

# I Listen



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I **hear** things  
all around me.



**Vroom!**

**Woof!**

**Beep!**

**Chirp!**

**Toot!**

Some sounds are  
wonderful!



# Activities to Encourage Careful Listening

Listening builds a child’s attention span and leads to understanding. Children *hear* from the day they are born, yet learning to really *listen* takes awareness and guidance. The toddler years are the perfect time to help children see the value of listening and grow their listening skills. A child can understand: **When I listen . . .**

1. I am part of something.
2. I learn new things.
3. I show I care.
4. I belong.

**Listening Through the Day.** Observe children and notice what skills they already have for listening and understanding. Pay attention to how they respond to words, tone of voice, and body language. To help children focus on listening to one another, prompt a child by asking, “What did (another child) say?” If the child responds appropriately, say, “That was careful listening.” If the child is unable to answer, ask the other child to say it again. Throughout the day, make it a point to affirm children’s efforts to listen to you and their peers.

**“Times to Listen” Cards.** Talk with children about home or school routines. Discuss times when children are expected to listen and follow directions (circle time, mealtime, getting dressed, going outdoors). Cut out pictures showing each of these times and glue or tape them to index cards. Use a hole punch and rings to attach the cards together. Use the cards to prompt children to listen. If working with one child, help the child turn to the appropriate card in anticipation of the next activity.

**Guess the Sound.** Use one plastic egg per child to make shakers. Set out small quantities of a few items, such as rice, beans, buttons, or stones. Let children watch or help as you put a small amount of an item in an egg half. Use a single filler for each egg. Attach the other half of the egg and secure it with tape. Then sit in a circle. As a child shakes an egg, have the group help the child guess what’s inside. Going around the circle, let each child test their instrument. Then have children find other children whose instruments have the same sound.

**Listening March.** Have children get in a line or circle holding their egg shakers. Turn on some music for children to shake their



instruments and dance around to. Tell them to listen carefully. When the music stops, they stop too. They can start again when the music resumes.

**Telephone Listening.** With a pencil tip, poke a hole in the bottom of two paper cups. Thread the ends of a five-foot length of yarn through each hole to make telephones. Tie a large knot in each cup to secure them.

Before giving children the telephones, give each child a paper cup. Have partners stand several feet apart; one partner can talk quietly into a cup while the other partner listens through another cup. Help children notice how well they hear. Then give partners the telephones you’ve made. Have them stand apart again, making sure that the yarn is pulled tight as they talk and listen. (This will conduct sound better.) Have children observe how much more they can hear as they listen this time.

Explain that the yarn helps carry the sound from one cup to the other. Just as they stretched the yarn tight between the phones, children can do things to make it easier for them to listen and hear each other in the classroom:

1. **Be quiet** when someone is talking.
2. **Look** at the person talking.
3. **Think** about what you hear.

For additional activities and ideas, go to [freespirit.com/2listen](https://freespirit.com/2listen); use the password **connect**.

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