

## Activities to help Auditory Processing Skills

The following games and activities can be used to help improve your child's listening skills. Remember to keep the activities fun and to only spend a short amount of time on any specific activity (5-10 minutes maximum).

- Listening Walk: The purpose of the walk is to listen to sounds, particularly those they may not have been aware of previously. Before the walk you can suggest sounds to listen for or you can call the child's attention to sounds as you walk along. After the walk, see how many sounds your child can remember and encourage him/her to describe them.
- Practise listening to environmental sounds and guessing where the sounds are coming from and what is making them.
- With their eyes closed ask your child to identify different noises e.g. clock ticking, coins rattling, squeaky toys, paper rustling, kettle boiling etc.
- Have your child close their eyes and then move to different positions in the room. Call out to your child and see if they can guess from which direction your voice is coming from.
- Play listening games such as "Simon Says". Simon says can also be
  - played with your child imitating your speech sounds, volume changes,
  - changes in pitch and rhythm changes.
- Play games such as "Eye Spy" or see how many things they can see in
  - the room that begin with a certain letter. Play matching games where the children have to match pictures of objects that have either the first or last sound the same.
- Encourage your child to focus his attention on particular sounds. For example, read a simple story with background noise created by a radio playing softly. Before beginning the story tell the child to listen for specific pieces of information in the story (e.g. the main characters name). Gradually increase the difficulty of the information the child is asked to listen for.
- Play games that encourage listening for differences between words. For example, ask your child to listen to a group of four words and tell you which ones rhyme or which ones begin or end with a different letter. For younger children, ask them to tell you if two words are the same or different, you can use word



pairs such as by/pie, mat/pat, fish/wish. Older children can listen to short lists of consonant sounds that contain one or more repetition e.g. b, d, k, f, d. They tell you the sound that is repeated.

- Clap in simple rhythmic sequence and then ask your child to imitate the sequence.
- Give your child a series of directions (e.g. two hops and one step) and ask them to follow your directions. You can gradually increase the length of the sequence as your child masters each stage.
- Read an unfamiliar story to your child. Afterwards ask questions about the sequence of events (e.g. what happened first, who went out to play etc). Continue to ask questions until the events in the story have been reviewed. Another strategy is to ask the child to predict likely events in the story.
- Present well-known stories, rhymes or songs with one or more parts omitted and the child must supply the missing information.



## **Modifications to the Environment:**

A student with auditory processing difficulties would benefit from the following modifications in the classroom:

### **A classroom setting with as low level of background noise as possible:**

- A single classroom rather than a double classroom
- The use of curtains, carpets and soft wall hangings help reduce noise and reverberation
- The classroom should be away from roads, high traffic areas within the school (e.g. the main entrance) or noisy areas within the school (e.g. the music room)

### **Preferential seating:**

- Close to the teacher so the student can hear the teacher's voice clearly and see their face - looking and listening is much more effective than listening alone
- If possible, seat the student between two quiet children who are on task
- Away from sources of noise such as fans, vents, windows, pencil sharpeners
- Away from sources of visual distraction - if a child is visually distracted, less attention will be given to auditory information
- If the audiologist has identified a 'weaker' ear on assessment, seat so that the better ear is favoured

Helpful Teaching Techniques:

### **1. Ensure that the student is attending before giving oral directions/ explanations:**

- a. Call the student's name &
- b. Get the child to look at you

### **2. When speaking:**

- a. Speak in a clear animated voice
- b. Slow down the rate of speech
- c. Speak using an appropriate volume
- d. Speak in short simple sentences with plenty of pauses and repeats

### **3. When giving instructions/directions:**

- a. Give clear, concise and succinct instructions - avoid lengthy and multiple-part instructions
- b. Provide a purpose for the activity to prepare the student
- c. Information is presented in simple steps or chunks e.g. sit down - get your book out
- d. Limit the amount of verbal information given at one time



- e. Stress the relevant parts of the instruction/explanation by altering your pitch, inflection, rate or volume of your voice.
- f. Avoid giving instructions when there is a high level of background noise

**4. While you explain what is being taught, use visual aids to help the student understand. The child should be encouraged to use both visual and auditory input to maximise comprehension:**

- a. Written instructions on the board
- b. Write key words on the board
- c. Write examples on the board
- d. Provide written frameworks for note-taking
- e. Display models, diagrams, overheads, charts, pictures or real objects
- f. Provide written notes/instructions beforehand to the student
- g. Nominate another student to act as note-taker (i.e. Avoid asking the child to listen and write at the same time)
- h. Use facial expressions and gestures to convey meaning unless they become distracting

**5. Monitor the message:**

- a. Recognise 'blank' or 'puzzled' looks
- b. Watch for signs of lack of concentration, understanding or attention
- c. Watch for signs of fatigue as students with auditory processing difficulties tend to tire more quickly if the activity is language or listening based. Short intensive periods of instruction with regular breaks tend to be much more effective.
- d. When repetition doesn't work, rephrasing the material often helps
- e. Ask the student questions or to repeat or paraphrase what has been said
- f. Encourage the student to ask questions if something is not understood

**6. Compassion:**

- a. Let the student know you understand their struggles and are willing to listen and brainstorm about strategies that will help the student manage in the classroom

**7. Encourage the student to:**

- a. Use gestures, meaning and intelligent guessing to fill in any gaps
- b. Become an active listener i.e. monitoring and checking their own listening comprehension
- c. Ask relevant questions to obtain the extra information that they may need e.g. present part of a story with a question. The child is then helped to paraphrase what he has read and identify what extra



information he needs to answer the question. The child can then be shown how to use this skill to improve his understanding of what he hears

- d. Use visual imagery e.g. visualise themselves doing a task as an aid to memory
- e. Rehearse facts and complex information. Auditory memory is aided by association with rhythm, so facts can be put to simple rhythms and tunes.
- f. Use their language/metalinguistics knowledge to assist listening comprehension.
- g. Repeat instructions to themselves.

### 8. Remember this mnemonic: **SPEECH**

**S** - State the topic to be discussed

**P** - Pace your conversation at a moderate speed with pauses for comprehension

**E** - Enunciate clearly without exaggerating lip movements

**E** - Enthusiastically communicate with speech, facial expression and gesture

**CH** - Check for comprehension

