

Listening and Spoken Language Strategies

When working with children, Hear and Say's experienced Listening and Spoken Language Specialists use strategies to promote speech, language and literacy through listening skills. This fact sheet details some ideas to consider incorporating into your classroom.

Repetition

To help understand the meaning of words, children need to hear words in context over and over. The more you repeat something, the easier children will learn to understand new language, and the sooner they will then start to use this language themselves.

Wait

By giving a child time to respond, you encourage them to verbalise, and teaches them how to take turns in an interaction. Wait for up to 10 seconds for a response from a child and look expectantly at them, so that they know you are waiting for them to say something.

Take turns

Turn-taking in a conversation is an important social communication skill to teach young children from an early age. Giving the child a chance to have a turn through waiting and looking expectantly at them, encourages and teaches them this essential skill. Keep this verbal exchange going by taking turns back and forward with the child.

Acoustic highlighting

Place stress on the important words in your phrases. Drawing attention to particular words helps children take notice of and learn the specific word. Accompany this with repetition, to give the child as many opportunities as possible to hear what you are saying.

Sing songs

Singing not only engages children, but the intonation and repetition in songs makes it easier for children to learn vocabulary and grammar. Music stimulates many areas of our brain at the same time, enhancing our memory and retention of new vocabulary and grammar. The more singing you do, the better.

Expand

Add to what the child says by repeating what they say, and then adding new information. This technique exposes the child to additional language. For example, if the child says, "It's a cow", you can say, "Yes it's a black and white cow. It has four legs and says 'moo'".

Talk about what the child is doing

Follow the child's lead and talk about what they are doing, hearing or seeing, particularly if the child is reluctant to talk. This provides language input and the opportunity for learning, even if the child does not respond.

Model correct words and grammar

Repeat what a child says using correct grammar, words and sounds. This gives the child the opportunity to hear and learn the appropriate way to speak, without drawing attention to their errors and discouraging them from trying.

Use auditory closure

Allow the child the opportunity to finish a sentence they are likely to know (including during songs), by pausing talking and wait for the child to fill in the gap.

Create communication opportunities

Encourage a child to verbalise by offering them a choice of toys, placing an object out of reach, or only giving them part of what they need to complete a task. This provides incentive for the child to speak.

Kindy Inclusion Service

07 3850 2111 | hearandsay.org.au

kindyinclusion@hearandsay.com.au



Hear and Say
Opening worlds