

Auditory Discrimination

Hearing differences between a range of sounds

Listening walks: *(This listening activity can take place indoors or outdoors.)*

1. Remind the children about the things that good listeners do (e.g. keep quiet, have ears and eyes ready).
2. Invite the children to show you how good they are at listening, and talk about why listening carefully is important.
3. Encourage the children to listen attentively to the sounds around them. Talk about the different sounds they can hear.
4. After they have enjoyed a listening walk indoors or outdoors, make a list of all the sounds they can remember. The list can be in words or pictures, and prompted by replaying sounds recorded on the walk.

A Listening Moment: *(This listening activity can take place indoors or outdoors.)*

1. Remind the children about the things that good listeners do (e.g. keep quiet, have ears and eyes ready).
2. Invite them to show how good they are at listening by remembering all the sounds they hear when they listen for a moment.
3. Ask them what made each sound and encourage them to try to make the sound themselves.

Drum outdoors:

1. Give each child a beater (or make drumsticks, e.g. from short pieces of dowel).
2. Encourage the children to explore the outdoor area and discover how different sounds are made by tapping or stroking with their beaters: a wooden door, a wire fence, a metal slide, and a few items such as pipes and upturned pots you have 'planted'.
3. Ask each child to demonstrate their favourite sound. The whole group can join in and copy.
4. Ask each child to take up position ready to make their favourite sound. An adult or a child acts as conductor and raises a beater high in the air to signal to the children to play loudly and lowers it to signal playing softly.

Teddy is lost in the jungle:

1. One child (the rescuer) is taken aside while a teddy bear is hidden somewhere in the room.
2. Tell the other children they are going to guide the rescuer to the teddy by singing louder as the rescuer gets closer to, or quietly as the rescuer moves further away from the teddy.

Alternatively lead the children in singing a familiar song, rhyme or jingle, speeding up and slowing down to guide the rescuer.

Mrs Browning has a Box:

1. Turn a box on its side with the opening facing away from the children.
2. One by one, place between four to six familiar noisy items (e.g. a set of keys, biscuit packet, squeaky toy) into the box, pausing to name them and demonstrate the sound each one makes.
3. Sing to the tune of 'Old MacDonald' but using your own name or one of the children:
Mr/Miss/Ms/Mrs...has a box ee i ee i o
And in that box they have a...
4. Stop. Gesture and ask the children to listen.
5. Handle one of the objects in the box, out of sight, to make a noise. The children take it in turns to guess what is making the sound. Continue the song but imitating the sound using your voice.
With a zzz zzz here and a zzz zzz there...
6. Allow the children to take a turn at making a noise from inside the box and use their names as you sing.

Favourite Sounds:

1. Ask the children to think about sounds that they do and do not like (e.g. stormy weather, barking dogs, car horns, crying babies) and to say why.

New Words to Old Songs:

1. Take a song or rhyme the children know well and invent new words to suit the purpose and the children's interests.
2. Use percussion instruments to accompany the new lyrics.

Adjust the Volume:

1. Two children sit opposite each other with identical instruments.
2. Ask them to copy each other making loud sounds and quiet sounds.
It may be necessary to demonstrate with two adults copying each other first, then try the activity with an adult with one child.

Listen to the Beat:

1. Play different rhythms.
2. Remind the children to use their listening ears and to move in time to the beat – fast, slow, skipping, marching, etc.
3. Keep the beat simple at first (e.g. suitable for marching) then move on to more complex rhythms for the children to skip or gallop to.

Voice Sounds:

1. Show children how they can make sounds with their voices, for example:

Make your voice go down a slide – wheee!

Make your voice bounce like a ball – boing, boing.

Sound really disappointed – oh.

Hiss like a snake – ssssss.

Keep everyone quiet – shshshsh.

Gently moo like a cow – mmmoooo.

Look astonished – oooooo!

Be a train – chchchch.

Buzz like a bumble bee – zzzzzzz.

Be a clock – tick tock.

This can be extended by joining single speech sounds into pairs (e.g. ee-aw like a donkey).

Target Sounds:

1. Give each child a target sound to put into a story when they hear a particular word or character (e.g. make a 'ch' sound when they hear the word 'train').
2. Start with a single sound that the small group of children can make together when they hear a target word.

Be prepared to prompt initially and leave pauses in your reading to make it obvious where the sounds are required.

Whose Voice?:

1. Ask children to close their eyes.
2. Choose one child to say something (e.g. by touching them lightly on the shoulder).
3. The children then open their eyes and have to guess who spoke.

Clapping rhythms:

1. Clap a simple rhythm and ask the children to clap it back to you. Vary the rhythm that you clap.
2. Once the children are used to this activity, invite a child to clap the rhythm for others to copy.

Listening Lotto: (available commercially or make your own)

1. Play the CD and the children mark off the sounds they can hear.
2. Start with easy boards, like animal noises, familiar environmental noises etc. and move on to emotion noises, musical instruments etc.

Match the Musical Instrument:

1. Get two sets of identical instruments. One for the 'teacher' and one for the 'listener'.
2. Set up a barrier so the child cannot see which instrument you are playing.
3. Can the child find the matching instrument?

Match the Sound Pot:

1. Collect opaque pots (old film canisters work well). Fill with sand, dry rice, paperclips etc. Make sure you have 2 for each sound.
2. Can the children match the pots by listening to the sound they make when shaken?

Find the Sound:

1. Set up a small talking tin with a recording, start with something loud and move on to quieter sounds.
2. Press play and then hide the tin in the classroom, under a box etc.
3. Can the children find the tin?

Same or Different?:

1. Check the children know the words same and different.
2. The teacher says two sounds – class to answer, were the sounds the same or different?
The class can be taught a simple action/sign to signify same and different so that the whole class can easily play at the same time.

Animal Bingo:

1. Access the online game: <http://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/AnimalBingo.html>