Chapter 8 Notes

I. Introduction
   a. Listening skill is the first language arts skill learned
      i. Develops before a child speaks
      ii. Many children develop the ability to listen carefully to the
          speech of others during early childhood, and others do not
      iii. Child’s listening ability is important to speaking and future
           reading and writing success because language growth is a
           receiving process followed by a sending process
   b. Hearing and listening are quite different
      i. Hearing is a process involving nerves and muscles that reach
         adult efficiency by age four to five
      ii. Listening:
          1. Is a learned behavior, a mental process that is concerned
             with:
             a. Hearing
             b. Attending
             c. Discriminating
             d. Understanding
             e. Remembering
          2. Can be improved with practice
          3. Affects social interactions, one’s level of functioning, and
             perhaps one’s overall success in life
      iii. Researchers estimate that we listen to 50 percent of what we
           hear and comprehend only 25 percent of that
   c. Listening skill can be described as passive and receptive, but it
      involves active thinking and interpretation
      i. Lively conversations between adults and young children who
         feel free to verbalize reactions to life’s happenings promote
         listening and speaking
      ii. Children offer more verbal comments in school settings in small,
          relaxed groups in which comments are accepted and
          appreciated
          1. Young children sometimes learn that it is best to keep
             quiet in some classrooms
          2. In other classrooms, every child’s opinion counts and
             classroom discussions are frequent and animated
   d. There are usually many opportunities to listen in early childhood
      centers
      i. Teacher-planned or child-created play is a source of many
         sounds
      ii. A quality program sharpens a child’s listening and offers a
          variety of experiences
      iii. Listening is not left to chance
          1. Planned programs develop skills
II. Research on Listening
a. Limited current research has been done on both listening and whether
direct instruction in listening skill is effective, but studies conducted in
the 1950s and 1960s showed that listening instruction led to
measurable gains in listening comprehension
   i. Active involvement following listening activities may help more
      than passive activities
b. Listening is not a discrete skill or generalized ability
   i. It is a cluster of specific abilities closely related to those needed
      in the reading task
   ii. Early childhood professionals should be aware of the early
devolution of a child’s listening comprehension level

III. Types of Listening
a. Listening occurs in many ways
   i. Person does not always listen for knowledge but may listen to a
      sound because it is pleasing
   ii. Preschoolers often make their own pleasurable or rhythmic
      sounds with whatever is available
b. The human voice can be interesting, threatening, or monotonous to a
   child, depending on past experience
   i. Silence also has meaning
   ii. Sometimes teachers suspect that a child has a hearing problem,
      only to find that the child was inattentive for other reasons
b. Children may listen but not understand
   i. May miss sound differences or listen without evaluating what
      they hear
   ii. Listening involves a variety of skills and levels
d. Goal of a good program in early childhood language arts is to guide the
   young child toward development of these listening levels
   i. Listening process contains three stages the child moves through
      in efficient listening
e. When a sound occurs, it is remembered by thinking about its features,
   including:
   i. Location
   ii. Pitches
   iii. Intensity
   iv. Newness

IV. Toddler Listening Experiences
a. Parents and center staff members can engage toddlers in a number of
   activities to stimulate listening
   i. Body-action play of the old “coochee-coo” variety, “This Little
      Piggy,” and simple rhymes and repetitions are recommended
   ii. Connecting noises and sounds with toys and objects and
      encouraging the child to imitate show the child that joy and
      sound making go hand in hand
iii. Rhythmic clapping, tapping, and pan beating in sequence or patterns can be enjoyable
iv. Musical toys and recordings add variety and listening pleasure
v. Encouraging children to watch facial expressions as different human sounds are produced and locating environmental sounds together are additional techniques in developing children’s listening skills

b. Adults exercise care in sound volume and quality
i. At all age levels, extra loud, shrill, vibrating, or emergency alert sounds can be frightening

c. Purposeful listening activities
i. Intent of purposeful listening practice is to increase the child’s ability to:
   1. Follow directions and instructions
   2. Perform tasks
   3. Respond appropriately in some fashion
ii. Teachers can use a three-step method to help very young preschoolers gain skill in this type of listening:
   1. Tell the children what you are going to tell them
   2. Tell the children
   3. Tell the children what you told them
iii. Purposeful, attentive listening takes concentration
   1. Teachers can perfect a “what I’m saying next is important” tone and consequently create a desire in children to listen
      a. Statement such as, “You might want to know how” or “You can listen closely to find out” or “If you’d like a turn, watch and listen,” may also provide the motivation to listen closely
iv. Planned, purposeful listening activities can include activities that encourage children to listen in order to:
   1. Do something for themselves
   2. Tell another how to do something
   3. Operate some type of toy or equipment
   4. Carry a message
   5. Recall details
   6. Put objects in a special order or sequence
   7. See how many names or facts they can remember
   8. Learn new skills, such as singing new songs or chanting or doing finger plays
d. Appreciative listening activities
   i. Appreciative listening deals with light listening when enjoyment or pleasure is paramount
      1. Wide variety of recorded and live appreciative listening experiences is possible
a. Background music can accompany favorite preschool pursuits
b. Chanting a remembered selection of words gives the children a double treat of hearing voices in unison and feeling part of a group
c. Some appreciative listening builds moods, touches emotions, and adds another dimension to experience
d. Programs attempt to offer listening experiences that are aesthetically pleasing environmental sounds such as familiar home and community sounds plus pleasant sounds found in nature

ii. Possible appreciative listening activities include:
   1. Moving to music
   2. Discussing music, rhythms, and sounds
   3. Talking about favorite sounds
   4. Talking about happy, sad, or funny feelings that sounds produce
   5. Tapping, clapping, or moving to music or rhythmic speech

iii. Benefits of introducing a music curriculum to young children are multiple
   1. Music provides another means of oral expression for children:
      a. Building vocabulary
      b. Establishing a sense of internal rhythm
      c. Developing an awareness of pitch and intonation in voice
      d. Creating an understanding of language concepts such as loud, soft, fast, and slow
   2. Providing practice in singing promotes the development of syntax and memorization skills

iv. There is a predictable pattern in children’s learning of any song
   1. Words are learned first, then rhythms and other elements
   2. Traditional nursery songs are plentiful, are appropriately pitched, and contain repetition of melodic and rhythmic patterns
   3. Music is a “language builder”

e. Favorite traditional songs
   i. “Old MacDonald Had a Farm”
   ii. “Dinah”
   iii. “Teddy Bear”
   iv. “Eensy, Weensy Spider”
   v. “I’m a Little Teapot”
   vi. “Hot Cross Buns”
   vii. “The Bus”
viii. “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”
ix. “Yankee Doodle”
x. “Did You Ever See a Lassie?”
xi. “If You’re Happy”
xii. “Ring Around a Rosy”
xiii. “Oh, Dear, What Can the Matter Be?”
xiv. “Skip to My Lou”
xv. “Down by the Station”
xvi. “Looby Loo”
xvii. “Bingo”
xviii. “The Bear Went over the Mountain”
f. Partial list of language features found in songs
   i. Vocabulary
   ii. Predictability
   iii. Story line and sequence
   iv. Rhyming
   v. Repetition
   vi. Cultural literacy significance
   vii. Rhythmic beat
   viii. Concept development
   ix. Appreciative listening
   x. Purposeful listening
   xi. Discriminative listening
   xii. Creative listening
   xiii. Coordination of words and physical movement

V. Critical Listening Activities
   a. Critical listening requires the children’s evaluation of what is heard and comprehended
      i. Requires contemplation and reflection, and some preschoolers develop considerable skill in this area and use it frequently
      ii. These children seem able to weigh the new against what they already know and feel and are eager to discuss differences
      iii. Other children seem rarely to hold any opinion or particular viewpoint and are reticent to share thoughts
      iv. Activities that involve critical thinking can be ones in which:
         1. A problem is discussed and solutions are offered and evaluated
         2. A probable outcome or guess is prompted
         3. A real or make-believe feature is pinpointed using some criteria
         4. Personal preferences or dislikes are discussed
         5. Group votes are reviewed and outcomes are anticipated
         6. Errors of some type are discovered or detected
         7. Feelings of others are predicted
         8. Inconsistencies are discovered

VI. Discriminative Listening Activities
a. Increased attention to discriminative listening has occurred as a result of current research and because of national legislative efforts to improve American children’s reading ability
   i. To discern whether a sound or sound pattern is the same or different, one uses discriminative listening skill.
   ii. This skill is necessary when a child attempts to decode words in early reading
b. Preschool teacher who plans a “Listening Detective” activity in which preschoolers catch the teacher in a mistake is presenting a discriminative listening exercise
   i. Imitating a clapping pattern is another, as is finding rhyming sounds or matching xylophone notes
c. Creative listening activities
   i. Many classroom literacy activities create an emotional response or reaction
      1. Audiovisual media can do so also
      2. Discussion after read-alouds and other literacy events may reveal child feelings and imaginative ideas
      3. Children may then be encouraged to create their feelings and ideas in subsequent art, drama, or other form of expression
   ii. Creative listening has been used as a strategy to unleash creative potential

VII. Teacher Skills
a. Good listening habits are especially important in school situations
   i. Teachers need to assess their own listening habits and abilities in their daily work with children
   ii. If they expect undivided attention from children, they must also give undivided attention to them
b. Two factors may decrease teachers’ ability to listen and model listening behavior:
   i. They may not have experienced teachers in their own schooling (including college professors) who listened with care and valued child inquiry, and
   ii. They are so busy imparting information that they miss the profound questions and comments of young children
c. This type of interactive style teaches children to sit passively and withdraw
   i. Teaches most vividly what the teachers least suspect they have transmitted
d. Instructions from teachers should be clear and simple, with a sequence of what comes first, next, and last
   i. Usually, instructions need not be repeated when given clearly and simply
   ii. Often, when the attention of the group is required, a signal is used
1. Any distinctive, easy-to-hear, pleasant sound or visual signal can alert children that it is time to listen
   iii. Silent pause before beginning an activity can be used effectively to focus attention on listening

e. Katz and Schery suggestions for educators who handle young children with hearing loss also apply to teachers of younger preschoolers and English language learners include:
   i. Speaking using an ordinary tone/volume
   ii. Making sure the child’s attention is focused on the speaker
   iii. Talking naturally and clearly and using simple phrases or simple but complete sentences depending on the child’s language level
   iv. Clarifying idioms
      1. Explain idioms in context
   v. Checking with the child to ensure comprehension
      1. Sometimes asking “Tell me what I just said” provides information to the teacher about how much a child understands
   vi. Showing real-life pictures when reading or talking about a topic and using simple signs
   vii. Pointing, or having on hand an example of the object you’re explaining
   viii. Being aware of background noise which can mask essential auditory information
   ix. Reducing classroom noise with acoustically treated low ceilings, carpet, and well-fitted doors
   x. Putting rubber tips or old tennis balls on the bottoms of chair legs
   xi. Positioning children to provide a hearing advantage
   xii. Being sure that lighting is appropriate
   f. Teachers sometimes use a short song, finger play, or body-movement activity to stimulate interest and draw the group together
      i. Helps children focus on what is to follow
   g. Encouragement and smiles at any time of the day can reward individual listening
      i. Positive, specific statements, such as, “Ramon, you listened to what Jan had to say before you started talking” or “It’s quiet, and now we can all hear the beginning of the story,” give children feedback on expected listening behavior
   h. Sample teacher statements that can promote a group’s ability to listen:
      i. At the beginning
         1. “When I see everyone’s eyes, I’ll know you’re ready to hear about . . .”
         2. “We’ll begin when we can all hear the clock ticking.”
         3. “I’m waiting until everyone can hear before I start. We need to be quiet so that everyone can hear about . . .”
         4. “It seems everyone is listening; it’s time to begin.”
5. “We take turns speaking. Skye is first, then . . .”

ii. During activity
1. “Wyatt had his hand up. Would you like to tell us about your idea?”
2. “It’s Maria’s turn to tell us . . .”
3. “We can hear best when just one person is talking. Louis, you go first, then Cristalee.”
4. “Ethan, it’s hard to wait when you want to talk. Khesia is talking now; you can be next.” (Later add, “Ethan, thank you for waiting for Khesia to finish. Now we will hear what you wanted to tell us.”)
5. “Everyone wants to tell us about their own pets. Raise your hand—I’ll make a waiting list so that we can hear everyone.” (Make the list quickly and hold it up.) “Isaac, your name is first.”

iii. At activity’s end
1. “We listened so quietly. We all heard every word of that story.”
2. “Everyone listened to what their friends said.”
3. “We listened and found out a lot about . . .”

i. Additional examples of teacher talk that promotes listening:

i. “We are going to do two things right now. Listen. Pick up your rug square; that’s the first thing to do. Then put your square right here on this pile on the table. You were listening, Polly, thank you.”

ii. “Listen and then you’ll know who will hold the door open. Today it’s Rudy’s job. Whose job is it? Right, it is Rudy’s job today.”

iii. “Eyes open. Lips closed. It’s listening time.”

iv. “I can’t hear when everyone is talking. Mario, tell us what you said. Michelle, you need to wait. We will listen to you next.”

v. “It’s Adrian’s time to talk now. That means no one else is talking.”

vi. “Let’s wait until it is quiet, then we are all ready to listen to the story.”

vii. “When I see everyone’s eyes looking in my eyes, I’ll know you are ready to listen.”

viii. “That was attentive listening. Everyone was quiet while Joni told us about her painting.”

ix. “Josh has something important to say. Let’s listen so that we all hear what he is going to tell us.”

x. “I know it’s hard to wait, Cleota, but Rick is talking now. Wait. It will be your turn next.”

xi. “What are we going to do after we pour the milk in the bowl? Yes, Brenda, we said we had to stir with the spoon. Good listening, Brenda.”
xii. “Now let’s think of another sound we might hear if we go to the window and listen.”

xiii. “It is my turn to speak, and your turn to listen.”

j. Rewarded behavior is usually repeated and becomes a habit
   i. Teachers should consistently notice correct listening behavior and comment favorably about it to the children

k. How can one recognize good listening habits?
   i. Characteristics of children with listening skills
      1. Good listeners:
         a. Look toward the speaker’s face
         b. Filter out distractions
         c. Can concentrate on the speaker’s message
         d. Can repeat back what the speaker said
         e. Interrupt infrequently
         f. Ask clarifying questions that make sense
         g. Seem to think about what has been said

VIII. Auditory Perception
   a. Ears respond to sound waves
      i. These sounds go to the brain and become organized in relation to past experience
      ii. Same process is used in early childhood and later when the child learns to read
      iii. Language development depends on the auditory process
   b. Educational activities that give practice and help perfect auditory skills usually deal with the following objectives:
      i. Sustaining attention span
      ii. Following directions or commands
      iii. Imitating sounds
      iv. Identifying and associating sounds
      v. Using auditory memory
      vi. Discriminating between sounds (intensity, pitch, tempo)
   c. Intensity of a sound is its degree of force, strength, or energy
      i. Pitch is the highness or lowness of sound
      ii. Tempo is the rate of speed of a sound, in other words, the rhythm of the sound that engages the attention
   d. Auditory activities
      i. A wide range of auditory activities can be planned
      ii. Goals that often serve as the basis for planning include:
         1. Recognizing own name when spoken
         2. Repeating two nonsense words, short sayings, chants, poems, finger plays, or any series of words
         3. Reporting sounds heard at home
         4. Imitating sounds of toys, animals, classrooms, rain, sirens, bells u telling whether a sound is near or far, loud or soft, fast or slow, high or low, same or different
         5. Identifying people’s voices
6. Identifying and repeating rhythms heard
7. Retelling a story, poem, or part of either
8. Trying to perform first one- and then two-part directions
9. Recalling sounds in sequence
10. Coordinating listening skills with body movements in a requested way
11. Enjoying music, stories, poems, and many other language arts, both individually and in groups

IX. Settings for Listening
   a. When preparing listening activities, the teacher can plan for success by having activities take place in room areas with a minimum of distracting sounds or objects
      i. Screens, dividers, and bookcases are helpful
      ii. Heating and lighting are checked, and comfortable seating is provided
      iii. Decisions concerning the size of a group are important
      iv. In general, the younger the children, the smaller the group teacher will attempt to instruct, and the shorter the length of the activity
   b. Listening cannot be forced, but experiences can be provided that create a desire to listen
      i. Some schools offer children the choice of joining a group listening activity or playing quietly nearby
      ii. Teachers find that an interesting experience will attract children who are playing nearby
      iii. When activities are enjoyable and successful, the child who was hesitant may look forward to new experiences
      iv. A teacher can turn on or turn off attention by ending, changing, or modifying activities when necessary
      v. Teacher should watch carefully for feedback
         1. Will help the child develop active listening
      vi. Skillful teacher will complete the learning activity before the group becomes restless
      vii. When an activity is planned for which listening is required, it is important to consider that an active preschooler may have to struggle to remain seated for any extended period of time
   c. Evaluating teacher behaviors
      i. Teachers planning activities need to consider the following questions:
         1. Why will a child listen to this activity?
         2. What factors or features could be included?
         3. What teacher behaviors, speech, or actions encourage child listening?
         4. How do I, as a teacher, develop “a listening habit” in children and promote specific listening skills?
         5. Can I judge when I have captured child attention?
6. Can I assess which children listen well and which children listen poorly?

ii. Reasons why children listen to an activity
   1. The activity relates in some way to past experience
   2. The children are curious about something new
   3. There is a motivation to listen because of something the children want to know that personally affects them
   4. The children enjoy the company of the people present
   5. Something has happened to capture their attention
   6. They can hear clearly without distractions and/or can easily see what is going on
   7. They are physically comfortable
   8. They have no physical, emotional, social, or personal distracting life situation upon which they are focused, such as hunger, lack of sleep, emotional pain, and so on

iii. Teacher behaviors, speech, or actions that might influence child listening:
   1. Enthusiasm
   2. Animation (but not overly so)
   3. Acceptance
   4. Recognition of children by name
   5. Establishment of a you-talk turn, i-talk turn interaction
   6. Eye contact
   7. Listening skill
   8. Patience
   9. Clear and appropriately paced and pitched speech
   10. Panning of a group with the eyes to gauge children’s avid or waning attention and adjusting accordingly
   11. Voice variety
   12. Appropriate voice volume
   13. Eye-level contact
   14. Planning for enough time so that there is not a rushed feeling
   15. Elimination of distractions such as two children sitting together who might “act up” or other noises in the classroom that interfere with listening
   16. Lowered voice volume to gain attention
   17. Stating of rules about turn-taking behavior, hand raising, and interrupting
   18. Use of an attention-getting gathering activity at the beginning of the activity

iv. Can I judge when I have captured attention or the activity has captured child attention?
   1. If you watch, you will know when they are with you, all ears so to speak
v. Can I assess which children listen well and which need help
developing listening skill?
   1. If you are watchful, yes, but there are days when even
the best listeners will be distracted

d. Speak-listen group times
   i. Kindergarten and some early childhood programs are offering
older preschoolers “talking-listening” social skill groups
      1. Goal of this activity is to give children who desire to
speak the chance to discuss child- and teacher-selected
topics in a social setting
      2. This structured activity promotes active listening
      3. In elementary school, this group experience is usually
termed “active listening” time or “community circle”

   ii. Children are seated in a circle so that they can look at the
person speaking and easily hear everyone’s comments
      1. In preschools, the circle times are kept short and
intimate, with small groups of children

   iii. Teachers structure this type of talking-listening time as follows:
      1. Teacher announces a talk-listen circle as a choice of
activity
      2. Teacher names the topic or elicits one from the group
      3. A chart depicting expected talk-listen circle child
behavior is introduced or reviewed
      4. Teacher states, “Each of us will have a turn to speak. If
you don’t want a turn to speak, you can say ‘Pass’.”
      5. Teacher speaks first, modeling a short sentence—“My
cat is gray and likes to sleep in a sunny window.” Then
she proceeds around the circle.
      6. A very short group evaluation can take place when all
have had a turn
         a. Was it easy to wait for your turn?
         b. Did you see others’ eyes while you were talking?
            i. Children’s answers are given in turn

   iv. Teachers may continue if discussion is still of interest with
statements such as, “We’ve all had a turn. Raise your hand if
you’ve something more to tell. Anyone can choose to leave our
talking-listening time.”

   v. A number of common behaviors occur at preschool discussion
times
      1. An egg timer might have to be used with the child who
planes on and on
      2. Same children may pass day after day, or the same
children may choose to participate in circle discussions
      3. A child may not stick to the announced topic, but all
comments are accepted and appreciated by the teacher
Because listening closely and group discussion may be new to preschoolers and because individual developmental levels vary, children may either quickly or slowly grasp the social and listening skills offered:

1. To encourage listening and speaking in turn, some programs use cardboard cutouts of lips and ears attached to tongue depressors.
2. The speaker holds the stick with the lips while listeners hold ear sticks.

Of course, many unplanned discussions take place in most preschool classrooms:

1. This type of structured group time encourages young children’s social discussion—a skill useful in future classrooms.

Listening centers:

i. Special listening areas, sometimes called listening posts, can become a part of early childhood classrooms:

1. Enjoying a quiet time by oneself or listening to recorded materials fascinates many children.
2. Headsets plugged in to a jack or terminal help block out room noise.
3. Partitions cut distractions.
4. Clever listening places where children can settle into become favorite spots, such as:
   a. Large packing boxes lined with soft fabrics and pillows.
   b. Old, soft armchairs.
   c. A bunk or loft.

ii. Videos, audio cassettes, DVDs, CDs and CD players, photographs, picture sets, and books offer added dimensions to listening centers:

1. Recordings of the teacher reading a new or favorite story can be available at all times for children’s use.
2. These recordings are sometimes called read-alongs and are also available from commercial sources.
3. Their quality varies widely, so it is recommended that they be reviewed before they are purchased.

iii. When teachers realize how much future educational experience depends on how well language is processed through children’s listening, listening activities and listening centers gain importance:

1. Many of today’s children have passively listened to considerable electronic media but may be particularly lacking in the practice of auditory analysis and logical sequential reasoning.
iv. Children can record, with adult help, their own descriptions of special block constructions together with accompanying drawings or photos
   1. “Why I like this book” talks can be made about a special book
   2. Children can record comments about their own pieces of art
   3. A field-trip scrap-book may have a child’s commentary with it
   4. Recorded puppet scripts and flannel board stories can be enjoyed while the child moves the characters and listens
   5. The child can explore small plastic animals while listening to a recorded story
   6. Possibilities for recorded activities are limited only by preparation time and staff interest

v. Children’s ages are always a factor in the use of audiovisual equipment
   1. Listening centers need teacher introduction, explanation, and supervision

f. Recorded media
   i. Some companies specialize in recordings for children that are designed to improve listening skills
      1. These recordings involve children in listening for a signal, listening to directions, or listening to sounds
      2. Some recordings include body-movement activities along with listening skills
   ii. Not all recordings contain appropriate subject matter for young children
      1. Before purchasing one for children, the teacher should listen to it and judge its quality
   iii. Tape recorders can fascinate children
      1. Can be valuable tools for listening activities
      2. Under the teacher’s supervision or after being acquainted with instructions for use, children can explore and enjoy listening

  g. Children’s books with listening themes
     i. Books with themes concerned with listening are good springboards to discussions about listening skills

  X. Music as a Listening Activity
     a. A type of listening Wolf calls “focused listening” occurs in many music activities
        i. Children may be attending to specific sounds and words that give directions
        ii. Singing games often call for child response or child silence (or pause)
iii. To remember and sing a song (or parts of songs), staying in tune and rhythm, entails not only focused listening but also auditory discrimination and intellectual processing

iv. Suggestions for music activities in early childhood centers include:
   1. Songs and recordings that give directions
   2. Songs and recordings that contain certain sounds that serve as a cue for response in speech, movement, or both
   3. Music that highlights particular rhythm instruments, drums, bells, sticks, and so forth
   4. Music with environmental sounds
   5. Music with songs that promote creative child response
   6. Background music accompanying play and exploration

XI. Are There Differences in Children’s Listening Abilities?
   a. There are wide differences in children’s listening abilities
      i. As teachers become familiar with the children enrolled in their classes, they may notice that some children display abilities that allow them to note fine differences in sounds
      ii. Other children, who are progressing normally, will not acquire these skills until they are older

XII. Phonological Awareness
   a. Phonological awareness skills are believed to be predictive of a child’s ease in learning to read
      i. Researchers have begun to investigate how to enhance these skills before children enter kindergarten
      ii. Phonological skill-building opportunities include:
         1. Rhyming
         2. Segmenting morphemes and syllables in words
         3. Using discriminative and critical listening, phonemic contrasting, and phonemic games emphasizing beginning letter sounds in words
         4. Commenting on alphabet letter sounds
         5. Engaging in other such sounds-of-language activities
   iii. These types of activities might aid all four- and five-year-olds and be particularly valuable for at-risk children
      1. Making these activities relevant and interesting can be a teaching challenge
      2. Activities can become an outgrowth of many daily planned happenings
   b. Phonological awareness is developmental—it develops in stages, the first and easiest being the awareness that our language is composed of words
      i. Language learners progress and become aware that words are made up of word parts (that is, syllables), and in the last and
most difficult stage, they become aware that syllables are made up of individual sounds (that is, phonemes)

(c) What did a large national reading panel conclude after reviewing research concerning phonetic awareness?
   i. Phonetic awareness instruction is effective in teaching children to attend to and manipulate speech sounds in words
   ii. Phonetic instruction is effective under a variety of teaching conditions and with a variety of learners
   iii. Teaching sounds in language helps children learn to read
   iv. It helps children decode novel words as well as remember how to read familiar words
   v. It boosts reading comprehension
   vi. Phonetic awareness helps all types of children, including normally developing readers, readers at risk for future reading problems, disabled readers, preschoolers, kindergartners, and first through sixth grade children learning to read English as well as other languages
   vii. It helps some children learn to spell in English as well as other languages
   viii. Instruction is most effective when children are taught to manipulate phonemes with alphabet letters, when instruction is explicitly focused on one or two types of phoneme manipulations rather than multiple types, and when children are in small groups
   ix. Instruction should be suited to the child’s level of development, with easier tasks being used for younger children
   x. Teaching alphabet letters is important
   xi. Teaching children to blend phonemes helps them decode
   xii. It is important to teach letter shapes, names, and sounds so that children can use letters to acquire phonetic awareness
   xiii. Instruction is more effective when it makes explicit how children are to apply phonetic awareness skills in reading and writing tasks
   xiv. Instruction does not need to consume long periods of time to be effective
   xv. Computers can be used to teach phonetic awareness effectively
   xvi. Phonetic awareness helps learners understand and use the alphabetic system to read and write
   xvii. Phonetic instruction is a critical foundation piece
   xviii. Instruction should be offered in short periods and be as relevant as possible
   xix. Early phonetic instruction cannot guarantee later literacy success

(d) Phonological awareness typically begins around age three and improves gradually over many years
i. Phonological awareness refers to the general ability to attend to (listen to) the sounds of language as distinct from its meaning

ii. A sub-skill, phonemic awareness, can be defined as understanding that spoken language can be analyzed into strings of separate words and that words can be analyzed in sequences of syllables and phonemes within syllables

e. English consists of approximately 41 to 44 phonemes, depending on the dialect
   i. Few words have but one phoneme
   ii. Most words contain a blend of phonemes

f. Young children begin to notice sound similarities in the words they hear
   i. They enjoy rhymes, language play with words, repeated syllables, and alliteration
   ii. Because children’s books contain these features, close listening at story time is certainly one way to develop phonemic awareness

g. Eventually, but usually not until kindergarten or early first grade, children can hear all the sounds in a word and can segment a word into each of its sounds, or phonemes
   i. Is there a sequence in the development of phonemic awareness?
      1. Most educators agree that simultaneous learning is more characteristic
      2. Activities associated with phonemic awareness are found at the end of this chapter

h. Learning about phonemes is not new
   i. What is new is the importance assigned to phonemes
   ii. There is great pressure on teachers to make sure that young children know how to use them to decode words
   iii. Teachers built their instruction of phonemes around children’s own language and experiences, and they moved from what was known by the students to less familiar territory
      1. Also states that they expected all of their students to participate and use whole-group sessions for assessment as well
         a. From these activities, they moved to small groups in which individual student needs can be met

i. Educators without a strong English language background need to be aware that phonemes are different from alphabet letters used in spelling words

j. Can an early childhood program include the goal of developing phonemic awareness?
   i. Is phonological awareness training helpful in four- to five-year-old preschoolers who are at risk for reading difficulties?
   ii. Research evidence points to a “yes” answer to both questions
k. What exercises were included in this phonemic awareness training?
   i. Directing children’s attention to rhyme
   ii. Segmenting morphemes and syllables (e.g., “say a little bit of butterfly” and “can you say ‘butterfly’ without the ‘but’?”)
   iii. Categorizing sounds (e.g., “which word doesn’t belong: mop, top, pop, can?”)
   iv. Identifying syllables (“do you hear ‘doe’ in ‘window’? In ‘candy’?”)
   v. Illustrating phonemic contrasts (e.g., /p/ vs. /b/)
   vi. Allowing children to experience relevant articulation gestures
   vii. Using segmentation and identification games at the phonemic level (e.g., “say a bit of ‘boat’.”)  
   viii. Segmenting phonemes in two- and three-phoneme words using a “say it and move it” procedure

l. Educators planning to incorporate phonemic awareness training for at-risk four-year-olds are urged to investigate projects like the Abecedarian Project

XIII. Phonemic Awareness Skill

a. A child with phonemic awareness may have phoneme segmentation skill, which allows her to hear phoneme segments in a word
   i. A phoneme is the smallest unit of speech distinguishing one utterance from another

b. International Reading Association, states that research findings have led them to the conclusion that phonemic awareness predicts reading success, and that they can only speculate on why the strong relationship exists
   i. One likely explanation is that phonemic awareness supports understanding the alphabetic principle, an insight that is crucial in reading an alphabetic orthography
      1. Logic of alphabetic print is apparent to learners if they know that speech is made up of a sequence of sounds (that is, if they are phonemically aware)

   c. Research in this area is motivated by the accepted conclusion that a good number of children having difficulty learning to read cannot hear sound sequences in words

   d. Hearing individual phonemes is not an easy task
      i. Hearing the “separate” words in a sentence is also difficult
      ii. When researchers and educators talk about developing children’s phonemic awareness, they are talking about developing children’s ability to hear such sounds, and particularly to analyze words into their separate sounds
      iii. Children hear and isolate letters with continuant, or sustainable, sounds first
         1. The sounds articulated in the letters a, e, i, o, u, f, l, m, n, r, s, u, and z are easier to sustain than the stop sounds articulated in the letters b, c, d, g, h, j, k, p, q, t, and x
2. Easier for children to hear the continuant sounds in the word *mom* than the stop sounds in the word *bat*

e. Five or more different levels of phonemic awareness have been identified:
   i. Most primitive level
      1. Measured by knowledge of nursery rhymes
      2. Involves nothing more than an ear for the sounds of words
   ii. At the next level, the oddity tasks require the child to methodically compare and contrast the sounds of words for rhyme or alliteration
      1. Requires not just sensitivity to similarities and differences in the overall sounds of words, but also the ability to focus attention on the components of sounds that make them similar or different
   iii. Tasks at the third level, blending and syllable splitting, seem to require:
      1. That the child have a comfortable familiarity with the notion that words can be subdivided into these small, meaningless sounds corresponding to phonemes, and
      2. That she be comfortably familiar with the way phonemes sound when produced “in isolation” and, better yet, with the act of producing them that way by oneself
   iv. The phonemic segmentation tasks require not only that the child have a thorough understanding that words can be completely analyzed into a series of phonemes but further that she be able to so analyze them, completely and on demand
   v. The phoneme manipulation tasks require still further that the child have sufficient proficiency with the phonemic structure of words that she is able to add, delete, or move any designated phoneme and regenerate a word (or a non-word) from the result
   f. Phonemic awareness is required to make connections between single alphabet letters and sounds
      i. It is therefore one of the first steps, or first skills, on the road to learning to read
      ii. Some preschool children can and do read the printed names of classmates and may have a large number of words memorized by sight, but tackling other words they see and sounding them out is impossible without phonemic awareness
   g. In-depth teaching in this area would focus on a number of language features, including rimes and onsets, before single phonemes (other than onsets)
      i. In spoken syllables, onsets are any consonants before a vowel in a syllable
         1. Rimes are the vowel and any consonants after it in a syllable
h. Several researchers have shown that young children are competent at analyzing spoken words into onsets and rimes but not into phonemes when onsets or rimes consist of more than one phoneme
   i. Usually more than one phoneme in the onset, the rime, or both
   ii. An example of this is the fact that children can mentally analyze the word smiles into /sm/ and /ilz/, but not into /s/, /m/, /i/, /l/, and /z/
   iii. Educators have identified 500 primary grade words that can be derived from a set of only 37 rimes
i. Fact that young children can split spoken words into onsets and rimes more easily than into phonemes (when phonemes are parts of onsets and rimes) raises the possibility that children use onsets and rimes rather than phonemes to pronounce new print words
   i. Research findings suggest that:
      1. Reading instruction predicated on the assumption that young children learn to pronounce unfamiliar print using phonemes is developmentally inappropriate, and
      2. Young children use their knowledge of onsets and rimes rather than knowledge of phonemes to pronounce unfamiliar print
j. What discussions will early childhood staff members have before providing phonemic awareness activities?
   i. Most certainly, “is it developmentally appropriate?”
   ii. Do children typically develop phonemic knowledge and phonic knowledge without direct teaching?
      1. Direct teaching does not have to be intensive and systematic to be effective for a majority of children
      2. At least three-fourths of children typically develop phonemic knowledge and phonic knowledge without much direct teaching
   iii. Will some children need and benefit from additional help in developing phonemic awareness?
      1. Various sources suggest that somewhere between 15 and 20 percent of children show a need for such additional instruction, whether it be provided in the classroom or not
   iv. What are recommended instructional techniques to help children gain phonics knowledge and phonemic awareness in the context of meaningful activities and language play?
      1. Many educators and phonics advocates recommend the following:
         a. Read and reread favorite nursery rhymes, and enjoy tongue twisters and other forms of language play together
         b. Reread favorite poems, songs, and stories; discuss alliteration and rhyme within them; and
play with sound elements (e.g., starting with cake, remove the c and consider what different sounds could be added to make other words, like take, make, lake)
c. Read alphabet books to and with children, and make alphabet books together
d. Discuss words and make lists, word banks, or books of such words that share interesting spelling-sound patterns
e. Discuss similar sounds and letter-sound patterns in children’s names
f. Emphasize selected letter-sound relationships while writing with, for, or in front of children
g. Encourage children to play with magnetic letters and to explore letter-sound relationships
h. Help children write the sounds they hear in words
i. When reading together, help children use prior knowledge and context plus initial consonants to predict what a word will be, then look at the rest of the word to confirm or correct
   i. Especially important for helping children orchestrate prior knowledge with context and letter/sound cues in order to not merely identify words but to construct meaning from texts, which, after all, is the primary purpose of reading
v. Phonological awareness activities should be embedded within a rich literacy context that also integrates reading, writing, and literature with the use of oral language across the curriculum
   1. Requires children to be thoughtful, which does not happen when they passively complete worksheets or engage in drill sessions
   2. Focuses on patterns, not rules
k. Phonemic awareness activities
   i. Teachers of young children should recognize the important role they can play in contributing to young children’s phonemic awareness and realize it can become a natural outgrowth of a wide variety of language-related activities and not become relegated to a “one-time-a-day” status
   ii. These activities can take place in the daily context of a developmentally appropriate program
      1. Goal of any phonemic awareness activity is to facilitate children’s perception that speech is made up of a series of sounds
2. Activities that easily fall into the category of phoneme awareness activities are word-play and word-game activities.

I. Using book discussions to develop phonemic awareness
   i. A teacher’s comments about a book the teacher is reading aloud can explicitly point out and analyze phonemic features.

m. Other listening activities
   i. Listening activities are used to increase enjoyment, vocabulary, and skill. In this chapter, the activities focus on the development of auditory skills through listening and response interactions.
   ii. Every classroom has some signal that alerts children to a change in activities or a new opportunity.
      1. Can range from a few notes on a classroom musical instrument to more creative signals.
      2. Usually, a short invitational and attention-getting statement will be used to pique children’s curiosity, such as:
         a. “Gail has a new game for you in the rug area today.”
         b. “Time to finish what you are doing and join Madelyn is in the story-time center with a book about Clifford, the big, red dog.”
         c. “Our clapping song begins in two minutes.”
   iii. In some centers, children are simply requested to finish up what they are doing and join their friends in a particular room area.
      1. Enjoyment of already-started finger plays, chants, songs, or movement captures their attention and they are drawn in.
      2. Great time to recognize all children by name.

n. Early childhood programs that promote poetry, child dictation, storytelling, and authorship can institute an author’s chair, a listening and discussion activity.
   i. Usually, the child-sized chair is specially decorated and used at one time of the day, or a sign is affixed—Author’s and/or Reader’s Chair.
   ii. Children are invited to share their own efforts or share a favorite or brought-to-school picture book.
   iii. Teachers may find a need to establish time limits for ramblers or may allow audiences to choose to leave quietly when they wish.