

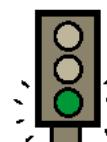
Listening and early phonological awareness

Listening skills are important for a child's developing speech system. Children may need to practice their underlying listening skills before they are ready to target individual speech sounds. General listening skills, as well as tuning into the rhythms and rhymes of words, are important skills to develop. Being aware of the different parts of words is also important for learning to read and spell later on.

Listening for everyday sounds – Listen out for the sounds around you (e.g. washing machine, dog barking, cars driving, birds singing, etc.). Talk about the sounds – are they noisy or quiet? Go for a *listening walk* outdoors or around your home – what sounds can you hear?

Ready...steady...go! – This can be any game or activity where your child has to wait until you say 'go' before they respond. Try pausing for different lengths of time. Keep it fun and exciting and your child will be motivated to wait in anticipation.

- Kick or throw a ball when you hear 'go'.
- Build a tower and knock it down when you hear 'go'.
- Go down the slide, or try a running race or chase game.
- Blow bubbles, your child can pop them when you say 'go'.
- Make a car ramp or marble run. Pause and wait for 'go'.



Hide and seek – Hide an object for your child to find. Use a musical instrument like a shaker, or a noisy object like keys, to give your child clues. Make the sound louder or softer as your child gets closer or further away from the hidden object.

Listening games – Hide some noisy toys or objects in a bag, encourage your child to identify what made the sound. Try listening games with animals or vehicles – make the sound and encourage your child to identify and copy the sound (e.g. '*Listen – can you find an animal that says sss?*').

Musical statues – Listen out for the music stopping... then freeze!

Listen to the beat – Play with musical instruments, or simply clap out a rhythm. Have fun making noisy/quiet sounds and fast/slow rhythms. Encourage your child to join in and copy you.



Simon says... – Encourage your child to listen to the instruction before carrying out the action (e.g. '*Simon says... touch your nose. Simon says... stamp your feet.*').

Run and touch – Choose 3 or 4 things you can see outside. Give directions for your child to follow (e.g. '*Run to the... gate!*'). Once your child can do this, add another step (e.g. '*Run to the gate and then the tree.*').





Nursery rhymes – Have fun singing songs and rhymes together. Once your child knows the rhyme, leave gaps for them to fill in (e.g. 'Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. Humpty Dumpty had a great...'). The [Bookbug](#) website and app has a great song and rhyme library.



Books – Choose repetitive books with rhythm and. Books by Julia Donaldson such as 'The Gruffalo', 'Room on the Broom' and 'Chocolate Mousse for Greedy Goose' are great examples, as are the 'Oi Frog!' or 'Hairy Maclary' series.

Rhyme – Have fun playing with words and making up your own rhymes (e.g. 'Is my name Mummy or is it Tummy?'). BBC's [Tiny Happy People](#) has lots of suggestions for rhyme activities.



Silly picnic – Collect some toy food in a bag. Make up rhyming clues for your picnic. For example, 'Felly, belly, welly, telly... shall we take a wobbly... jelly!'. Providing a string of rhyming words will make it easier for your child to notice the rhyme.

Treasure hunt – Another rhyming game. Hide objects or pictures around the room and give your child rhyming clues (e.g. 'Red, said, ted, led... something is hiding under the... bed!').

Syllables – Break words down into parts by emphasising each syllable. You can do this at any time during your everyday routines and activities (e.g. 'What's for snack today? ce-re-al, ba-na-na').

Feely bag - Collect some toys or objects in a bag. Encourage your child to clap or stamp out the beats of each word (e.g. 'di-no-saur', 'fi-re-en-gine').

