



Tuning into sounds

Discriminating between different types of sounds helps your child develop their ability to 'tune in' to the different sounds in their language.

When learning phonics, your child will need to hear and say the different letter sounds correctly in order to blend them together to form words.

The skill of hearing initial sounds in words can be developed with games which use letter sounds instead of letter names. (For example the sound 'a' in ant instead of the letter name 'ay' in ape.)

This link gives the pronunciation guide for the initial sounds in English:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MbO6vGBkx48&t=4s>

Initial sound activities to try

Playing "I spy".

- ❖ Start the game with the simple sentence "I spy with my little eye, something beginning with...".
- ❖ Encourage your child to look around the room and say any words which begin with the letter you have chosen.

For example: The sound 't' could be 'television'.

When you have a sentence with words in that start with the same letter sound, this is known as 'alliteration'.

A perfect example of this is '**P**eter **P**iper **p**icked a **p**eck of **p**ickled **p**epper'.

Use the initial letter of your child's name to form a sentence:

'On **s**unny **S**aturdays, **s**uper **S**uzie **s**its and **s**ings'.

'**L**ovely **L**idia **l**ikes **l**emonade and **l**ollies.'

- ❖ See if you can make up a sentence with same initial sound as your child's name together.
- ❖ Ask your child to copy you and see if they can come up with any other words which have the same initial sounds.

There are sounds all around us all of the time. Listening and learning to recognise them takes some practice. Take the time to listen carefully to what is going on in the environment and see what you can hear. Careful listening and remembering the sounds helps develop your auditory memory, a bank of sounds that you know because you have heard them before.

Go on a listening walk.

Walk outside (if possible). Stay very quiet and listen very carefully to all of the sounds you can hear.

- ❖ 'Tune in' to the sounds that are far away (such as a police car in the background) and those that are nearer to you (in the foreground, such as someone standing next to you and whistling).
- ❖ Can you record any of the sounds that you hear and listen to them again when you get home? Hearing the sounds again should help you to remember what you saw and how you felt when you first heard them.

Just being quiet

Taking the time to be still and quiet gives you chance to listen carefully to the sounds around you that you might normally miss. Try this activity to see how many sounds you can hear.

- ❖ Set a timer for 1 minute.
- ❖ Close your eyes, make yourself comfortable and sit really still.
- ❖ What can you hear?
 - is the sound close to you – in the room that you are in?
 - is the sound far away – outside or coming from another room?
- ❖ Take turns to describe the sounds that you heard. There are lots of words you can describe the sounds you might hear:
Whirring, buzzing, clicking, ticking, loud, quiet, humming, sloshing

Make music

Making music is a great way to hear sounds, and you can easily make your own instruments using items from around the house.

- ❖ Saucepans and wooden spoons make great drum kits.
- ❖ Clean two yoghurt pots and put some dry rice or pasta into one of them. Pop the open tops together and secure with sellotape and you have your own maraca.
- ❖ Get an empty tissue box, wrap some elastic bands round it and you have your very own guitar.

Listen to each instrument one by one. Then ask your child to cover their eyes and you play one for them. Can they tell you which one they can hear?