

# Listening Strategies

Information for children, parents, teachers and carers

① For more information, please contact your Audiology Department

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## You have been seen in Audiology for a hearing test today

Some of the people you may have met today are:

- **Audiologist-** an audiologist is someone you will see in the clinic. Their main role is to identify and assess hearing and balance problems. Audiologists can work with all ranges from children to adults.
- **Associate audiology practitioner-** The practitioner role is a pathway towards full accreditation as an audiologist.
- **Assistant audiologist-** Working alongside other staff members or under direct supervision to assist in various clinics in audiology.
- **Student audiologist –** Undertaking a degree in audiology, may be there to observe or participate under direct supervision.

## Hearing test

You have been seen in audiology today for a hearing test. The audiologist will have looked in your ears to make sure they are healthy. You will then have either played a game or pressed a button when you heard the beeps. The audiologist will have told you to press the button as soon as you hear the beep. We are checking to see what the quietest sounds you can hear are.

## **Different hearing tests that we may use:**

**Objective hearing assessment-** A measurement of how well the ear and hearing nerve are working this doesn't require the child to show that they have heard the sound.

**Behavioural hearing test-** This involves the audiologist recording the child's response to sound. This might be a 'startle', look or head turn in younger children.

**Play hearing test-** For children aged around two and a half years old, you may be asked to play a game. As soon as the child hears the beep, you may put a ring on a stick or throw a ball.

**Pure tone Audiometry-** This is used for slightly older children, as soon as the child hears the beep, they press a button. The child would usually wear headphones or insert earphones, and may need to listen for longer periods of time so more pitches of sound can be tested.

## **Results of the hearing test**

Once the hearing test has been completed, the audiologist will discuss the results with you and your adult.

The results show that you have good hearing.

This may be called 'normal hearing' satisfactory hearing'. This means that you have heard the quietest sounds today.

We check different pitches of sound, like low pitch (where male voices are heard) and high pitch (where bird sounds are heard)

The results are really good and tell us that you are hearing well, and are able to hear soft speech sounds; this is really helpful if you are still developing your language

## **My hearing test is normal but I still find it difficult to hear**

Listening comprehension is more than just hearing what is being said, it involves:

- The ability to take in the spoken information
- The ability to respond to spoken instructions
- The ability to share ideas

# What is listening comprehension?

Listening comprehension is the ability to understand the meaning of the words you have heard and be able to relate to them in some way. When you hear a story, listening comprehension allows you to understand it, talk about it and sometimes retell it in your own words. It is important that we develop listening skills at a young age. It is like a muscle, it needs regular exercise to grow stronger.

## Ways to help with some listening tips for younger children

1. Make sure that you are paying attention when someone starts talking. Your family members or teachers should encourage you to look at them ready to hear what is being said.
2. Play listening games, 'Simon says', 'Kim's game'. These games can help to build your listening skills.
3. Copycat games- Clapping a pattern or repeating silly rhymes.
4. Pictionary- Your adult describes a picture, and you then draw what you've heard.
5. Listen for sounds- Close your eyes and take it in turns to play different sounds from around your house.
6. Audio stories- Listen to stories together, your adult can ask you questions about what is happening.
7. Story chain- Build a story together, one person starts with the original story 'we went for a walk on a hot sunny day, the next person then continue with another sentence, and keep building from there.
8. Your family members need to be good listeners too, it's important to have chance to talk at your own pace.
9. Short attention spans- This is really common in younger children, remember to use simple language, one or two words together.  
Three different steps are happening when we listen:
  - Hearing
  - Listening
  - Attention

**Hearing-** Hearing doesn't mean listening. Hearing is a physical act of receiving sound stimulation and sending it to the brain to be received.

**Listening-** Listening is the ability to tune into a sound, recognise its importance and interpret the information in the brain.

**Attention-** Children may be able to hear and listen to sounds and voices, but they also need to be able to do this for a sustained period of time. Children need to be able to focus and maintain concentration on aspects of their environment in order for them to learn from it.

### **Active listening**

This means giving the speaker your full attention and trying to understand the complete message that is being said. Active listeners often show their interest by asking questions, non-verbal signs might be shown by nodding, and smiling.

### **Passive listening**

Hearing what the speaker is saying without really trying to understand it. When children passively listen they don't always understand what is being said. They don't tend to retain information as they are easily distracted. Some common signs of listening difficulties;

- Having trouble following spoken directions
- Often asking people to repeat what they have said
- Following conversations may be a struggle
- Struggling to learn songs or nursery rhymes
- Difficulty remembering what has been said

## **Ways to help with some listening tips for older children**

- Talk together about what you find difficult
- When speaking together make sure you get your child's full attention, this means asking your child to come away from whatever they are doing, such as gaming or watching TV.
- Have your conversations in the same room, there is no point shouting into another room.
- Make sure that background noise is at a minimum
- Take it in turns to speak
- Visual timetables can help plan day to day activities
- Using timers so your child knows how long to listen for
- Regular rest breaks

- Ensuring that your child isn't listening to music/noise at an unsafe loud level.
- Speak slowly, making sure your voice is loud and clear, but don't shout.
- Keep sentences short and simple. You may need to break them up into short chunks.
- Allow extra time for your child to process language.
- Make sure your language is meaningful-talk about the here and now, things within the child's experiences.
- Change the words to help your child understand, use simpler words but keep the message the same.
- Check for listening and understanding frequently.
- Help your child develop a strategy to let you know when they have not understood.
- You will be able to find some listening activities on the app store to help enhance your listening skills.
- Most of all make sure that you have time to rest; teenagers lead busy lives and need to have down time too.

### **Useful websites:**

Talking point [www.ican.org.uk](http://www.ican.org.uk) NDCS [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)  
 York's local offer [www.yor-ok.org.uk](http://www.yor-ok.org.uk)

References: National Deaf children's society APD uk

## Tell us what you think of this leaflet

We hope that you found this leaflet helpful. If you would like to tell us what you think, please contact: Audiology Department, York and Scarborough Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, The York Hospital, Wigginton Road, York, YO31 8HE or telephone 01904 726741 option 2.

## Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS)

PALS offers impartial advice and assistance to patients, their relatives, friends and carers. We can listen to feedback (positive or negative), answer questions and help resolve any concerns about Trust services.

PALS can be contacted on 01904 726262, or email [pals@york.nhs.uk](mailto:pals@york.nhs.uk). An answer phone is available out of hours.

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Owner	Kate Iley and Stacey Gurnell
Date first issued	August 2021
Review Date	August 2024
Version	1 (issued August 2021)
Approved by	Audiology Department
Document Reference	PIL 1527 v1

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