



Auditory Sandwich

“Auditory Sandwich” is a strategy you can use to help your child learn how to listen and talk. This strategy uses spoken language instructions with visual aids “sandwiched” in-between. This strategy will help your child focus on auditory directions and reduce the need for visual support. You are probably already using parts of this strategy. Auditory and visual supports by themselves are helpful, but the Auditory Sandwich uses both to help your child learn to listen.

We use this strategy to help children develop listening skills. Sandwiching a visual support between auditory directions can help your child understand spoken language.

Use the auditory sandwich when you notice your child having difficulty listening or understanding. You can use it at home, at school, and even when your child is with their friends. It is a great way to draw their attention to the importance of listening.

Here is an example of using the auditory sandwich strategy when playing with your child. You will see verbal instructions used before picking up the toy in order to draw the child's attention to listening first.

Step 1 – Give your child an auditory-only instruction. For example, you might say, “Put your shoes on.”

Step 2 - If your child doesn't seem to understand what you said, repeat it and add a visual cue, like pointing at an object or showing a picture. You could say, “Put your shoes on” and point to his shoes.

Step 3 - When you see that your child understood, repeat your original instruction without the visual cue so that your child can practice listening. “Put your shoes on.”

This strategy does require patience because you will need to repeat the auditory instruction three times to your child. As you use this strategy, be sure to repeat the instruction at the same tone and volume, otherwise your child may think you are upset or angry.

Here is another example of how you can use the auditory sandwich strategy when playing a game with your child.

Here is another example of how you can use the auditory sandwich strategy when preparing a meal with your child.



Parents, family members, therapists, teachers, and anyone who works with or takes care of your child can use the Auditory Sandwich strategy. This strategy is easy to use and it doesn't require a lot of training. Teach your family members how to use this strategy to help them support your child's listening development through consistent use of the strategy.

As your child's listening improves, move toward helping your child listen on their own by using other strategies, like wait time, that do not require as much visual support. If pausing after giving directions or asking a question, that is, using wait time, doesn't prompt your child to respond, you may need to continue using the Auditory Sandwich strategy a while longer.

The first step is to identify your reason for wanting to use the auditory sandwich strategy, and the specific issue you would like to work on. For example, helping your child listen.

Second, a SMART goal to help you take the next step. A SMART goal is specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and it has a deadline for you to act on your goal.

For example, if your goal is to use the auditory sandwich strategy, a SMART goal might look like this:

Specific: I want my child to listen to instructions.

Measurable: I will use the strategy when giving my child instructions to clean up after play time.

Achievable: the goal should be something you feel confident you can do.

Relevant: the goal should be relevant to you, for example, I want my child to learn how to listen to instructions before starting preschool.

And Time-bound, you have a deadline for acting on your plan, such as I will use the strategy every day, starting today.

Third, think about potential barriers you might experience that could keep you from acting on your goal. For example, do you get distracted or do you have a busy schedule and might this cause you to forget to start using the strategy? Do you need more resources or instruction to help you understand more about using the strategy? Maybe it feels unnatural to you to use the strategy.

Finally, problem solve potential barriers. For example, you can teach family members the strategy so you can support each other, you can incorporate the strategy into everyday activities, you can practice with a friend, or you can discuss your concerns with the professional that you trust, such as your speech-language pathologist, early interventionist, deaf educator, or audiologist. This will help you manage challenges more easily if they occur. You can better help your child when you are able to cope with barriers as they arise.