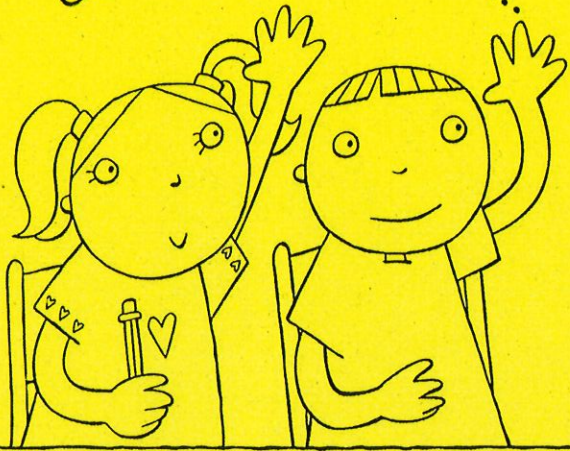


Good listening is...



staying quiet.

Good listening is...



looking at the person who is talking.

Good listening is...



sitting still.

Good listening is...



listening to ALL the words.

You can help your child to listen!

Here's how



ALL children are more affected by background noise than adults. We screen it out. They don't. Turn off or turn down when you talk and play together.

Small children usually have single channelled attention. This means that if they aren't looking at you they probably aren't listening to you! Call their name and encourage them to look in your direction before you speak to them.

The less you talk the more likely they are to listen! Use short and simple sentences; say them slowly; use pauses and they are more likely to stay with you.

Watch them to see what they are looking at and talk about that. If you talk about what they are focusing on then they are much more likely to listen!

Model the behaviour that you want to see. Look at **THEM** when they are talking to you and wait for **THEM** to finish talking before you speak.

Being able to wait is a skill that will be really helpful when they go to school. Even very small children can practise it! Try "Ready Steady..... Go!" before activities and gradually make the pauses longer.

No-one can talk and listen at the same time so model really good turn taking with them. Wait for them to finish before you start talking and encourage them to do the same for you!

#weneedtotalk



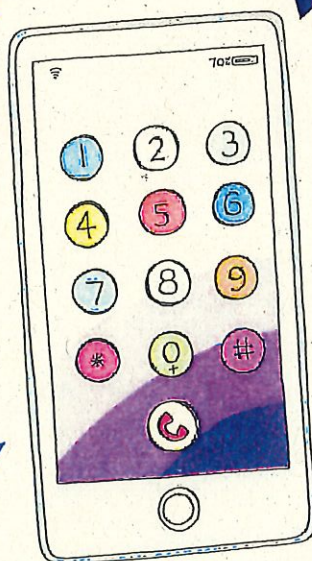
www.hacw.nhs.uk/weneedtotalk

Knowing the challenges and benefits of technology will help you give your child the best opportunities to learn to listen and to interact.

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.

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.



No-screen bedrooms. Tired children find it hard to listen and learn. You can help get a better night's sleep by making bedrooms a no-screen zone 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 devices then turning them off will help make it a better environment for children to learn to listen.

Who feels different?

How to play:

One child puts on a blindfold. Another child in the group is given an emotion picture. They have to hide the card behind their back and make the face on it. Everyone else has to make a happy face. The first child has to take off the blindfold and look at all the children's faces to identify who feels different. If they have chosen correctly then the child produces the card from behind their back.

Equipment:

- Blindfold
- Emotion pictures – happy/cross/sad/surprised (See Appendix 6)

To make it easier:

Tell the child which emotion card they are looking for, e.g. 'Who's got a cross face?'

To make it harder:

Give out more than one emotion card. The child then has to find who feels different **and** say how they feel.

TIP: Start by giving out just the 'cross' card as this appears to be easiest for children to recognise, then move on to giving out both the 'cross' card and the 'surprised' card. Finally, give out the 'cross', 'surprised' and 'sad' card. This is the most difficult as children often find it hard to discriminate between 'cross' and 'sad'.

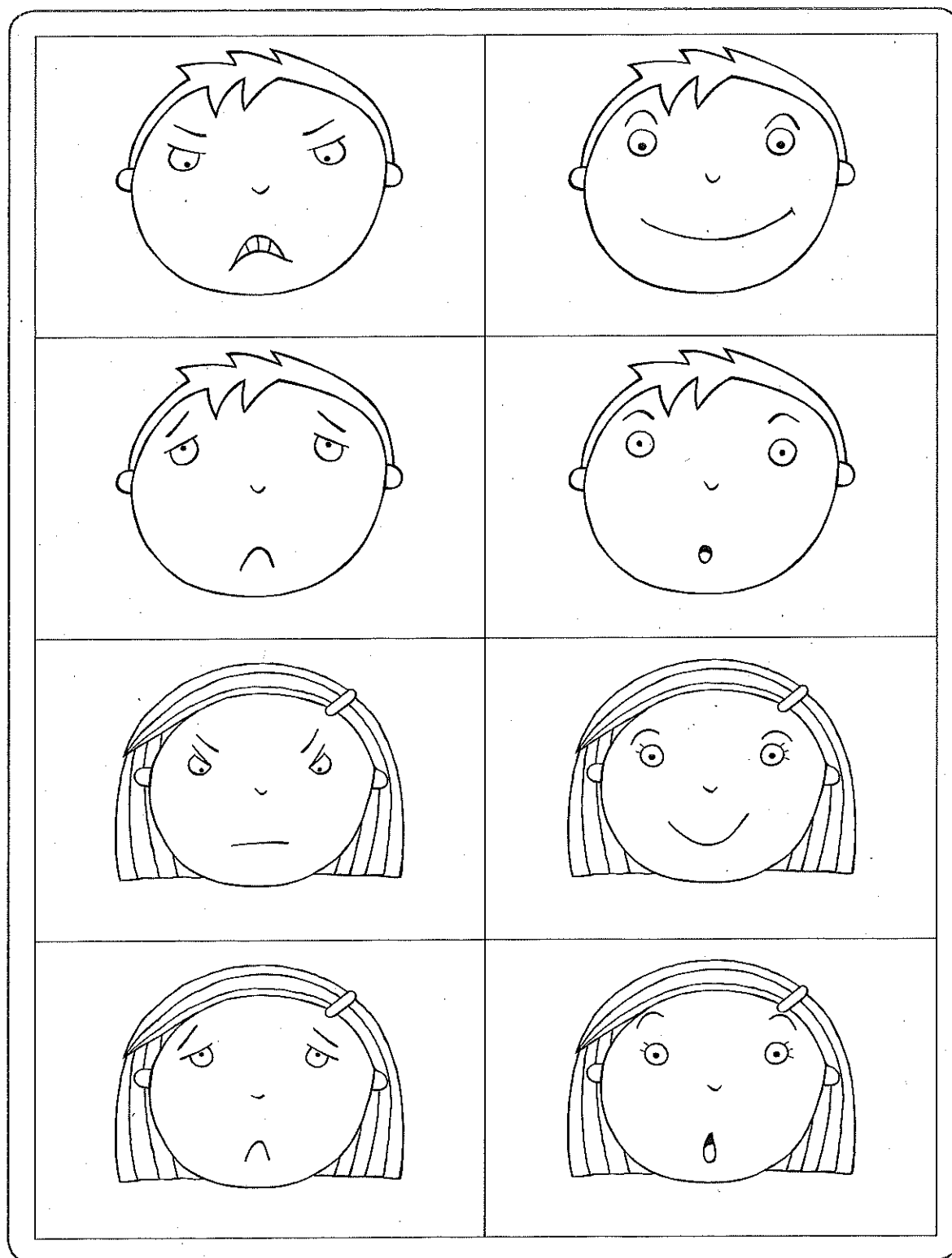
Ground rules:

1. Everyone has to keep looking at the person who had the blindfold.
2. Everyone apart from the child who has the emotion card has to make a happy face.

Inside information:

- Spend time practising making the faces, with a mirror if necessary.
- Play the game several times, introducing an extra emotion picture each time. Build up to hiding a sad, cross and surprised face.
- Don't let the child take the blindfold off until everyone else is making a happy face.
- Children sometimes want to make accompanying noises, e.g. growling while making a cross face. You need to be explicit that they must only use their face to demonstrate the emotion.
- Don't try to hide the happy face too – unless the other children have been given a specific face to make they will copy one of the children hiding an emotion card!

Appendix 6 – Emotion pictures



What am I doing wrong?

How to play:

Sit on a chair in the middle of the room and say 'I'm going to do some things now which are NOT good sitting. Put your hand up if you know what it is.' Then model as many types of fidgeting behaviour as possible. The children put up their hands to identify behaviour and you respond with, for example 'You're right. I'm rocking on my chair. Can you still do good sitting while you are rocking on your chair?'

Equipment:

- None needed but it helps, and makes it more fun, if you have items that the children usually fidget with, for example, shoes with Velcro on them, a tie, a hair band, etc.

Ground rules:

1. If you see the grown up doing something which is NOT good sitting then you must put your hand up. You cannot shout out.

Inside information:

This activity is an essential precursor to any of the further activities which target fidgeting. In our experience, children have very little insight into their own sitting and this activity both raises their awareness of what fidgeting is and establishes the principle that you cannot do good listening while you are fidgeting.

It is really important to model all the fidgeting behaviours that you want to target in the children you are working with. Do not expect children to generalise the term 'fidgeting' to whatever behaviour it is that they do without having their attention explicitly drawn to it. Obviously, the names of specific children do not need to be mentioned.

Some fidgeting behaviours that you might want to model are:

- Rocking on chair
- Playing with Velcro on shoes
- Taking shoes off
- Playing with hair
- Sucking thumb
- Chewing cuff
- Rolling down socks
- Messing with other children

And if you are brave enough:

- Nose picking
- Putting hands down trousers!

The children you work with will almost certainly inspire many more!

Sitting still with distractions

How to play:

This is a game to help children practise sitting still even when someone next to them is being silly and trying to distract them. Explain that you are going to play the 'Sitting still with a timer' game (See game 6) but that this time it is going to be MORE difficult because when they are sitting on the mat you are going to do something which makes it much harder for them to keep sitting still. 'I'm going to blow bubbles and they might land on your hair...they might land on your nose...they might land right next to you but you CAN'T pop them and you CAN'T fidget. You've just got to keep sitting still'. Then play the game exactly as before with the added distraction of bubbles and stop the timer when someone fidgets.

Equipment:

- Mats or chairs
- Timer
- Stop/go sign
- Bubbles
- Other distractions such as feather dusters/mini fans, etc.

To make it easier:

See game 6.

To make it harder:

Use other distractions such as feather dusters to tickle them or mini fans to blow their hair, etc.

Ground rules:

1. The children who are watching must put their hands up – they cannot shout out.
2. The grown ups decide if someone has fidgeted.
3. The children are allowed to breathe and blink!

Inside information:

- Start with 'Sometimes when children are trying to sit really well, someone next to them is a bit silly and talks to them or messes with their hair or clothes. Does that ever happen to you?' Explain that this game is to help them practise doing good sitting even when someone next to them is being really silly.
- Make the link for the children – 'I can't believe that you sat still for a whole minute even though I was blowing bubbles on you! Now I know that you can do really good sitting on the carpet even if the other children are being silly.'
- Praise children in the general group if you see them trying to ignore a child who is attempting to distract them. This is a more powerful way of tackling this behaviour within the group than telling off the child who is being silly.

Sound location around the room

EYFS

How to play:

One child goes out of the room. A musical toy or radio is hidden somewhere in the room. The child then comes back into the room and has to listen and find the noise maker.

Explain the game to the children and then ask the group, 'What can we do to help them do really good listening?' Hopefully, someone in the group will suggest being quiet. When they do you need to reinforce this, e.g. 'What a good idea! If we are really quiet then that will help them to do really good listening. If we are noisy they won't be able to hear that little noise.' Then play the game.

Equipment:

- Noise maker or radio

To make it easier:

Use a really noisy toy or a radio with the volume turned up.

Tune the radio to music.

To make it harder:

Use a very quiet toy or a radio on low volume.

Tune the radio to speech.

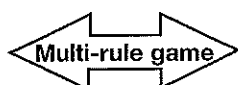
Hide a toy which makes a funny noise. This will make the children want to laugh so they will need to exert self control to stay quiet. This is what we want children to do when listening in class.

Ground rules:

1. Everyone has to stay quiet.
2. Everyone has to look at the person trying to find the toy.
3. You must stop and listen before trying to find the noise maker.

Inside information:

- Again, children will want to solve this task visually and will tend to race around the room at top speed just looking for the noise maker. You must model standing in the middle of the room and listening first.
- You must establish the ground rule 'Everyone has to look at the person trying to find the toy' or children will look at the hidden noise maker and give the game away. If you know you have children within the group who will find it hard not to look at the toy, then give them this as a challenge, e.g. 'Do you know, I really want to put this radio behind your chair but I'm a bit worried that you will turn around and look at it and spoil the game. Can I trust you to be really sensible and just look at the person with the blindfold?' Then give them lots of praise when they do this. In our experience, children will always rise to a challenge given like this.
- Look out for other noise making items that you can hide. For example, toys which talk; toys that make intermittent noises, etc.



This game can be used as a 'listening' game for very young children who are not yet at the level of listening for words.

Listening for 'go'

EYFS

How to play:

You will need a marble run or similar activity. The activity needs to be very motivating. The child is given the marble but cannot put it down the marble run until you say 'go'.

Equipment:

- A marble run or equivalent

To make it easier:

Only wait a second or two before saying 'go'.

Say 'Ready... Steady... GO!' to keep the child focussed.

Use the stop/go sign to help focus the child (See Appendix 9).

To make it harder:

Increase the amount of time that the child has to wait before you say 'go'.

Whisper 'go' but warn the child that you are going to make it harder and they will have to listen very carefully.

Ground rules:

1. Only children who are sitting still and not shouting out will get chosen to have turn with the marble run.
2. You **MUST** wait to hear 'go' before you put the marble down the run.

Inside information:

- As well as being a good listening game, this is a good activity to teach children to wait for an adult signal. It is a good starting point for managing the behaviour of children who are very active or impulsive.
- It may help to focus the child if you count out loud before saying 'go' – 'You got to 5 last time – how long can you wait this time? One...two...three...'
- Always start with a very short wait and work upwards, however easy it seems to ensure the children experience success.
- If you are familiar with a signing system then using the sign and saying 'wait' can help to focus the child.

Is it me?

How to play:

The idea of this game is that children must listen to two statements and decide whether they apply to themselves before carrying out an action. This is a good game to move children from one activity to another in a calm and orderly fashion, e.g. 'If you are a boy and you are eight... line up at the door.' However, you can also play the game with dressing up props, e.g. 'If you are a girl and you are wearing black shoes... put on a hat.'

Equipment:

- None necessary but to make it fun you could use a set of dressing up props – suitable for boys and girls, e.g. hats, hairbands, glasses, medals, necklaces, sweatbands, etc.

To make it easier:

Use very concrete statements, e.g. gender/age/clothing

Don't use props and only have one action, e.g. 'If you are a boy and you are six... line up at the door'.

To make it harder:

Use more abstract statements, e.g. hair/eye colour; likes/dislikes

Give the children 3 statements to listen to, e.g. 'If you are a boy AND you are wearing trainers AND you have a sister... put on some glasses'.

Ground rules:

1. You must not move until you have listened to ALL of the words.

Inside information:

- This is a really good game for those children who listen to the first thing you say and then think they know what to do. If they start to move once they have heard the first statement then remind them to stop and listen right to the end before they decide whether or not it is them.
- Always start with concrete statements where there can be no arguments. Eye colour can provoke a huge amount of debate which stops children doing good listening.
- You can introduce concepts that you may be working on in other areas of the curriculum, e.g. 'If you are MORE than 6 and you have trousers on'.

Pass the object

How to play:

The children sit in a circle. Choose an interesting object related to a current topic and pass it from child to child. Each child has to say something about the object such as what it feels like or where it comes from but they cannot say the same thing as anyone else. See how far round the circle you can get before the children run out of ideas.

Equipment:

- Object related to topic

To make it easier:

Children who are shy or have language problems may have difficulty thinking of something to say. In this situation, it is helpful to use 'phone-a-friend' which means they can select another child in the group to help them out.

To make it harder:

Instead of just passing the object round, YOU have control of where it goes. Tell the children 'You MUST keep listening because I might come back to you.' Then hand the object to random members of the group, repeatedly going back to any children who tend to switch off.

Ground rules:

1. You can only talk when you are holding the object.

Inside information:

- This is a really useful way of brainstorming while incorporating good listening. An adult can scribe the children's answers to use in other lessons related to the topic.
- This is a really nice activity for reinforcing and practising topic vocabulary.
- Again you will need to minimise the stress on children who might have language difficulties. You can use 'phone-a-friend' as described above but also try to place children who might find this task a challenge near the beginning of the circle.