

# Tip Sheet: Draw Attention to Syllables with Clapping Games

## FOR PRESCHOOL TEACHERS

For additional support on this topic, visit <https://bit.ly/QTSyllable> to view a short video.

### WHY?

Children with solid phonological awareness skills tend to be better readers. Phonological awareness develops while children are in preschool and elementary school. Clapping out **syllables** helps children notice and hear that words have parts.

### WHAT?

Phonological awareness is the understanding that language is made of sounds and includes the ability to detect the individual sounds of spoken language. Words are made up of syllables, a unit of speech that has a vowel sound. For example, the word **basketball** has three syllables: bas/ket/ball. Clapping out syllables helps children notice the sounds in each part of a word. They will later use their knowledge of word parts to spell words. This understanding will help them with spelling later on.

### HOW?

Work a syllable clapping game into your morning circle time or as a fun transition between activities.

- Invite children to clap out the syllables in their name during morning circle time.
- Support children in clapping out the next activity in the schedule. For example, "We're going to recess. Let's clap out the syllables in the word **recess**."
- Give children percussion instruments to mark syllables in words, such as with a tambourine, a maraca, or tapping sticks.



### TEACHER TIP

One way to help children become aware of syllables is to have them place their hand under their chin when they say a word. Their chin will drop once for every syllable they say. This is because their mouth opens when they say a vowel.