

## Developing Listening and Language Skills

### Supporting Students who are Deaf / Hard of Hearing at Home

1. Stories	
<i>(a) Encourage imagination (b) provide opportunities to talk about every day events &amp; (c) expand grammatical understanding &amp; vocabulary</i>	
<b>Recounts/Retelling a Simple Event</b>	You can use photographs, objects, leaflets about places visited etc. You can write a note in the child's copy book about something he/she has done, so they can recount the tale.
<b>Traditional Stories</b>	Often predictable and repetitive and a great way to learn about story structure. As they are generally introduced to very young children, your children may not have been able to access them as well so they are worth revisiting.
<b>Imaginative Stories</b>	Exploring make believe stories, encourages your child to: be flexible in their thinking, make predictions, & to see that there could be a number of answers or solutions. Try making up new endings to familiar stories or making predictions about what will happen next.
<b>Playscripts</b>	Act out stories through dress up, reading aloud, taking part or using puppets will encourage your child to think about characters' personalities. It will help them to think about other people's views and feelings and how people interact together. This can help develop skills which can then be used to act out everyday situations.

2. Increasing your Child's Vocabulary	
<i>In the course of every day routines, the important thing to remember is that children need a little more help and repetition to understand and retain new words. You can:</i>	
<b>Use interesting and new words in your speech</b>	Hearing new words regularly makes it much easier to understand and remember.
<b>Make links to your child's own experiences</b>	If new words are linked to your child's own experiences, they become more easily remembered as the words will become more relevant and useful.
<b>Explain how words &amp; ideas are linked together</b>	This is another useful way of making a word have more meaning and use, so it is more likely that your child will remember it. For example, you could talk about whether something that is "scalding hot" can be "refreshing" like a cup of tea.
<b>Keep a "New Word" Dictionary or Notebook</b>	You and your child might enjoy keeping a dictionary or notebook with new words that your child is learning.
<b>Focus on School Words</b>	You may find it useful to ask school which new words your child is likely to be using during a term and then think of ways to use them at home so as to reinforce the work.
<b>Correct Grammatical Structure</b>	Model correct grammatical use if they have made a mistake. Be careful not to correct or emphasise that they have made a mistake as this will be disheartening. For example: "I've <u>forgot</u> my homework" "Oh, you've forgotten your homework, so what are you going to do?"

### 3. Create Opportunities for Conversations

*It is important to keep in mind that despite the wonderful technology it is still more difficult for your child to follow a conversation and remember what is being said and they will find it tiring. They need time to relax alongside their brothers and sisters and pushing too hard is likely to make them switch off. It is a difficult balance as they need to work harder to acquire language skills than a hearing child but they still need to be a child.*

<p><b>Using Everyday Experiences</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular walk with the dog – an opportunity to look at changes in the environment</li> <li>• Planning shopping lists</li> <li>• Cooking together/Setting table for a meal</li> <li>• Watching a TV programme together and talking about the story afterwards</li> </ul>	<p>Every new experience your child has will create the opportunity for conversation and language development. Such experiences do not need to be special events but can be part of everyday routines and life. Conversations based on routine family life are very relevant to children and the experiences very familiar, so are particularly useful for developing language skills. Encouraging your child to help with routine jobs such as the laundry, washing up, bed making, gardening etc which all help to develop independent life skills as well as create the opportunities for conversation.</p>
<p><b>Reading - How to make Story Time fun and relaxing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Choose a story your child is likely to enjoy or has chosen.</li> <li>• Pick a quiet comfortable place to read.</li> <li>• Do not read for too long, you will need to judge when your child is starting to lose interest.</li> <li>• Talk about what happens in the story.</li> <li>• Relate it to your child's own experience.</li> <li>• Look at and talk about any pictures.</li> <li>• Remind your child what has happened previously.</li> </ul>	<p>Reading is a crucial skill for everyone but especially for your child who may not always hear clearly what is being said. For example, this can be especially useful when watching the television with the aid of subtitles. As learning to read is hard work and is so important, you can help keep up your child's interest in books by sharing books with them in a relaxed way as well as helping them with reading books from school. Keep this story time fun and do not be tempted to use it to teach or test your child's understanding.</p> <p><b>More tips on making Story Time fun and relaxing:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk about what you think may happen next.</li> <li>• Avoid asking questions about what has happened.</li> <li>• Do not worry if they have not understood every twist and turn of the plot.</li> <li>• Try to share a book as often as possible.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Board Games &amp; Jigsaws</b></p> <p><b>Important Note:</b> <i>Select a game appropriate for your child's language/concentration levels and be prepared to spend time explaining and supporting them through learning to play the game.</i></p>	<p>Another fun and useful way to be involved with your child and create lots of opportunity for discussion is through sharing board games and jigsaws. These provide the opportunity to promote and develop many skills including turn taking, remembering instructions, problem solving, new vocabulary, team work, discussion and negotiation.</p>
<p><b>Computer Games &amp; Websites</b></p>	<p>Most children will happily take part in a game or activity if it is presented on a computer or a hand held device. It is, therefore, likely to be a very good means of creating a conversation or discussion. The conversation could be around the activity your child is enjoying or as the result of playing a two-person game with your child. Sitting beside your child at the computer sharing a game also provides an excellent and natural opportunity to develop listening and conversational skills without lip reading.</p>

Adapted from resources that were developed for families by The Ear Foundation *THE EAR FOUNDATION*  
PRIMARY STAGE [www.earfoundation.org.uk](http://www.earfoundation.org.uk)