

[Teacher] "It moves so hard it quickly stole a striped flag fluttering on a pole." Imagine that! It was so windy it just took the flag away from the pole.

[Narrator] To begin a wordplay lesson, this teacher first reads aloud and then leads children through activities that relate to the story they just heard.

[Teacher] Now we know that the wind blew the flag. Listen to these words: flag, bag, wet. Say those words.

[Students] Flag, bag, wet.

[Teacher] Which words rhyme?

[Students] Flag, bag.

[Teacher] Flag and bag, wonderful. Please take them out of the baggie and I want you to... let's just put them on the table in a row.

[Narrator] Because different children have different levels of understanding, teachers sometimes use manipulatives to make phonological awareness concepts more concrete.

[Teacher] Good, let's move them back. Let's try one more time. That was a long sentence; this is a challenge.

[Narrator] Through repetition, wordplay provides opportunities for children to practice phonological awareness activities. Here, children practice sentence segmenting.

[Teacher] Say it with me, ready?

[Teacher and students] It grabbed a shirt left out to dry.

[Teacher] Now if I take this word away, we're going to be able to see what's left. So let's do it.

[Teacher and students] It grabbed a shirt left out to-

[Teacher] Let's take this word away and say what's left. Say this much.

[Students] It grabbed a-. It grabbed.

[Teacher] What's left?

[Students] It.

[Teacher] It. We got down to one word, didn't we? That's great.

[Narrator] Teachers may use the same stories to develop activities for all five levels of phonological awareness. In the story, children heard of newspapers blowing in the wind. In this example, children play with compound words.

[Teacher] Newspapers.

[Students] Newspapers.

[Teacher] Echo the word. Newspapers.

[Students] Newspapers.

[Teacher] Show me the two parts of that word.

[Teacher and students] News. Papers. Newspapers.

[Narrator] The goal of wordplay activities is for students to become so familiar with phonological awareness concepts that they become proficient. In these examples, the children will practice manipulation of words and sounds.

[Teacher] The word is nose. Echo?

[Students] Nose.

[Teacher] What sound is at the beginning of that word?

[Students] N.

[Teacher] That's the letter name, I need the sound.

[Students] /n/.

[Teacher] /n/, that's right. Here's your next word. Rose. Echo?

[Students] Rose.

[Teacher] Tell me the sound that was at the beginning.

[Teacher and students] /r/.

[Teacher] Wonderful. /wh/ /ite/. What's the word?

[Students] White.

[Teacher] Change white. Change the /wh/ to /b/, what a dog might do?

[Students] Bite.

[Teacher] Bite, great job.