

Listening Skills Develop Early – A Hierarchy of Auditory Skills Learned by Age 4 Years*

Age Acquired	Listening Skill	Expected Skill Development
0 – 3 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditory awareness • Responds to sound by smiling, head turning, stilling, startling • Responds to loud sounds • Recognizes mother's/caregiver's voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detection • Discrimination
4 – 6 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sound begins to have meaning • Listens more acutely • Starts to associate meaning to sound (e.g., responds to own name occasionally) • Responds to changes in voice inflections • Starts to localize source of voice with accuracy • Listens to own voice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detection • Prosodic identification • Discrimination
7 – 9 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Localizes sound source with accuracy • Discriminates suprasegmental aspects of duration, pitch and intensity • Has longer attention span • Associates meaning to words • Discriminates vowel and syllable content 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detection • Segmental identification • Discrimination
10 – 12 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Associates meaning to more words • Monitors own voice and voices of others • Localizes sound from a distance • Discriminates speaker's voice from competing stimuli 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual Integration: Sound/Object • Figure ground discrimination
13 – 15 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identifies more words • Processes simple language • Auditory memory of one item at the end of a phrase/sentence • Discriminates between familiar phrases • Follows one-step directions that are familiar 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual Integration: Sound/Object • Discrimination • Memory
16 – 18 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discriminates between more phrases • Identifies and associates more words related to objects (e.g., body parts, food) • Imitates words heard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration • Discrimination • Memory
19 – 24 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditory memory of 2 items • Discriminates songs • Discriminates descriptive phrases • Follows a two-step direction (e.g., Get your ball and throw it) • Identifies by category 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration • Discrimination • Memory
25 – 30 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditory memory of 2 items in different linguistic contexts • Listens to familiar songs (recorded) • Comprehends longer utterances • Listens from a distance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration • Memory • Figure ground discrimination
31 – 36 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continues to expand auditory memory – 3 items with different linguistic features • Sequences 2 pieces of information in order • Listens to stories (recorded) • Follows 2-3 directions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration • Memory
37 – 42 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Auditory memory increases to 5 items • Sequences 3 or more pieces of information in order • Retells a short story • Follows 3 directions • Processes complex sentence structures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integration • Memory
43 – 48 months	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Processes longer and more complex language structures (e.g., Can you find something that lives in a tree, has feathers and a yellow crest?) • Follows more difficult directions (e.g., Put the thick blue square behind the empty jug.) • Retells longer stories in detail – 5 or more sentences • Tracks an 8 word sentence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emerging Closure • Emerging Visual Integration: Sound/Letter

*Typically hearing, typically developing children. Information excerpted from Cochlear Limited (2005). *Listen learn and talk: Another cochlear innovation*. Compiled from the listening section of the *Integrated Scales of Development*, based on a variety of sources. It was further revised to include expected skill development by age. 2015© Karen L. Anderson & Lynne H. Price, *Steps to Assessment*, <http://successforkidswithhearingloss.com>