Auditory Memory
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Auditory memory is an important building block for developing language understanding. Some children who are deaf or hard of hearing may have difficulty with auditory memory which may cause them to have trouble learning efficiently. Working on auditory memory skills can help build expectations for listening to longer strings of words as demands for vocabulary and language grow. Auditory memory development may have a positive impact on English language competence both in spoken and written forms.

When targeting auditory memory development with a child, work through a hierarchy of difficulty. Begin with listening for two critical elements or important items in a phrase. As a child’s auditory memory skills progress, targets can increase in number of important items a child is expected to remember (i.e., 2 critical elements, 3 critical elements, etc.). Repeating items in the correct sequence adds an additional level of difficulty. Repeating lists of items is not the only goal. Functional language, including multiple step directions and sequences, should always be considered when selecting targets.

Goal: Child will repeat a list of 3 items.
Targets:
- Ingredients for his favorite recipe (e.g., flour, sugar, eggs, etc.)
- Supplies for art class (e.g., paper, paint, smock, etc.)
- Steps in a daily routine (e.g., get toothbrush, put toothpaste on brush, etc.)
- Favorite colors (e.g., pink, yellow, blue)

Goal: Child will identify two critical elements in a phrase.
Targets:
- Get your shoes and your backpack.
- Put your shoes in the closet.

The following are some guidelines when selecting targets:

- Words should be very familiar. This is not a vocabulary learning task.
- Words should be easy to say. This is not an articulation task.
- Words should be very acoustically different. This is not a speech perception task.

Parents, educators, and therapists can use a number of strategies to help children develop auditory memory skills.

- **Acoustic highlighting**: emphasize the important words by saying them louder and longer.
- **Auditory-only**: This is an auditory memory task. Use a speech hoop or sit side by side to remove speechreading cues.
- **Pause**: pause before and after important items to indicate it’s time to listen
- **WAIT**: allow time for the child to process your message before providing repetition or support
- **Model**: show the child how you remember lists. Demonstrate “self-talk” and verbal rehearsal (repeating the items to yourself).
• **Create visual helpers:** provide visual indicators of the number of items a child is expected to remember. This could be 3 blank lines on a piece of paper or two boxes where the child will place selected toys.

• **Repeat:** to build auditory memory skills, repeat the message exactly as it was said the first time. Repeat the whole message, not just the part the child missed. The objective is remembering the words in sequence, not simply repeating individual words.

**References:**