

Literacy Tips (November) by Brenda Holliday

Hello everyone!

I hope that everyone has been learning some useful facts about literacy on our website. This month, I would like to talk about phonological awareness. This is sometimes referred to as phonemic awareness. Phonological awareness is the awareness of and ability to work with sounds in spoken language. This ability is vital in the future ability to decode, blend, and read words in text.

Phonological awareness is explicitly taught at Clear Vista starting in kindergarten. In kindergarten, the children master rhyme detection and generation, count words in sentences, count syllables in words and blend syllables together to make words. From there, the children learn to delete syllables from a 2 syllable word and figure out what is left. Finally, they learn to identify the beginning sound in a word. Print concepts are also taught in kindergarten. As a story is read, the children should be able to identify where the story starts, where a word is on a page, a letter in the word that is read, and end punctuation. In grade 1, the children move on to stating words that make sense in an oral sentence. They learn to segment the sounds in a word and to delete certain beginning or end sounds and figure out what is left. They identify beginning, middle, and end sounds in words and read and spell real and non-words. Some of these skills are quite complex but if children master them, then the progression to using these in decoding and encoding is much easier.

How can you help your child with these important skills?

1. Read many nursery rhymes to your children. They are rhyme based. Ask them to generate their own rhymes using real or non-words.
2. Practice counting how many words are in a sentence of a book you just read.
3. Practice identifying the beginning or end sound of a word that you say.

WRPS considers these skills an integral part of early literacy. The children are tested on these skills twice a year to determine what has been mastered and where the challenges are. There are programs used at Clear Vista such as Heggerty and Sounds Abound to practice these skills with the whole class. Phonological awareness is the foundation for reading and writing and so any gaps in this understanding are covered through re-teaching or intervention. Please feel free to contact me with any questions about literacy tips.