

Children need to be able to pay attention and listen to people talking so that they can learn to talk. Before children can understand the meaning of words they need to be able to recognise voice, speech sounds and early words. Listening games and songs are great to develop this skill through encouraging children to listen and respond appropriately.

"Listen for the word"

Getting ready

Choose a familiar story from a book.

Alternatively, why not make up your own story?

Gather everyone around to listen (you may want to do this in small groups).



How to play

- Introduce the story and talk about the characters in it. Give one or two of the characters a certain sound/action – for example, make a howling sound for a wolf or put your hands up as long ears for a rabbit.
- This is fun for playing with a small group of children. Everybody can listen for the same character or different people could listen for different characters.
- Tell the children the story, emphasising the name of the character(s) you have talked about. Each time the children hear the character's name(s), they must make the sound or do the action.

Play it a different way

Make it easier: leave a gap after the character's name, so that the children can fill the gap with the action or sound.

Make it trickier: ask the children to listen for more than one character – can they remember all the actions?