

Patient information factsheet

Listening skills (school aged children)

Listening skills are important to help children develop their speech and communication skills. Good listening skills will help your child with their achievement at school as well as their ability to make and keep good friendships.

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 school)

- Check you have your child's attention when you speak to them (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
- Face your child when you are speaking to them
- Try to make sure you are in good lighting and use some supporting visual cues where necessary
- Ask if your child can sit closer to their teacher so they can see and hear them clearly
- It is helpful for teachers to repeat what other children have said to the class

Controlling and reducing background noise

The presence of background noise can make it trickier for your child to hear. This is particularly important at school, which can be a noisy environment at times.

At home

- Turn down the television or radio when you want to talk to your child.
- Make sure you are in the same room as your child when speaking to them.
- Be aware of other background noises from appliances, such as the washing machine.
- Close the door to other background noises (where possible).

At school

- Be aware of noise from other children.
- Be aware of noise from outside of the classroom, such as traffic (if possible, close windows to reduce background noise).

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Listening games

We have included some game ideas below that you can play with your child at home to try to improve their listening skills:

- **Feely bag** – Describe what you are touching in the bag so your child can guess what's in there.
- **Stories** – Read your child a familiar story. Can they remember what happens next? Can they tell you the story?
- **What is it?** – Describe an animal, person or object so your child can guess what it is.
- **Follow the directions** – Give your child short, simple instructions and ask your child to draw what they hear.
- **Spot the change** – Read a short story to your child and then repeat the story, but change a few details, and see if your child can spot what has changed.
- **Memory games** such as “I went shopping and I bought...” or “I went for a walk and I saw...” – Gradually add extra items to the list and test your child's memory (and listening skills).
- **What's missing?** – Put a few items on a table and then take one away. See if your child can identify which item is missing.
- **Alphabet memory game** – Choose a topic, such as animals, and ask your child to use each letter in the alphabet to come up with a different animal. For example ant, bear, cat, dog and so on.

Contact us

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

Audiology and hearing therapy department
Level A
The Royal South Hants Hospital
Brintons Terrace
Southampton
Hampshire
SO14 0YG

Telephone: **023 8054 0188**

Email: **UHS.RSHAUDIOLOGY@nhs.net**

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