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Phonics Learning Hurdles for First Graders

1. Sound-to-Letter Confusion

One of the first hurdles your child may encounter is simply connecting the correct sounds with the letters they see. While adults take this for granted, it's a complex cognitive task. Phonics instruction helps clarify these inconsistencies over time, but until then, it's natural for kids to struggle.

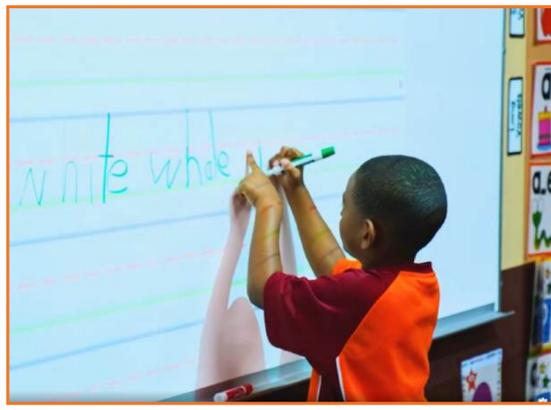


2. Blending Sounds

Another major challenge is blending. Your child might be able to identify the sounds in "c-a-t" but struggle to combine them smoothly into "cat." As a parent, you can help teach your first grader phonics by sounding out words together and encouraging them to stretch and blend sounds smoothly.

3. Poor Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic awareness refers to the ability to identify and manipulate the phonemes (sounds) that make up words. Phonemic awareness is the foundation for reading, and without it, students will struggle to read. The good news is that phonemic awareness can be developed through activities that help students isolate sounds and manipulate sounds.



4. Auditory Processing Differences

Some first graders struggle with phonics due to underlying auditory processing challenges. If your child has trouble distinguishing between similar sounds, they'll likely have a harder time decoding accurately. Talk to your child's teacher about techniques like sound sequencing games, using manipulatives like blocks, or rhyming games.

5. An Over-focus on Speed

When kids begin to decode successfully, they may have a tendency to read fast so they can get through the material and move on to the next activity. If your child races through sentences but has no idea what they just read, phonics alone won't solve the issue. Reinforcing meaning helps keep reading from becoming a robotic task and helps your child understand the purpose behind their reading.



6. Limited Vocabulary

Phonics helps children decode words, but if they don't understand word definitions, it's harder for them to connect those words to something meaningful. Reading aloud to your child, discussing new words, and exploring different topics all help to build a stronger foundation.

7. Inconsistent Practice

Reading is like any other skill. The more your child practices, the better they get. Progress slows if reading becomes a "once in a while" activity instead of a daily habit. Consistent exposure to books, sounds, and word patterns helps phonics skills stick, so do your best to build reading practice into your daily schedule.

