

Listening and Spoken Language Strategy:

Auditory Sandwich

Definition: Through the use of the **Auditory Sandwich**, information is presented through listening before the introduction of visual or other support information is given to a child. When visual information is needed to assist in comprehension, the information is then put back in to the auditory only presentation. The **Auditory Sandwich** is also referred to as the Listening Sandwich.

How is this strategy done?

The *auditory sandwich* follows this formula:

- 1) Auditory input is given first to ensure the focus is on listening to gain meaning
- 2) Visual/tactile input is added, when appropriate (may be eye gaze, pointing, showing a toy, etc.)
- 3) Auditory input is repeated again without the visual input

It is important to remember that a child may need to listen for 2-3 times prior to the presentation of visual/tactile information. The main point is to give the child the opportunity to learn through listening alone. Always remember to put the information back in to the auditory only presentation after the visual cue is given to ensure the last presentation has been successfully processed through audition alone.

Why is this strategy important?

The *auditory sandwich* is based on the premise that children who are deaf or hard of hearing need to learn to trust their hearing and rely on auditory input to learn spoken language. This emphasis on listening helps to strengthen the development of audition. Many aspects of speech (especially the suprasegmentals such as pitch, duration and intensity; as well as the difference between voiced/voiceless sound pairs) are not visible on the face or mouth, they are therefore best taught through listening (Listen Learn and Talk, Cochlear Limited, 2005). Visual cues are beneficial in only 30% of speech sounds in running discourse (Cole & Flexer, 2007).

The purpose of the auditory sandwich is to encourage comprehension and communication through the child's auditory abilities. Therefore, it is important to lead with auditory input, support the message with visual, or in some cases, kinesthetic input, and follow up with the auditory input only again. The addition of the auditory signal after visual support reinforces the importance of listening.

This strategy allows information to be gathered about the child's auditory abilities alone. If the child does not respond with the initial auditory input and consistently needs visual support, a discussion with the child's audiologist is recommended.

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

- ✓ suprasegmentals of speech
- ✓ attention to auditory input and the speaker
- ✓ parents' belief that the child is able to gain information through listening alone
- ✓ ability to process language through audition

Discussion

Through the use of the *auditory sandwich*, the child develops and learns to recognize auditory patterns. The most natural way to develop spoken language with appropriate rate, rhythm and intonation is to learn through listening (Listen Learn and Talk, Cochlear Limited, 2005).

As with many strategies, the *auditory sandwich* is most effective when used with proper *wait time* and the expectation that the child is able to take in auditory information but may also need a visual/tactile cue at first to link meaning to sound. Oftentimes visual information is presented to a child prior to giving adequate opportunity for the child to listen first, which causes visual skills to be reinforced instead of auditory skills. By reinforcing audition, the *auditory sandwich* will bring attention to the targeted verbal input and give the child the necessary repetition and reinforcement they need for auditory learning.

It is the "rule of thumb" to use three auditory strategies before giving visual input. If three attempts to use audition do not result in the desired respond, additional input (visual or tactile) is given, followed by audition again. (Estabrooks, 2006)

Example

Adult: It's time to go outside. Let's get your coat! (auditory input first)

Child: no response

Adult: (rephrasing and attempting again): Where's your coat?

Child: no response

Adult: (providing another opportunity to listen only) Get your coat!

Child: no response

Adult: I see your coat! (giving visual information by shifting eye gaze to child's coat hanging on a hook)

Child: makes move to get coat

Adult: Let's get your coat!

References

Cole, E. B., & Flexer, C. A. (2007). *Children with hearing loss: Developing listening and talking, birth to six*. San Diego, CA: Plural Publishing.

Estabrooks, W. (2006). *Auditory-verbal therapy and practice*. Washington, DC: Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Inc.

Listen, Learn & Talk (2005). Babies Babble. Cochlear Ltd.

<http://www.cochlear.com/wps/wcm/connect/in/home/support/rehabilitation-resources/early-intervention/listen-learn-and-talk>