



## **SPEECH AND LANGUAGE ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOL- AGED CHILDREN**

Elklan Training run courses delivered by speech and language therapists and specialist teachers. We want to share some simple techniques and activities that we have recommended over the years that you can use at home with children to support their language and communication skills. These activities may be useful to help children with learning and keeping them focused and engaged. These activities can be used everyday and really work!

### **Attention and Listening**

One of the best ways to develop your child's attention and listening skills is to dedicate 'special time' with your child, even if it is just for 5-10 minutes every day. This can happen outside too, if you are in the park try and give some uninterrupted time to your child.



### **Top Tips to help children attend and listen:**

- Make sure you have the child's attention before speaking to them.
- Minimise background noise and distractions where possible. For example, turn off the radio and television when talking together.
- Follow the child's lead as s/he is more likely to maintain interest if doing something they enjoy.
- If possible, create a cosy quiet communication friendly spaces for book sharing and special time. This may be a pop-up tent in the living room or a rug in the child's bedroom.
- Make sure that the child can see you clearly. Using gestures can help gain attention.
- If your child is very focused on something else, you may need to call their name or even touch them gently to get their attention.

- Your child may benefit from using visual aids so that they know how long they will be completing an activity for and what is going to happen next. Useful visual aids for listening include timers and clocks or visual timelines. Visual timelines show activities in photo/picture form and show the number and order of activities that will be carried out. There is a link to information about visual aids below.
- Work for short periods of time. Gradually increase the amount of time that you do an activity and expect ask your child to focus for.

### Useful attention and listening activities:



- **Go for a listening walk** and talk about all the noises you can hear.
- **Anticipation games** such as 'ready steady...', Jenga and Pop Up Pirate. These will gain your child's attention as they will be waiting to see what will happen.
- **Puzzles.** These can help to hold children's attention and are a great way to share an activity together.
- **Kim's Game.** In this game, a number of objects or pictures are shown and one of these is removed. The child needs to guess which one is missing.
- **Physical games** where children listen and respond to instructions. E.g. '*run to the table and do 5-star jumps*'.
- When you are outside in the park **play games where they have to run to the swings and then the slide** etc.
- **Simon Says.** In this game you take turns to give each other instructions. The instructions can be made easier or harder depending on the age of your child.
- **Bingo using everyday sounds.** These could be familiar everyday sounds at home or specific topics of interest such as animals or transport etc.
- **Spot the Mistake!** This is a fun activity where you read a story and make a deliberate mistake! Can your child spot it?
- **I went to the shop and I bought....** In this game, one person starts with 'I went shopping and I bought a ball'. The next person repeats what they have heard and adds an item e.g. 'I went shopping and I bought a ball and a hat etc. This carries on until you can no longer remember the list of items. This is a great game to play in the car or

outside and can be adapted to the situation. If you are on a walk, you could adapt this game to become 'I went to the forest and I saw....'.

- **Action games** where you carry out an action every time you hear a certain word. For example, every time you hear the word 'up' you must stand up etc.

### Listening to Sounds

There are lots of simple activities and games that we can use to help children listen to and identify sounds. These are just a few of our favourites and can be carried out both inside and out.

- Highlight words beginning or ending with specific sounds in everyday situations. This could be whilst reading a book, on a walk or playing games or toys.
- Play games with objects or pictures starting with the sound you want to highlight. 'Kim's Game' is a good game for this. Have lots of objects or pictures beginning with the sound, take one away and see who can remember what is missing!
- Play '*I spy*' using the sound not the letter. For example, *I spy with my little eye something beginning with the sound 'sh'*.
- Make up silly sentences using as many words beginning with the specific sound as possible. E.g. '*Shellfish shouldn't shimmy in the sunshine*'.
- Carry out sorting activities where your child sorts objects by the sound they begin with. You can use hoops or boxes to put these in. Alternatively, you could use pictures and your child can post these in a box for words beginning with different sounds

If you would like to find out more about our e-learning opportunities please visit our website at <https://www.elklan.co.uk/information/practitioners/e-learning-opportunities> for a range of interactive courses to suit all ages, with or without accreditation.

For more information or advice about any of our courses or resources, and to find out about upcoming opportunities, please contact Clare on [clare@elklan.co.uk](mailto:clare@elklan.co.uk) or ring us on 01208 841450

#### Useful links and resources:

Special Play Time – An important way for parents to spend time with their children

<https://www.kathyeugster.com/articles/article001.htm>

Aha! Parenting, [https://www.ahaparenting.com/blog/How To Special Time 9 take one out](https://www.ahaparenting.com/blog/How_To_Special_Time_9_take_one_out)

Talking and Listening activity: children 3-6 years

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/connecting-communicating/communicating/talking-and-listening-activity-children-3-6-years>

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Listen Up

[https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/3166/postcards\\_school\\_age\\_final.pdf](https://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/3166/postcards_school_age_final.pdf)

Let's Talk with Under 5's Workbook [www.elklan.co.uk](http://www.elklan.co.uk)

Let's Talk with 5-11s Workbook [www.elklan.co.uk](http://www.elklan.co.uk)

More about Visual aids

Video on using visual supports at home

[https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C5CHFA\\_enGB875GB876&sxsrf=ALeKk016Xb79x1YLoXjRQhjn3PwroRA5IA%3A158619322233&ei=RmOLXpfsDbWx8gLuw77QDQ&q=using+visual+supports+with+early+years+children+at+home&oq=using+visual+supports+with+early+years+children+at+home&gs\\_lcp=CgZwc3ktYWIQAzoECAAQR0oJCBcSBTEyLTkySgkIGBIFMTItMjZQ-GZYv44BYPuQAWgAcAJ4AIABhQGIAbAUkgEFMTUuMTGYAQCgAQGqAQdnd3Mtd2l6&sclient=psy-ab&ved=0ahUKEwiXp7mcptToAhW1mFwKHe6hD9oQ4dUDCAw&uact=5#kpvalbx=WmOLXueaF-BhbIP\\_OebkA429](https://www.google.com/search?rlz=1C5CHFA_enGB875GB876&sxsrf=ALeKk016Xb79x1YLoXjRQhjn3PwroRA5IA%3A158619322233&ei=RmOLXpfsDbWx8gLuw77QDQ&q=using+visual+supports+with+early+years+children+at+home&oq=using+visual+supports+with+early+years+children+at+home&gs_lcp=CgZwc3ktYWIQAzoECAAQR0oJCBcSBTEyLTkySgkIGBIFMTItMjZQ-GZYv44BYPuQAWgAcAJ4AIABhQGIAbAUkgEFMTUuMTGYAQCgAQGqAQdnd3Mtd2l6&sclient=psy-ab&ved=0ahUKEwiXp7mcptToAhW1mFwKHe6hD9oQ4dUDCAw&uact=5#kpvalbx=WmOLXueaF-BhbIP_OebkA429)