

Say It and Move It with Elkonin Boxes

Say It and Move It with Elkonin Boxes is a strategy to help improve a child's *phonemic awareness*. Being able to HEAR the individual sounds in a word is critical to reading and spelling success.

- Use the back side of this card and a set of counters (pennies).
- Student places the counters below the boxes.
- Say a word with two or three phonemes, such as the word *ship*.
- Student repeats the word aloud.
- Student segments the word into phonemes by saying the word slowly and moving one counter up into a box for each sound.
 - /sh/ Student moves one counter into the first box.
 - /i/ Student moves a second counter into the second box.
 - /p/ Student moves a third counter into the third box.
- After moving all three counters into the boxes, students repeat the word while sliding their fingers below the counters in a left-to-right sequence.
- Increase to longer words with many phonemes or individual sounds.

Some sounds can be made until you run out of air, such as /m/, /s/, and /f/, and the sound stays the same. Other sounds, like /t/, /b/, and /k/, change if you try to stretch them out. If you stretch out these sounds, you add the /uh/ sound to the end. This makes it very confusing for children. Do not stretch out sounds if doing so distorts the sound.

Using Elkonin boxes with LETTERS improves a child's *phonics knowledge*, helping them to understand that each phoneme or individual sound in the English language is spelled with one to four letters (**go** has two sounds, each spelled with just one letter, and **though** also has two sounds, but the **th** is spelled with two letters and **ough** is spelled with four letters.) It's a deep knowledge of phonics that allows us to read unknown words.

- Use the same Elkonin Boxes, but substitute letters cards for counters.
- Use dry erase makers to write the letter or letters in each box.
- Have the child write the letter or letters in each box.



Elkonin Boxes

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Adapted from: Elkonin, D. (1971). "Development of Speech". In A.V. Zaporozhets and D. B. Elkonin (Eds.), *The Psychology of Preschool Children*. Cambridge, MA: M.I.T. Press.