

# Listening Skills

Listening skills play a key part in helping your child to communicate. When your child listens to what is happening around them they are able to learn sounds, words and sentences.

Below are a list of activities and games that you can play to help your child's listening skills, which in turn will help their speech skills to develop. Remember - children learn best when they are having fun!

- No sounds verses sound:  
Children firstly need to no the difference between sounds and no sounds. Below are a list of activities that can help with this:
  - Musical statues: Encourage your child to move/dance around the room when they hear music and to stop when the music stops.
  - Object noises: Place a range of objects in a bag some that make noise (e.g. a bell, a squeaky toy, a whistle, a bottle with rice in etc.) and some that don't make sound (e.g. a sock, a wooden spoon, a ball etc.). Ask your child to choose an object and give it a shake. Then ask them if it makes a sound or no sound and separate the objects into two piles.
- Listening walk:  
Take your child for a walk and encourage them to listen to the sounds around them. Point out different sounds to them such as dogs barking, cars driving past or aeroplanes.
- Parachute:
  - Using the parachute (or a bed sheet will have the same effect) encourage your child to move the parachute when they hear music and to hold it still when the music stops.
  - Using a parachute place a soft toy in the middle and encourage your child to make the toy jump by shaking the sides of the parachute. Encourage your child to make the toy jump high by shaking it very quickly or to do small jumps by shaking it slowly. Your child will need to listen carefully to hear your instruction in order to know how quickly to shake the parachute. The more excited your child becomes, often the more difficult it becomes for them to listen!



- Musical Instruments:

There are many ways that musical instruments can be used to help a child's listening skills:

- You will need a soft animal and a musical instrument. Ask them lie their soft animal down and pretend that they are asleep. Ask them to play their instruments quietly so they can sleep. Then play the instruments loudly to wake the animals up.
- Encourage your child to copy how you are playing your instrument. Start off by tapping a beat slowly and see if they can copy. Gradually speed up the beat and slow it down. Then try and play it quietly and gradually get louder.
- Using two musical instruments play one and then play the other one. Ask your child to copy what you have done. When they become confident at doing this, play the instruments one at a time hidden so your child can't see and ask them to repeat what you have done. Your child will have to have listened well to know which to play first. When your child becomes confident at this try doing it with three instruments.



- Animals:

- Using a soft dog and cat (or other animals depending on what you have available) and some pretend food encourage your child to feed the correct animal depending on what animal sound you make e.g. "woof" - feed the dog.
- Give each child a soft toy animal or picture of an animal and encourage them to take brick and build a tower when they hear their animal's sound. The child with the most bricks and tallest tower wins. If your child does this easily then make the animal sounds with your back to them so that they can't see your mouth when you make the sounds.



- Songs:

- Singing songs and rhymes often gets children's attention. Why not try singing tidy up songs, action songs etc.
- Singing songs such as "Here we go round the Mulberry Bush" and Simon says are a great way at developing attention and listening skills as your child will have to listen carefully in order to know what to do next.

