

Aspect 1: General sound discrimination – environmental sounds

Tuning into sounds

Main purpose

- To develop children's listening skills and awareness of sounds in the environment

Listening walks

This is a listening activity that can take place indoors or outdoors.

Remind the children about the things that good listeners do (e.g. keep quiet, have ears and eyes ready). Invite the children to show you how good they are at listening and talk about why listening carefully is important. Encourage the children to listen attentively to the sounds around them. Talk about the different sounds they can hear. The children could use 'cupped ears' or make big ears on headbands to wear as they go on the listening walk. After the children have enjoyed a listening walk indoors or outdoors, make a list of all the sounds they can remember. The list can be in words or pictures and prompted by replaying sounds recorded on the walk.



A listening moment

This is another activity that can take place indoors or outdoors.

Remind the children how to be good listeners and invite them to show how good they are at listening by remembering all the sounds they hear when they listen for a moment. It may be useful to use a sand timer to illustrate, for example, the passing of half a minute. Ask them what made each sound and encourage them to try to make the sound themselves.

Drum outdoors

Give each child a beater or make drumsticks, for example from short pieces of dowel. Encourage the children to explore the outdoor area and discover how different sounds are made by tapping or stroking, with their beaters, a wooden door, a wire fence, a metal slide, and a few items such as pipes and upturned pots you have 'planted'.

The activity could be recorded and/or photographed.

Ask each child to demonstrate their favourite sound for the rest of the group. The whole group can join in and copy.

Ask each child to take up position ready to make their favourite sound. An adult or a child acts as conductor and raises a beater high in the air to signal the children to play loudly and lowers it to signal playing softly.