

Patient information factsheet

Listening skills (pre-school aged children)

Listening skills are important to help children develop their speech and communication skills.

We have written this factsheet to give you information on how to improve your child's listening skills. It can be useful for children with normal hearing and those with a diagnosed hearing loss. These tips may also be particularly useful for children who have had a temporary hearing loss and need to regain listening skills. We hope it will help to answer some of the questions you may have. If you have any further questions or concerns, please speak to a member of our team.

Tips to help improve your child's listening skills (at home and at nursery)

- Check you have your child's attention before you speak (for example, by calling their name)
- Use a clear voice
- Move closer to your child to speak to them, rather than shouting
- Try to use the same instruction whenever you repeat a routine
- Give your child time to respond to what you have said
- Ask your child to repeat the instruction you have given them and praise them for this
- Ask if your child can sit closer to their teacher so they can see and hear them clearly
- Face your child when you are speaking to them
- Try to make sure you are in good lighting and use supporting visual cues where necessary
- Background noise can make listening more difficult. Try to reduce any background noise when you can, for example:
 - turn the TV down when you want to speak to your child
 - be aware of background noise from appliances such as the washing machine
 - be aware of noise from children in other rooms and close the door to noise (where possible)

Activities to encourage listening skills

Talk your child through your daily routines

- Getting up and dressed: Talk about the clothes and the different colours
- Emptying the washing machine or sorting clothes: Talk about the clothes and who they belong to
- Getting ready for nursery or getting ready to go out: Explain where you are going and who you are seeing
- Mealtimes: Talk about the food you are preparing, laying the table and washing your hands
- Putting the shopping away: Name the different food items and where they will go

Engage with your child by joining in with their own play

This gives your child the opportunity to use and learn language in the context of real life situations. Examples of games you might play include:

- shopping games
- playing doctors

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- talking on the phone
- dressing up
- tea sets
- dolls
- cars or garages

Sounds and action songs

Children enjoy the repetition of songs. Songs can also help your child to understand the meaning of words. Examples of songs you could sing with your child include:

- Heads, shoulders, knees and toes
- Incy wincy spider
- The wheels on the bus
- This little piggy
- This is the way we wash our hands or brush our teeth

You may also like to play a game called 'what's that sound?'. This game involves asking your child to cover or close their eyes while you make a sound with a musical instrument or toy. Your child must then try and identify what made the sound.

Memory games

- Copying rhythms (for example clapping hands or banging a drum)
- Simon says
- Try to get your child to remember three or four items placed on a table, then take one item away and see if they can identify what item is missing
- Give your child a simple instruction to follow and then build up the number of instructions (one at a time) in line with your child's ability
- "I went for a walk and I saw..." (gradually build up the number of items to see how many your child can remember)

Contact us

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact us.

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