Integrated Treatment Services
Client-centred Therapy

Listening to Language

Speech and Language Therapy Activities

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ABOUT THIS BOOK

Many children who have difficulty learning to talk don't always make the best use of what they hear. This could be because they find it hard to listen or pay attention properly.

This booklet contains games and activities designed to help your child to learn how to listen and concentrate better. With some games, you can take turns to be the "listener", so that your child can tell you what to do next.

The games are easy to play and you may know some of them already.

Choose the ones that you think your child will like best, and have fun playing them together.

You can try all of the games, or just some of them, and you can change them a little to suit you and your child better.

Try to set aside a certain amount of time each day to play the games, and choose a time when your child is likely to cooperate.

Don't give up too soon, as your child may need to have the game shown to him/her more than once, so that he/she can get used to it. On the other hand, don't spend too much time on the game at first.

Listening games are very important to help in developing your child's language – so give them a try – and HAVE FUN.

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POSTING GAME

Equipment:

A large cardboard box with a slit cut in the bottom of it.

Pictures of everyday objects on pieces of card or strong paper.

All children enjoy being Postman Pat! Make the post box more realistic by painting it red etc.

In the game your child has to post pictures through the hole in the post box, which can be placed face down on the floor or on a table against a wall.

The child is shown some pictures; begin by placing just 3 or 4 in front of him/her. He/she then has to listen, and you tell him/her which picture is to go in the post box, for example:

"Can you post the car?" Once your child has chosen the correct picture, repeat the name, e.g. 'well done, that's the ***car'***
Add new pictures as the others are posted.

You can make the game more challenging by:

a) Telling the child to go and get a certain picture to post, where the pictures are spread out across the room, or on another table a little distance away from the box.

b) Having a wider selection of pictures e.g. 6-8 to choose from.

c) Asking him/her to post the one you drink from, or the one you can kick for example, rather than naming the objects cup and ball.

d) Use pictures of people doing activities, so your child has to listen to an action word and find the correct picture, for example:
'someone drinking'
'someone running'
'the man sleeping' etc.

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MUSICAL ISLANDS

- For this game you will need 6 pieces of paper large enough for your child to stand on.

- Draw or stick a large, simple picture on each piece of paper e.g.
  Cat
  Dog
  Ball
  House

- Scatter the pictures on the floor. Tell the child (and his/her friends) to run and dance round until the music stops. Then they must stop and listen to what you tell them.
  E.g. Find the cat
  Stand on the dog
  Go to the house then the ball.

When the child has found the correct picture, name what they are standing on e.g. 'Yes, that's the ***cat***'

HIDING GAMES

Hide the toy

Play hide and seek using one of your child's favourite toys. Ask him to leave the room while you hide the toy.

While he is looking for the toy, make a noise e.g. clap or bang a drum. Make the noise loud when he/she is near the toy and quiet when he/she is not – or you could tell him/her when he/she is close to it, and when he/she is not. If he is having difficulty, give clues e.g. go and look near the table etc.

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FIND ME THE ……

- For this game you will need a few familiar objects e.g. cup, shoe, brush, spoon etc.

- Hide the objects around the room while your child has his eyes covered.

- Then ask him/her to “find the brush”.

- Your child must find the object you ask for, when they bring it back to you, name it, ‘Yes that’s the ***brush***’

- When your child finds this quite easy, ask him/her for 2 objects.

TEA PARTY

You can use a tea party to encourage your child to listen.

- You need 2 different toys, such as dolly and teddy and cups, plates, spoons etc. You may like to use real or pretend food as well.

- When you are preparing for the “party” ask your child to do different things e.g. “give this to teddy”, or “give teddy a spoon” or “where are the plates?” etc.

- Similarly, when you are having the tea party, you can suggest different things such as “Teddy would like a drink” etc.

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WASHING LINE GAME

Draw a washing line on a long piece of paper or stick a piece of string onto the paper, and draw a pole at either end.

Draw and cut out articles of clothing: socks, shirts, trousers, skirts etc.

- Ask your child to put things on the washing line. Make it easy to begin with by only asking for one item. Make it more difficult by asking for 2, 3 and 4 items. Can he/she remember them all? Add different colours of clothes, so that he/she has to listen for the colour as well as the type of clothing.

- Swap over so that he/she is asking you to put things on the line.

HOLIDAY PACKING GAME

This is similar to the washing line game, but this time use either a real suitcase or a pretend one (e.g. a cardboard box cut to shape). You can use real clothes or the cut out ones again. And remember the other things you might take on holiday e.g. shampoo, camera etc.

- Again ask your child for 1 item to begin with, then increase the number he has to remember. Ask him for clothes belonging to different people e.g. “Daddy’s shorts”, “Mummy’s jumper”.

- Swap over so that he is asking you to put things in the case.

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SHOPPING GAME

Use empty food packets or pictures of food, a shopping bag and toy money/buttons for this game.

- Pretend you are going shopping. Take turns with your child at being the shop keeper and shopper. As in previous activities start by asking for 1 item and gradually increase the number you ask for as your child can cope. Remember to give your child a turn at being both shopper and shop-keeper.

COPYCATS SCREEN GAME

Equipment:

A large cardboard box cut into 2 sides or a large book to act as a screen.

Two sets of identical objects/small toys.

A good game for holding your child's attention and letting him/she see his/her own success, as well as developing listening skills.

Sit facing your child with the screen between you on the table, you have one of each pair of items, and you child the other. Begin with a small number of items, 3 or 4, for example: spoon, ball, cup and brick. Place one item on your side of the screen and tell your child what it is:

"I've got a spoon"

"You find a spoon" etc.

You may have to demonstrate the first time. He /she then puts the matching object on his/her side of the screen, and the screen is then removed to see if it is the correct one. Then another object is selected and so on.

You can make the activity gradually more difficult, depending on how easy your child finds the game, for example:

- Increase the range of objects to choose from to 6 – 8.

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- Put 2 items rather than just one by the screen e.g. the spoon and the cup.

- Ask your child to do something with the objects, for example:
  'Put the spoon in the cup'
  'Put the ball in the box'
  'Put the brick under the book'.

To encourage your child to use words during these activities, always name the object/picture they choose/find.

Wait a few seconds to see if he will name it before he is allowed to post it. Any noise your child makes is acceptable at first.

When he is regularly saying something for each one, encourage him to make a better attempt at the word before he is allowed to post it.

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