Supporting Children to Listen in School

Worcestershire Communication TAs
What are children _NOT_ doing that you need them to do?
What are the good listening rules?

- Looking at the person who is talking
- Listening to ALL of the words
- Sitting still
- Staying quiet (so that everyone can listen)
# Listening Rating Scale

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sitting Still</td>
<td>Not able to stay on chair/mat Constant fidgeting</td>
<td>Inappropriate sitting posture/ lots of fidgeting</td>
<td>Stays on chair/mat but some fidgeting</td>
<td>Appropriate balanced sitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at the person who is talking</td>
<td>Does not initiate eye contact spontaneously</td>
<td>Some eye contact but not sustained</td>
<td>Initiates eye contact but needs recall</td>
<td>Appropriate eye contact when listening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying quiet</td>
<td>Consistently interrupts/ talks during instructions</td>
<td>Occasionally quiet but cannot maintain this</td>
<td>Some talking but can be recalled to stay quiet and listen</td>
<td>Quiet when listening in class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening to all of the words</td>
<td>Does not follow instructions/ relies on routine/ copies others Does not recognise when has not understood</td>
<td>Carries out part of an instruction - needs repeated reminders</td>
<td>Follows simple instructions but needs repetition of complex information</td>
<td>Able to listen to complex/ unfamiliar information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listening Score</td>
<td>Recognises when has not listened accurately and seeks help</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How we classify children’s listening:

Children who score:

4 – 7  Severe listening difficulties

8-11  Moderate listening difficulties

Over 12  Adequate listening
Results – 4034 children

BEFORE INTERVENTION

- Severe: 41%
- Moderate: 22%
- Adequate: 37%

AFTER INTERVENTION

- Severe: 4%
- Moderate: 27%
- Adequate: 69%

NHS
Worcestershire Children & Young People's
Speech & Language Therapy
Helping you live well

COMMUNICATION TAs
Supporting targeted interventions in schools
Also consider...

Active poor listener?
Often engaged and enthusiastic. May be looking at you and listening but find it hard to sit still and stay quiet.

Passive poor listener?
May sit quite still and often very quiet and don’t contribute but are often not looking at you and not listening to your words.
Teaching good listening:

• Whole class or listening groups
• Structure of session:
  ✓ Introduction/reinforcement of rules
  ✓ Game for each rule
  ✓ Final game to reinforce all rules
  ✓ Identifying times to do good listening in school
Sample games:
Looking at the person who is talking
Looking pairs

Cross

Surprised

Sad

Happy
Sample games

Listening to ALL the words

Nonsense word stories
Once upon a time, there was a little fleecelepog called Red Nibdib Hood. One day, her dobnicko was poorly. So her mother said “dindlehag, take these flowers and drenkeypitch to Grandma but

Jingle Bells

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Santa</th>
<th>cracker</th>
<th>present</th>
<th>Christmas tree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>snowman</td>
<td>holly</td>
<td>reindeer</td>
<td>bauble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santa</td>
<td>cracker</td>
<td>present</td>
<td>Christmas tree</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Sample games

Sitting still
How many children on the mat?

Lily pads
Sample games

Staying quiet

What am I?

What am I?
I am made of paper...
I have a cover...
You can read me...

What am I?
I am a book
Supporting listening in class
Looking at the person

- Model the behaviour yourself
- Call their name and wait for them to look
- Be explicit that you are waiting
- Praise them when they show this behaviour and tell them WHY it helps e.g. ‘You are doing fantastic looking at me – that tells me that you are ready to listen’
Listening to all the words

- Keep your instruction short
- Remind them to listen ‘all the way to the end of my words’
- If they react impulsively then stop and bring them back and remind them to listen to the end

We are all thinking about…
Staying Quiet

• Never compete – be explicit that you are waiting for quiet e.g ‘I want to tell you what we are going to do but some people are still talking’

• Be explicit about the volume

• Be explicit about calling out
Sitting Still

- Use photos of target behaviour
- Chairs are always easier
- Encourage them to take responsibility for distractions e.g. ‘Where can you put X so you can do your best listening?’
- Be very careful with fidget toys
- Use movement breaks
## Mini Brain Breaks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rolled...</th>
<th>Brain break 1</th>
<th>Brain break 2</th>
<th>Brain break 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><strong>Flamingoes</strong>&lt;br&gt;Stand on one leg for a minute – how many times do you have to put your foot down? Try again with the other leg next time!</td>
<td><strong>Snap wink</strong>&lt;br&gt;Wink your left eye and snap the fingers on your right hand then swap round as fast as you can!</td>
<td><strong>Air guitar</strong>&lt;br&gt;Put some fast guitar music on and play your air guitar along as energetically as you can</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><img src="image2" alt="Image" /></td>
<td><strong>Who’s chasing me?</strong>&lt;br&gt;Run on the spot... your teacher will shout out which animal is chasing you and you decide how fast you have to run 😊</td>
<td><strong>Countdown</strong>&lt;br&gt;3 jumps&lt;br&gt;2 hops&lt;br&gt;1 spin round&lt;br&gt;How many sequences can you do in a minute?</td>
<td><strong>Multi-tasking</strong>&lt;br&gt;Pat your head and rub your tummy for one minute. When your teacher says ‘all change’ swap hands!</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Use photos!

Good Listening is......

SITTING STILL

Good Listening is......

STAYING QUIET

Good Listening is......

LOOKING AT THE PERSON WHO IS TALKING

Good Listening is......

LISTENING TO ALL THE WORDS
Do they know what helps?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Turning down background noise:</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying my name first:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having something to fidget with:</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not having to listen for too long:</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at me so I know you are talking to me:</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Showing me as well as telling me what to do:</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other people staying quiet:</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Giving me time to think before saying something new:</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looking at the person when they are talking to me:</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saying it again using the same words when I don’t understand:</td>
<td>✔️</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Parent Resources

www.hacw.nhs.uk/childrensSLT

Good Listening is...

Looking at the person who is talking

5 ways to help children listen!

Model the behaviour you want to see. Stop what you are doing if you can and look at them when they speak to you.

Don’t just say ‘listen to me!’ Be explicit about what you want them to do e.g. “I need you listen all the way to the end of my words”.

Praise good listening behaviour when they show it... “you were so quiet when I was talking they that really helped you do your BEST listening”.

Keep your instructions short. The less you say the more they listen.

Be careful about background noise. It makes it much harder for children to listen no turn it down or turn it off!

Parent Resources

Early Years Listening games for home

Looking

Who’s got the hat?
- Try this activity at home with other family members. Encourage your child to hide his/her eyes while someone puts the hat on. Help your child to then look around the group to see who’s got the hat on. To help them, you can point at each person and say “is it....
- Praise your child and reinforce “good looking”
- You can play this game with other items e.g. a scarf, glasses, necklace, a medal, a ring etc

Listening to ALL the words

Listening for “go”
- Suitable toys for this game include a car ramp and cars, garage and cars or a marble run
- Encourage your child to hold the car and wait for you to say “ready steady go”. You may need to help your child to begin with and gently encourage them to wait.
- You can then try to gradually increase the amount of time your child waits before you say “go”

Staying Quiet

Musical traffic lights
- You will need – musical instruments and the stop/go sign
- Encourage your child to play their instrument when they see the “go” sign
- When you turn the sign to “stop”, they must stop playing and try to keep their instrument quiet
- You can then count e.g. starting with 3 seconds, before you turn the sign to “go” again

Sitting Still

Traffic light signaling
- You will need – some toy cars etc, toy cones and a stop/go sign
- Set out the cones at either end of the room.
- Encourage your child to choose a car and try to keep it still at one of the cones
- They need to wait for you to turn the sign to “go” and then can then push the car to the other cone

Looking at the person talking games to try at home

Silent Treasure Hunt

You will need:
- Some ‘treasure’ to hide

- The child goes out of the room and while they are gone, a box with “treasure” in it is hidden in the room.
- The child comes back in the room and has to find the treasure.
- The people in the room cannot tell the child where the treasure is but they can help them find the treasure by looking at where it is hidden.

Pass the turn

You will need:
- A game or activity that you can take turns in

- Choose a game or activity which your child enjoys. E.g. a puzzle, a card game, a marble run or another game.
- Explain that you’re going to give the people in the room a turn but you are not going to say their names. You are going to look at them and give them a little nod.
- Then pass the turn to people one at a time by looking at them and nodding.

Technology – how to get the balance right

Manage screen time. Treat technology as you would any other environment a child spends time in. Adults should be in charge of how long children spend looking at a screen.

Join in! You can help them learn much more effectively by joining in with what they play. Look for interactive games that you can both play and talk about what you are watching together.

Be a good model. Children learn best through imitation so make sure you show them what you want them to do. When they talk to you make sure you look up from your phone or laptop so they know you are listening.

No-screen bedrooms. Tried children find it hard to listen and learn. You can help get a better night’s sleep by making bedrooms no-screen zones and making the last hour before bed time a time for listening to stories and talking rather than watching a screen.

Be aware of background noise. Noise from the television, radio or electronic games can really get in the way. If you are not watching it or listening to it when it is on, then turn it off. It will help make a better environment for children to learn to listen.

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Adapted for Worcestershire Speech and Language Therapy with permission from “Teaching children to listen in the Early Years” – Speech & Workbank
Questions?

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www.hacw.nhs.uk/childrensSLT

Worcestershire Speech and Language Therapy

Closed group - Worcestershire Communication TAs

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