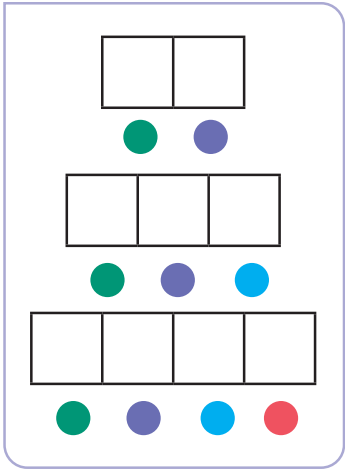


An Effective and Efficient Routine for Phonemic Awareness Instruction

Phonemic awareness routines should be oral, short, and intense. Use explicit instruction, modeling, and guided practice to give children the chance to quickly practice a specific aspect of phonemic awareness. Consider including manipulatives or magnetic letters to make your routines more concrete and ensure that children are working with letters and sounds as soon as possible.

Elkonin boxes, which are sometimes called sound boxes or word boxes (Elkonin, 1963; Keesey et al., 2015; Schacter & Jo, 2005), are a great tool for building phonemic awareness. Below is a quick routine that you can use with the whole class, small groups, or individuals to support phonemic awareness, using Elkonin boxes, like the ones to the right.



ROUTINE FOR PHONEMIC AWARENESS INSTRUCTION	
Instruct and Model	<p>Pick one aspect of phonemic awareness based on your scope and sequence. This example demonstrates three-sound blending.</p> <p>“We can put together sounds to make words. When we put sounds together, we slide through them, connecting each sound. I can use the boxes and my coin (or other manipulative) to help me slide through each sound. Watch me slide through the sounds /s/ /a/ /t/.”</p> <p>Put a coin on the first box and say /s/. Hold the sound as you move to the second box and say /a/. Hold the sound as you move to the third box and say /t/. Move the coin back to the first box and say all the sounds together as you quickly run the coin across the boxes.</p> <p>“This word is sat!”</p>
Together	Give each child three boxes and a coin. Practice with children for 3 to 5 words.
Practice	Say three sounds, such as /r/ /a/ /p/. Have children whisper to themselves as they slide across sounds. Have children tell their partner the word. If children are spelling, have children write the word on a paper to check their blending and segmenting. Repeat with 5 to 8 words.
Close	<p>Ideally, move into a lesson on sound-spelling relationships or reading of a decodable text so that children can directly apply their knowledge.</p> <p>“We listen for and slide through sounds in words so that we are able to read and write words!”</p>

(Based on Keesey et al., 2015)

You can add letters (magnetic letters, letter cards, foam letters) to Elkonin boxes using the same routine as above. Be sure to preplan the words you will have children work with. Give children around six letters to manipulate at a time. Children then place the letters into the corresponding boxes, effectively spelling the word. You can also use this procedure with just one sound at a time: “We’re listening for the first sound in the word *mop*. Point to the first box as you say the first sound and then slide across as you finish the word: *mmmop*. Now, put the letter that makes the first sound in the first box!”