

Listening Activities

Soundmakers

- Have a special time in the day for children to explore soundmakers and instruments
- Gather useful items together for a 'listening box' (see below for ideas)
- Try to have pairs of instruments so you can play matching games

Use one soundmaker in different ways, e.g. shaken, tapped, scratched or hit with hard or soft blow.

Use different beaters.

Make different sounds from different parts of the instrument.

Explore different pitch and volume. (N.B. some children with a hearing impairment may not hear some high pitched or quieter sounds.)

Listening Box

- Bell
- Assorted pairs of musical instruments
- Squeaky toys
- Shakers
- Scrunchy paper
- Musical and noisy mobiles
- Electronic key finder
- Alarm clock
- Metronome
- Buzzers
- Hooters
- Music box
- Musical cards

- Musical and noise making toys
- Sea-shells
- Books with sound makers

Sound or silence?

Children with a hearing loss may have difficulty in detecting sound and distinguishing the start and finish of a sound.

- Action and movement games. Using one instrument or soundmaker, ask the children to perform an action or movement when the instrument is played eg clapping their hands, raising arms in air, standing up or sitting down.
- Musical statues
- Musical bumps
- Musical chairs
- Sound or silence in everyday routines. Use sound to signal start or end of an activity. Use the end of a sound to signal an activity, e.g. children have to wait until you finish shaking the tambourine before they sit down on the carpet.
- Human sounds. At first let the children watch your face as you make the sound or say the word. Later you can hide your face, so the children can rely on their listening skills alone. The aim is to teach the children to respond to a sound or voice. E.g. play 'Ring-a-Ring-of-Roses' and make children wait for the sneeze before they sit down.
- Representational sounds. At first let the children watch your face as you make the sound or say the word. Later, you can hide your face, so the children can rely on their listening skills alone. These activities will help the children learn the difference between sound and silence. E.g. set out a model farm and give each child an animal. Make children listen for the sound of that animal before placing it in the farm. Teach sounds that represent objects or situations e.g. 'Wheel!' when going down slide, 'Beep Beep' when pushing a car along, 'Tick Tock' when playing with a clock, etc.

Developing auditory memory

- What was the first thing you heard when you arrived at Nursery?
- What made that sound? One child closes eyes, another child chooses an object or soundmaker and makes a noise. The child opens his/her eyes and finds the object that made the noise.
- Simon says. Gradually make the commands longer.
- I went shopping and bought.... I went to the zoo and saw..... I went on holiday and took..... etc.

Listening to speech

Single words

The number of information carrying words in a sentence will affect the complexity of the utterance. Some words in a sentence are redundant - they add nothing to the message. For example, "Give me the ball," while holding out an outstretched hand is only requiring the child to understand the word ball. The outstretched hand indicates that the adult wants to be given something. This sentence, used in this context, will have one information carrying word. Activities where the child is required to make a choice are likely to have information carrying words. So if you ask for a banana there must be a choice between a banana and another item. The following topics can be useful for one information carrying word activities.

- Body parts
- Prepositions
- Animals
- Clothes
- Food
- Toys
- Transport
- Action words
- Feelings

Examples of suitable games - pretend shops; gathering ingredients to make a meal/cake; dress / wash the doll; place animals in a farm/Noah's Ark; action songs

Simple commands

A simple command may include one or more of the following concepts:

- Size (big, large, small, little)
- Length
- Weight
- Position (on, under, in, next to, behind, near to)
- Action words
- Number
- Texture (smooth, shiny, rough, scratchy)
- Taste (sweet, sour, salty)

Examples of activities - obstacle race (Run round the bean bags, hop across the line etc); putting away the shopping (Put the sugar in the cupboard); rearrange furniture in a dolls house

Complex Commands

The activities used earlier can be extended to include more complex commands. E.g. "Fetch the red apple and put it in the bag." Wash teddy's hands and feet."