

Primary Age

Listening practice for primary children

The ultimate goal of listening practice is always auditory comprehension or *understanding* through listening. It involves short and long term memory and more complex auditory skills.

Auditory comprehension requires both the perception (*awareness/insight*) of sound and the knowledge of language to interpret the sound. It also requires the ability to recall the sound/language that has been heard.

It is important to remember, particularly in the early weeks or months post implantation, that a deaf child may take up to 7 seconds or more to think about or 'process' what he/she has just heard. Only then, can he/she begin to structure a response, if at all.

Ideas for working on auditory comprehension:

Present lots of opportunities for the child to develop auditory comprehension with suggested activities and extensions of these. Keep in mind that listening and language needs to be developed in a *natural, meaningful* and *fun* way.

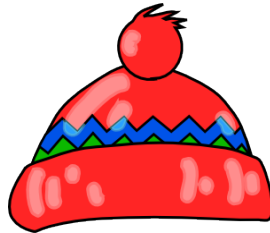
Use musical activities:

- Sing Nursery rhymes that have a good rhythm and lots of bounce to them. Use these in ways already described. Use songs in natural situations and encourage your child to join in. Remember to encourage any attempts.
- Develop responses to beats in basic rhythm patterns.
- Action jingles - encourage your child to listen to the song, jingle or game and then do the actions suggested e.g. 'Head, shoulders, knees and toes', 'Simon Says', 'Here we go Looby Loo'. This may be done individually, with partners, or with a group.



Use repetition in familiar scenarios to increase auditory comprehension

- For example, on a cold day introduce the concept by saying something like “Brrr it’s cold outside, we need to get our **hats**”.
Begin with one direction: “Let’s get your **hat**”. (Walk around ‘looking’ for it)...”Where is it?” “Where’s your **hat**?” “Come on, let’s find your hat” etc....’ If your child does not understand the direction, repeat, and then model again. Find the hat with the child, and say “Ah, here’s your **hat**. Hooray!!”



As one direction becomes easily attainable increase this to 2 items e.g. ‘Get your hat and your gloves.’ As your child becomes more confident, hide several familiar items around the room and make it a game.

- Give more detailed directions for the child to follow in sequence e.g. a simple recipe.
- Play an action game, giving them a list of movements e.g. lie down, stand up, put your hands on your head, and turn around. This type of exercise is a complex task as it requires your child’s attention, a good level of auditory memory and knowledge of language.

Using books as a listening tool

This is not about teaching your child to read; it is just another way to help them make sense of their world, linking the clear speech sounds they hear from you to the pictures they see on the page.

(Please note, some of the best books don’t have any words at all, just pictures)
Use lots of intonation when you read the words or describe the pictures. Have fun using different voices/accents for each character. The more interesting the story sounds, the more exciting the story.



Suggestions:

Read the same 2-3 books every day for a week and then switch over to others. This will allow your child to become familiar with the sounds and intonation of speech, starting to link the book's pictures to the associated spoken word.

Point out the pictures in the book while you are reading; make the animal sounds, name the duck, the cat or vehicle noises etc.

When you know your child is familiar with a book, pause occasionally to allow them time to fill the silence. If this occurs, show how happy you are.

A word of warning!

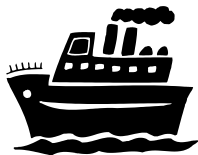
Children enjoy repetition and *will not tire* of hearing the same story many, *many* times! The good thing though is that by knowing books inside out, your child is learning how to sequence events e.g. what happened **first**? what happened **next**? and **then** what might happen **after that**? and so on...

Play Listening Games:

- Ask the child to tell you the sounds they heard within a set time e.g. the birds singing outside, the aeroplane, someone talking.



- Play a listening game where each child repeats a word he/she has heard and adds one more: 'the car'- the next child says 'went'.
- Recall 2, 3 and then 4 critical elements in a message. Put 5-6 objects in front of the child. Ask, 'Give me the boat and the train.' Accept any order to begin with, but encourage the correct order and expect this later. Increase to 4 items 'Give me the boat, the ball, the duck and the plane.' Or vary with the introduction of prepositions, adjectives and verbs - 'Put the boy in the bed and the girl on the swing'. Or "Give me the big yellow helicopter".



Some pointers:

- Choose some games/activities that you know the child likes and play them more often as it is important that he/she is motivated and the repetition will be very helpful.
- You need a good balance between keeping her/him confident with the game by playing them often and introducing an element of surprise or freshness now and then to keep him/her interested.
- Seize every opportunity in your daily routine to take advantage of listening and language building exercise

Remember the key to any listening activity is to have

FUN!

Relax and enjoy listening activities with your child.

Keep a diary of your child's listening progress. Great to look back on!