Phonological Awareness Checklist

The 8-level progression from the phonological-awareness-activities guide, from word awareness through phoneme manipulation — entirely oral, no letters required.

Name: _____ Date: _____

How to use this worksheet

1. Work through the levels roughly in order — each builds on the one before.
2. Try the example activities on this level's page over a few days.
3. Check the box once the level feels solid, and write the date.
4. Once levels 5-7 are solid, your child is ready to connect sounds to letters — that's phonics.

Tip

This is entirely oral — no letters or print needed. Car rides, bath time, and dinner all work as practice moments.

Level 1 — Word awareness

Typical age: 2–3. Recognising that spoken sentences are made of separate words.

Example activities:

- Clap each word as you read a sentence
- Count words on fingers: 'the big dog' = 3 claps
- Tap the table once per word in a nursery rhyme

☐ **This level feels solid**

Date practiced: _____

Notes: _____

Level 2 — Syllable awareness

Typical age: 3–4. Breaking words into beats / syllables.

Example activities:

- Clap syllables: hel-lo, el-e-phant, cat-er-pil-lar
- Tap drum beats for name syllables: E-mma = 2 beats
- Stomp syllables while walking

☐ **This level feels solid**

Date practiced: _____

Notes: _____

Level 3 — Rhyme awareness

Typical age: 3–4. Recognising and producing rhyming words.

Example activities:

- 'Does cat rhyme with hat? What about cat and dog?'
- Finish the rhyme: 'I see a cat / sitting on a ___'
- Nursery rhyme read-aloud — pause, let child complete rhyme

☐ **This level feels solid**

Date practiced: _____

Notes: _____

Level 4 — Onset-rime

Typical age: 4–5. Splitting a word into its first sound (onset) and the rest (rime).

Example activities:

- 'What starts with /s/ in the word sat?'
- 'Blend these: /m/ + at = ?'
- I-Spy: 'I spy something beginning with /b/...'

☐ **This level feels solid**

Date practiced: _____

Notes: _____

Level 5 — Phoneme isolation

Typical age: 4–5. Identifying the first, last, or middle sound in a word.

Example activities:

- 'What's the first sound in cat?' -> /k/
- 'What's the last sound in dog?' -> /g/
- 'What's the middle sound in hit?' -> /i/

☐ **This level feels solid**

Date practiced: _____

Notes: _____

Level 6 — Phoneme blending

Typical age: 5. Combining separate sounds into a word.

Example activities:

- Robot talk: /k/…/a/…/t/ -> cat
- Mouth it slowly, child blends
- Arm blending: tap shoulder, elbow, wrist per phoneme

☐ **This level feels solid**

Date practiced: _____

Notes: _____

Level 7 — Phoneme segmentation

Typical age: 5. Breaking a word into all its individual sounds.

Example activities:

- 'How many sounds in fish?' -> /f/-/i/-/sh/ = 3
- Use fingers: one per sound
- Elkonin (sound) boxes: one counter per phoneme

☐ **This level feels solid**

Date practiced: _____

Notes: _____

Level 8 — Phoneme manipulation

Typical age: 5–6. Deleting, substituting, or reversing phonemes.

Example activities:

- 'Say cat without the /k/' -> at
- 'Change the /k/ in cat to /h/' -> hat
- 'Reverse the sounds in up' -> puh

☐ **This level feels solid**

Date practiced: _____

Notes: _____