

Elkonin Boxes

What are "Elkonin Boxes" and why are they important?

"Elkonin Boxes" (Elkonin, 1963) are used to help your child become aware of the individual sounds that make up a word. The boxes provide a visual prompt that helps your child learn to isolate the sounds in a word. This is an important strategy for developing phonemic awareness, a necessary part of learning to read.

How can I use "Elkonin Boxes" with my child?

You can use this strategy with preschool, kindergarten, and first graders. Begin with simple, one-syllable words that are familiar to your child. Put in front of your child a paper containing the same number of boxes for each sound represented in the selected word. For example, *cat* would require three boxes. *Feet* would also require three boxes. There are three sounds in *feet* even though it is spelled with four letters. However, *clip* would need four boxes because you hear four sounds.

Say the word for the child and then repeat the word, stretching the sounds out so that he can hear each one. As the word is being stretched, have the child place a marker (chip, raisin) in the box to represent the sound that is heard. For example, *map* would have three boxes and three markers [□□□], whereas *trip* would have four [□□□□].

When the markers have been placed in each box, repeat the word and have the child pronounce each sound (phoneme) and point to the marker. The child can also repeat each sound (phoneme) as the marker is removed.

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