repeat the sounds back to her, doesn't she? She looks right at you!"

### Silly with sounds

Santiago and 2½-year-old Adam are listening to Jhumur read from an alphabet book about cooking. When Jhumur reads "bread," Adam responds by saying: "Bread, red! Red bread!" and giggling. Jhumur laughs too and says, "I hear a lot of '-eds' from you today! You're rhyming! Maybe the redheaded bread said 'bed'!" Santiago giggles and says, "Red bread, red head!"





## Phonological Awareness in action for preschoolers

Alex, a preschool teacher, talks with the children in her class about what they eat for lunch when they are at home. Many of them mention bread. Alex begins to explore the topic of bread with the children.

### Matching sounds

Alex meets with one small group of preschoolers during snack. She holds up a piece of bread that they made earlier and leads the children in naming it by saying, "Bread." She then shows the children different toppings—butter, jam, and hummus. She and the children name each topping out loud. Finally, Alex says, "Bread, which topping starts the same as bread?" Tom points to the butter. "Butter!" he says. "Butter-bread-bbb," says Lia. "Yes," Alex agrees, "'butter' and 'bread' both start with a 'b-b-b' sound!" All the children play with the "bbb" sound as they eat their snacks.

### Fun with syllables

Some children in Alex's preschool class can already break up speech into words that they know. Alex helps a small group of children break words into syllables. The class has been singing and acting out "patty cake, patty cake, baker's man" in circle time and the children all know it well. She decides that it will be a fun activity for them to practice breaking this engaging and familiar song up into syllables. She notes that most of the words are one-syllable words, so this will be a good introduction to syllables.

They start by singing together and making all of the motions. They take turns deciding whose name will be in the song. Today is Lia's turn.

Alex supports the children as they break up one new line of the song into syllables for each small group session. Although, she does not expect the children to correctly break up the words every time, she knows that this engaging practice supports their phonological development.

Pat-ty cake, pat-ty cake, bak-er's man  
Bake me a cake as fast as you can  
Pat it and roll it and mark it with an "L"  
And put it in the ov-en for Li-a and me

# References for Phonological Awareness

## Professional References

- Birckmayer, J., Kennedy, A., & Stonehouse, A. (2010, January). Sharing spoken language: Sounds, conversations, and told stories. *Young Children*, 65 (1), 34-39.
- Moats, L., & Tolman, C. (n.d.). *Why phonological awareness is important for reading and spelling*. Retrieved from Reading Rockets website: <http://www.readingrockets.org/article/why-phonological-awareness-important-reading-and-spelling>
- Morrow, L. (2014). *Literacy development in the early years: Helping children read and write* (7th ed.). Needham, MA: Pearson.
- Schickedanz, J. A., & Collins, M. F. (2013). *So much more than the ABCs: The early phases of reading and writing*. Washington, DC: National Association for the Education of Young Children.
- Snow, C. E., Burns, M. S., & Griffin, P. (Eds.). (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.
- Strickland, D. S. (2004). The role of literacy in early childhood education: Working with families as partners in early literacy. *The Reading Teacher*, 58 (1), 86-88.



This document was prepared under Grant #90HC0001 for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Office of Head Start, by the National Center on Cultural and Linguistic Responsiveness <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/cultural-linguistic>