

# Listening and Spoken Language Strategies

**Wait time**—After you give a direction or ask a question, purposefully pause (7-10 seconds) to give your child time to process verbal information and form a response. Give an expectant look that shows you are listening and it is now their turn to talk.

**Auditory First**—Talk about the action or object before you point or show it. Build anticipation.

**Auditory Sandwich**—Give auditory information, use a visual aid or gesture, then back to auditory alone (Think—>talk, show, talk).

**Acoustic highlighting**—Use your voice to stress a specific sound, word or phrase (stretch out the word, change your pitch or volume). Whispering certain words can recapture their attention and make soft sounds easier to distinguish. Using a sing-song voice with lots of variation also holds their interest and attention, particularly with infants and toddlers.

**Auditory closure**—Give them the opportunity to fill in the blank with the last word or phrase in a familiar pattern (this is especially fun with repetitive lines in songs or books).

**Asking, “What did you hear?”**—Call attention to sounds in their environment. Also useful with older kids when they ask you to repeat something. Help them rely on their hearing by confirming what part they understood and what part they may need to hear again.

**Rewording**—If they still don’t understand the prompt, try varying the words that convey the same message (e.g. “He’s hungry...he wants to eat...give him some food”).

**Auditory Bombardment**—Creating repeated opportunities for your child to hear a speech sound, vocabulary word, or sentence structure. You are not expecting them to say it back yet. For now, you are just presenting it over and over in a playful and interesting way.

**Sabotage**— Deliberately set up unexpected situations or situation where they need your help. (e.g. Put clothing on wrong part of body, give them a snack in a container they can’t open, give them a little bit of something they want so they can ask for more).

**Self Talk**—Talking about what you are doing in the moment, no matter how routine (e.g. “I hear the doorbell! I wonder who that could be. Let’s open it and see!”)

**Parallel Talk**—Talking about what your child is doing in the moment, no matter how routine (e.g. “You like those blocks. I see you stacking them. Up, up, up. There’s another one. On top! Oh! Crash! You knocked them down.”)

**Expansion**—Building on something your child has said as a way to link additional information or increase the length of the phrase or sentence (e.g. Child: “Ball” You: “Here’s the big red ball”, Child: “Dog” You: “He’s a nice dog”).

**Recast**—Rephrasing what your child said to correct the word order fill in missing words. Then help them try it again. (e.g. Child: “Want cookie” You: “I want a cookie” Child: “I want a cookie”) Using acoustic highlighting is helpful when doing this.