Games for Practicing Phonological Awareness at Home

Sound Stop Lights

- Child has a paper with 3 colored rectangles: green, yellow, and red.
- Child has a box with small objects to represent about 5 consonants and 2 vowels.
- The parent demonstrates that the green box is the first sound, the yellow box is the middle sound, and the red box is the last sound.
- Parent says the sounds in the word, and child selects objects by initial sound and places them on the colored rectangles.
- For example, for the word map:
  /m/ mitten on the green box
  /a/ apple on the yellow box
  /p/ pizza on the red box

Polar Bear Foods

- Parent glues a picture of a polar bear on the outside of a brown paper bag.
- Pictures of food are pasted on small cards. Child sorts the pictures and places only the words that start with the sound /p/ in the bag.
- For example:
  Popcorn, pretzel, and pickle go in the bag.
  Apple, raisin, and carrot do not go in the bag.

Head, Waist, and Toes

- The parent leads the child as he/she say the sounds in a 3-phoneme word.
- Child touches his/her head while saying the first sound, their waist with the middle sound, and their toes with the last sound.
- The parent asks questions to prompt child to show whether a target sound is associated with the head, waist, or toes.
- For example:
  Where is the /t/ in cat? (toes)
  Where is the /r/ in rat? (head)

Knit a New Word

- The parent throws a ball of yarn to the child and asks him/her to drop a sound from a word.
- The child says the new word and throws the yarn ball back to the parent.
- The parent throws the yarn ball to the child and continues with a similar question.
- For example:
  What word is star without the /s/? (tar)

Unifix Words

- Child is given 3 Unifix cubes or similar items.
- The parent says 3 sounds.
- Then the parent asks child to say the sounds separately while pushing his/her individual cubes together.
- Once the cubes are connected, the child repeats the sounds all together.

Bunny Hop

- Child will need a picture of a bunny taped on a popsicle stick.
- The parent shows the child how to hop for each word in a sentence.
- For example:
  The dog is brown. (4 hops)
  The dog is with the boy. (6 hops)

Change That Sound

- The parent asks the child to say a word.
- Then the parent asks them to change a sound in the the word and say a new word.
- For example:
  Say cat. Now change the first sound to /r/. (rat)
  Say hit. Now change the last sound to /p/. (hip)
  Say big. Now change the middle sound to /a/. (bag)
  Say put. Now change the middle sound to /a/. (pat)

Which One Doesn't Belong?

o   Child has 3 objects in front of them.
o   The parent asks the student to name each object.
o   The parent asks the child to hold up the object that doesn't have the same first sound.
o   For example:
    pen, pencil, crayon (crayon)

Count That Name

o   Child shares the name of his/her pet or a pet they know.
o   As each name is spoken, child joins parent in repeating the name, syllable by syllable.
o   Child chooses whether to clap, tap on a drum, or snap fingers for syllables.
o   For example:
    Fido (2 claps)
    Devonshire (3 claps)

Elkonin Boxes

o   Parent should pronounce a target word slowly, stretching it out by sound.
o   Ask the child to repeat the word.
o   Draw "boxes" or squares on a piece of paper or dry erase board with one box for each syllable or phoneme.
o   Have the child count the number of phonemes in the word, not necessarily the number of letters. For example, wish has three phonemes /w/, /i/, /sh/
o   Direct the child to slide one colored circle or cube in each cell of the Elkonin box drawing as he/she repeats the word.

Initial and Remainder Cheer

o   Child stands and holds his/her arms straight out in front of their bodies with hands in fists.
o   One hand is opened and turned over, palm up, when the initial sound in a word is spoken.
o   Then, while saying the first vowel and everything that comes after it, the second fist is turned over and opened with palm up.
o   For example, for cat:
    /c/ left fist opened and hand turned palm up
    /at/ right fist opened and hand turned palm up