

## Setting the Table-- Sound (Phonological) Awareness

### What the Research Says

- Sound awareness refers to the ability to recognize that spoken words are made of different sounds. These sounds can be taken apart and put back together. (“Cat” has three sounds. /c/, /a/, /t/)
- This ability to recognize different sounds in spoken language is one of the strongest predictors of reading, writing, and spelling success.
- Families can support development of sound awareness through reading, singing, reciting nursery rhymes, and having conversations with their children.
- Sound awareness starts to develop at around three years of age, when young children start to hear and recognize the similarities and differences in rhyming words.
- Sound awareness continues to develop through the early years and at age five, most children are starting to recognize individual sounds in words. They are especially inclined to recognize individual sounds at the beginning of words. (For example: Juice, jar, jelly all start with the same sound.)
- Sound awareness or phonological awareness is not the same as phonics. Phonics is the understanding that letters have specific sounds. Phonics instruction will begin in Kindergarten when children begin to learn how to read.