

Listening walk

Rationale:

On a listening walk, your child walks with the purpose of focusing on the sounds she hears around her. When your child really listens to the background sounds in a familiar environment, she will recognise things she has not noticed before. This helps her to realise how much more she can notice when she focuses. It is also a great way for you and your child to focus on the present without distraction. Encouraging your child to be in the here-and-now can give her skills to deal with the stress of study, work and play as she gets older.

Age range information

4-6 years

What you need

You will just need whatever you normally take with you on your walks. A listening walk is just like any other walk, except you focus particularly on sounds.

How to do it

Here's are some ideas:

1. Choose where to walk. You can go for a listening walk anywhere. Ask your child where she would like to walk. If you have more time you could plan your listening walk for somewhere that you might hear interesting sounds – for example, the gardens, the beach or a wildlife sanctuary. Natural sounds like leaves rustling, waves, sand underfoot and birdsong can be enjoyable and relaxing for you both.
2. Talk to your child about how to listen very carefully while you are on your walk. You might like to ask her what sounds she expects to hear.
3. During your walk, stop often. Stop in different places and close your eyes together. Ask your child what she can hear.
4. Notice the sounds – for example, talk about how loud the sounds are, listen to the sounds near and far away. Talk about what is making the sounds – are they made by people or machines, or are they natural noises like wind or birds?
5. Keep it fun. Be guided by your child. Stop when your child has had enough and have fun walking home together. Do not make this walk hard work by asking too many questions or going for too long.

Adapting for younger and older children

You can make this fun for your younger child by encouraging her to copy some of the noises she is hearing. See if she can make a really convincing car horn, or make her footsteps sound louder or softer.

Your older child could draw a sound map after the walk, showing where she has walked and what she has heard along the way.



Recommended Reads by the National Library Board

Recommended Reads

- [How to talk so little kids will listen: a survival guide to life with children ages 2-7](#)
- [Knock, knock who's there-a book of animal sounds](#)
- [Elmo Can... Taste! Touch! Smell! See! Hear!](#)

Engage your child with simple activities at home! Check out some of these things you can do together:

- [Animals and their Sounds](#)
- [Do Dogs Go "Meow"?](#)