

## Listening and Spoken Language Strategy:

# Auditory Closure

**Definition:** *Auditory Closure* is when a speaker begins a song, rhyme, or sentence and then stops talking in order to encourage the child to fill in a verbal response.

### How is this strategy done?

To utilize *auditory closure*, begin a song, rhyme or sentence and then stop and look expectantly at the child and wait for them to vocalize a response.

In its purest sense, auditory closure refers to the ability of a listener to decode information that was not heard completely or was distorted in some way and to fill in the missing information (Ferre, 2006). As a listening and spoken language strategy, *auditory closure* takes advantage of the redundancy of familiar language in order to encourage a child use expressive language.

### Why is this strategy important?

*Auditory closure* affords the adult opportunities to informally assess the child's expressive language skills. Typically, if the child knows the word that has been left out, the child will naturally fill in the word or phrase.

*Auditory closure* can help an adult avoid the trap of a constant flow of questions directed at the child. An adult can change a question into a statement to encourage the child to respond. For example, when looking at photos, "Who's that?" becomes "I see \_\_\_\_\_".

This Auditory Verbal strategy helps build the following Listening and Spoken Language skills:

- ✓ attention to speaker
- ✓ response from child
- ✓ turn-taking skills
- ✓ child's use of spontaneous language
- ✓ expressive language expansion

## Discussion

Auditory Closure assists parents and teachers to improve a child's ability to use contextual information, to fill in the blank, to gain more information, or to clarify information. The ability to fill in missing or distorted portions of the auditory signal helps a child understand the whole message in difficult listening situations such as background noise, speakers with regional dialects, quiet speakers or with someone who mumbles (Ferre, 2006). A child with hearing loss often does not have the necessary language or life experience that enables them to "fill in the gaps" of missed or inferred information (Beck, 2011; Cole & Flexer, 2007). This skill can be addressed at a very young age through the use of *auditory closure*. Familiar nursery rhymes or songs may initially be one of the best ways to utilize *auditory closure* as long as the child has been exposed to the song or rhyme enough times to be able to meet with success when *auditory closure* is used. This strategy can be employed with familiar books as well. During a story, the adult pauses to see if the child will fill in the blank.

Adults who work with a child who is deaf or hard of hearing may sometimes fall in to the trap of a barrage of questions directed to child in order to gather data on the child's expressive language skills. Data collection on a child's language skills can be accomplished in a much more natural method by using *auditory closure*. This strategy helps to make the exchange much more conversational in nature.

*Auditory closure* should be utilized when the adult believes the child has the ability to meet with success.

## Example

Mom and her toddler are in the car and sing the familiar song of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star".

Mom begins: Twinkle, Twinkle Little (and stops)

Toddler: star!

Mom: How I wonder what (and stops)

Toddler: you are

This turn-taking goes on for the remainder of the song with the mom paying particular attention to the number of words the child is able to fill in.

An adult and child share a book.

Adult: Oh look; I see a \_\_\_\_\_ (and points to a zebra)

Child: horse!

Adult: It does look like a horse, but try again. It's a \_\_\_\_\_.

Child: no response

Adult can give the beginning sound of the word: A z \_\_\_\_\_

Child: zebra

Adult: That's right. I see a zebra running across the field.

# References

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