

# ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP ATTENTION AND LISTENING SKILLS

Communication Interaction Team



**Close your eyes and listen.** What can you hear? Do you know what has made that sound? This activity can be done indoors or outdoors.

Make a set of **shakers** using plastic bottles. Each shaker contains something different, eg pebbles, pasta, peas, buttons. The child is blindfolded or turns his/her back and a sound is made with one of the shakers. Can he/she identify which one it was?

**Musical notes** – are they the same or different?

**Clapping hands** to a rhythm demonstrated/modelled by the adult.

**Listening for beats in a word.** Can the child clap the number of beats (syllables) in their name, sister's/brother's name, mummy/daddy, etc?

Play **listening and remembering games**, eg variations on 'I went to the shops and bought ...'.

**Songs involving memory and sequencing.**

Place a number of **pictures** on the table, eg pictures of farm animals. Give each child a different picture name (eg a different animal name). **Tell a story mentioning the pictures by name.** When a child's picture is named they raise their hand or point to the picture. This will encourage careful listening.

**Arrange small world toys** (eg Put the plate on the table. Put the dog under the table).

**Play Copy Cat games** where the children have to copy actions modelled by the adult. Accompany actions with spoken instructions. Encourage children to copy your actions, eg '*Clap your hands, tap your feet*'.

Encourage the children to join in with **finger rhymes** and **action rhymes**.

**Recognising voices** – Blindfold children and see if he/she can recognise the voices of other children repeating a simple sentence such as 'Who am I?'

**Play barrier games with musical instruments.** Place behind a screen a set of musical instruments that have already been looked at, listened to and named by the children. Make a noise behind the screen with one of the instruments and the children have to guess the instrument.

**Play Spot the Mistake.** Children listen to sentences/rhymes with deliberate mistakes. Can they identify and correct the mistake? Eg Baa, baa, black pig.

Children take it in turns to **copy a rhythm** (eg using a shaker) made by the adult. Children identify whether two rhythms are the same or different.

**Clap the rhythm.** Children sit in a circle. One person claps a rhythm. The rhythm must pass around the circle. Each person must clap after they hear their neighbour clap.

**Read a short story** then as you read it a second time, **make deliberate mistakes.** Can the child recognise the mistake?

**Play Listening Bingo.** Give each child 6 pictures from the same category, eg food, clothes or toys. Say/read a sentence which includes one of the pictured items. If a child identifies the correct picture then he/she can place a counter on the picture. The picture can be included in more than one sentence. If the children have an identical set of pictures (but possibly in different order on their board), then at the end of the game they can see if they all have the same number of counters on the pictures. Extend this activity by including 2 of the pictures in each sentence.

**Identifying and correcting absurdities in verbally given sentences.**

Give instructions as to how to **colour a picture.** The children could all have an identical picture and take turns giving an instruction.

**Listening to sounds on CD** – there are commercial materials available or you can make your own. Ask the pupils to listen to a sound and do a specific activity.

**Sound Bingo** – listening to sounds on CD and covering the correct picture.

**Sound walk** – listening for different sounds they hear on a walk, then using these to paint a picture or compose a group poem.

**Simon says** – listen carefully for specific instructions and then do the actions.

**Share reading** – using big books to help focus attention on the visual cues.

**Circle-time activities** – when one child is speaking they could hold a listening shell, which means that everyone else (including the adults) must listen to what they say.

**Story CDs** – listening-centre activities can include listening to story CDs interspersed with activities related to the text.

**Who am I?** – miming activities can be related to a classroom topic (story characters, occupations and people in the school).

**Parachute activities** – pupils need to listen carefully to the instructions in order to be part of a team activity.

**Messages** - ask the pupils to recall simple messages.

**Chinese whispers** – pass an action message round the circle. The last pupil to receive the message has to perform the action.

**Listen and colour** – colour a picture by listening to the instructions.

**Listen and draw** – draw a picture by listening to the instructions (there are some published materials for this).

**Twenty questions** – allow the pupils twenty questions to discover the identity of a hidden object related to a class project. Pupils need to listen carefully to make deductions.

**Hot-seating** – one pupil chooses to be a particular story character and sits in the 'hot seat'. The other pupils ask questions to discover the identity of the character. This works well for all ages, from Little Red Riding Hood to Romeo.

With reference to: *Handbook for Special Needs Coordinators* edited by Jacquie Buttriss and Ann Callander