

Purposeful Play for Parents and Professionals

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Introduction:

Training babies and toddlers to listen must be fun and age-appropriate. Parents and professionals want to select ideal toys for a child who is deaf or hard of hearing, and play with toys in a meaningful and purposeful way. A single toy can be used in diverse ways to teach auditory skills and receptive/expressive language at varied levels.

Questions:

1. Which toys are effective and appropriate for use with children in 0-12 month, 12-24 month, and 24-36 month age ranges to develop auditory skills and receptive/expressive language skills?
2. How do parents and professionals utilize toys as well as incorporate strategies and techniques to teach auditory skills and receptive/expressive language skills?

Age Adaptable Toys

The toys highlighted below can be adapted for ages birth-3 in order to meet communication milestones.

Birth-12 months:

Animal and Vehicle toys

- Auditory skills- Learning to listen sound awareness/ Sound Discrimination/ Localization of noisemakers and music/ Awareness of suprasegmentals and pattern perception/ Awareness to music and songs associated with animals and vehicles (itsy bitsy spider, old McDonald had a farm, farmer in the dell, b-i-n-g-o, car song, the wheels on the bus)
- Receptive/Expressive Language skills- Cause-effect/ Basic body parts/ Actions (go/stop)/ Vocabulary labels/ Function words/ Early routines (123 go)/ Common directions (put on, in) and common phrases/ Imitation of actions and gestures

Books

- Auditory skills- Learning to listen sounds-object associations/ Auditory attention/ Meaningful auditory integration/ Prolonged awareness to speech
- Receptive/Expressive Language skills- Book sharing/ Early vocabulary (open, close, turn the page, all done)/ Receptive identification of first words (baby, mama, ball, dog)/ Early songs and speech games (peek a boo, uh-oh, pat-a-cake)

People figures and Dolls

- Auditory skills- Awareness of suprasegmentals of speech and pattern perception (pat-pat-pat, walk walk walk, shhhhhhh)/ Awareness to music for songs (if you're happy and you know it)
- Receptive/Expressive Language skills- Greetings (hi/bye), Cause-effect/ Basic body parts/ Actions/ Early routines (going to bed, eating, bathing, dressing, diaper changing)/ Participation in vocal play and babbling



Age Specific Toys

Birth-12 months:

Rattles, pop beads, ring stackers, bubbles, musical instruments, pinwheels, board books, noisemakers, visually stimulating and/or moving toys, gear toys



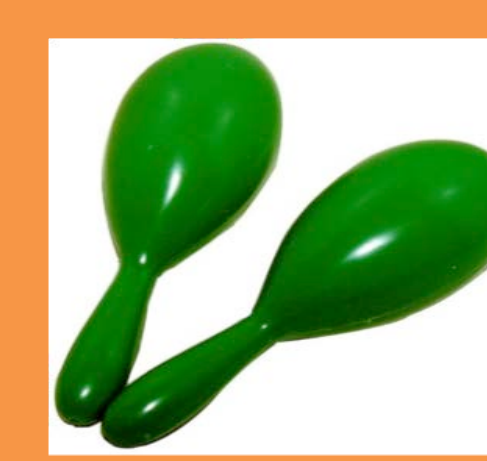
12-24 months:

Puzzles, blocks, stackable cups, light up toys, musical toys, battery powered toys, shape sorters, peek a boo blocks



24-36 months:

Books with manipulatives, motor activities, balls, play-doh, arts/crafts, sorting toys, pretend play toys- i.e. food, dollhouse, farm



Strategies for the Birth-12 month old:

Talk before show, Pairing sound with movement, Singing, Melodic voice, Acoustic highlighting, Parent modeling, Self talk, Parallel talk

Strategies for the 12-24 month old:

Pairing sound with movement, Talk before show, Yardstick Level, Parallel Talk, Self Talk, Expansion/Recasts, Hand Cue, Acoustic Highlighting, Auditory Spacing, Auditory Sandwich, Following child's lead

Strategies for the 24-36 month old:

1-2-3, Auditory Closure, Parallel Talk, Self Talk, Repetition of Syntactic Structures, Pause Time, Expectant Lean, Observe/Wait/Listen

Age Adaptable Toys

12-24 months:

Animal and Vehicle toys

- Auditory skills- Sound localization/ discrimination between minimally and maximally contrastive suprasegmentals (vroom vs. beep-beep-beep)/ 2 item recall (Get airplane and car)/ Discriminate among early nursery rhymes
- Receptive/Expressive Language skills- Following one-step directions/early speech games and songs (old mcdonald, wheels on the bus)/ Imitate 2-5 animal and environmental sounds

Books

- Auditory skills- Identify Animal/Vehicle/Environmental learning to listen sounds/ Sound-object associations by (i.e. "Mooooo, I hear a cow!" "Tick-tock, tick-tock, I hear a clock!")
- Receptive/Expressive Language skills- Early book conventions (open the book, left to right, turn the page)/ Points to object pictures when asked "where"/ Label verbs, nouns

People figures and dolls

- Auditory skills- Comprehend 2 step related directions/ Discriminate similar phrases/ ID object by descriptor (closed set)
- Receptive/Expressive Language skills- Basic body parts identification/ Identification of some clothing and foods/ Daily routines such as going to bed, eating, bathing, dressing, diaper changing etc.

24-36 months:

Animal and Vehicle Toys

- Auditory skills- 3 item recall (Get airplane, car and train)/Following two-three step directions/ Minimally contrastive segmental features (boat vs. goat)/ Conditioned response to sound
- Receptive/Expressive Language skills- Quality concepts (big little)/Receptive ID of early prepositions (on, off, in, out)/Identify parts of objects/ Uses regular plurals

Books

- Auditory skills- Listens to 5-10 minute story/ Comprehend longer utterances
- Receptive/Expressive Language skills- Point to action words in pictures/Beginning to identify and name colors/Understands and produces pronouns/Uses and understands negation/ Answers yes-no questions

People figures and Dolls

- Auditory skills- Follow 2-3 step directions/ Carries on conversation auditory only
- Receptive/Expressive Language skills- Names family members/Answers wh-questions (what, who)/ Recite nursery rhymes/ Sing songs/ Quantity concepts (one more, how many)/ Receptive ID object functions/ Uses verb forms

Conclusion:

- Age-appropriate toys become tools used by parents and professionals to engage the child in learning to communicate.
- As children grow and acquire new communication skills, the methods used when playing with the same toys can evolve in order to meet that child at his/her current auditory skills level and language needs.
- An integral component of a comprehensive aural habilitation program is teaching parents how to use the toys they have in their home in a purposeful way that also facilitates generalization.
- Parents should learn to use toys to teach, going beyond play, and having specific goals in mind while playing.
- Implementing strategies makes the toy fun and elicits responses.