



Hearing: Fostering Development

Providing sensory experiences for babies and toddlers expands their understanding of the world around them.



By around 6 months of age, babies can demonstrate the ability to localize sounds, turning their heads toward the direction of a noise.

Any Age:

- Follow a daily routine for children. Routines help children cooperate, because they come to expect certain ways of doing things.
- Expose children to a wide range of musical genres and styles.
- Read aloud to children regularly, starting early in life.
- Spend time outdoors, exposing children to natural sounds.
- Respond to the communication attempts of children.



Babies exposed to multiple languages from an early age can become proficient in more than one language without confusion.



Providing opportunities for learning, exploration, and positive interactions nurture growth in children.



Birth-1 years:

- Respond to the baby, look at them when they make noises.
- Mimic talking with baby by imitating the sounds they make.
- Teach baby to imitate actions like clapping, peek-a-boo, & blowing kisses. This teaches turn taking- which is used in conversation.
- Narrate actions throughout day- Example: “Mama is getting your food, it’s in the refrigerator. I’ll put it in the bowl.”
- Mark a sound you hear with an action - Lift your index finger by your ear and show a look of concentration. Ask the baby “Can you hear that? It’s sounds like a train—Choo Choo.”

1-2 years:

- Read to child daily. Talk about the pictures on the page.
- Ask the child to name pictures in a book, they may not do it at first.
- Use short sentences and words your child can imitate.
- To help child develop, use correct grammar.
- Talk about sounds around the house (the doorbell goes “ding!”) and during interactions (when playing bubbles say “pop!” while popping some).
- Adults should talk to the child in the language they are most comfortable using.
- Add words to what the child says, if they say “truck” respond with something like, “Yes, the truck is going fast! Slow down truck.”



Preschoolers are surprisingly adept at picking up subtle auditory cues and nuances in speech.

2-3 years:

- To help child develop, speak clearly.
- Practice counting, using fingers & toes or count steps.
- Ask them to repeat things that don't make sense, this shows them that what they say is important. If this doesn't work, ask the child to show you.

3-4 years:

- Continue to do the prompts from 2-3 years and 1-2 years.

**5-6 years:**

- Talk about: opposites, where things are (using words like first, last, right, and left), & categories, sort items into categories and talk about what doesn't belong.
- Keep teaching the child new words.
- Teach the child to ask for help to understand new words.
- Read stories to the child, have them guess what will happen next.
- Play games like "I Spy."
- Give the child two step directions.
- Ask them their opinion and let them make choices.



Young children sometimes engage in echolalia, where they repeat words or phrases they hear. Echolalia is a normal part of language development as children learn through imitation and repetition.



Check back for updates!



Illinois Early Hearing Detection & Intervention Program

