



# Starting School Speech Therapy



## Visual Aids: Listening Rules



Eye Watching  
Look at the speaker.

The simple actions help children remember the rules.



Voice Quiet  
Put finger to lip.



Body Calm  
Relax and take a breath.



Ears Listening  
Put hands on ears.



And the visual aids help reinforce children's learning.



# How to Guide for Parents

## Starting School: Speech Therapy

### 1. *Teaching school routines*

- *Visual supports and schedules*
- *Classroom and listening rules*
- *Bathroom and hand-washing*
- *School and fall themed vocabulary*

### 2. *Targeting social-communication skills*

- *Requesting and asking for help*
- *Commenting*
- *Asking questions*
- *Sharing and taking turns*
- *Play development*

### 3. *Addressing language goals*

- *Following directions*
- *Actions*
- *Basic concepts*
- *Answering WH questions*
- *Logical reasoning*
- *Sequencing*

### 4. *Recommended picture books, games, and songs*

# Teaching School Routines



## Visual supports (pictures)



- Children learn language more efficiently using a multi-modality approach
  - verbal information is paired with visual, tactile (touch), and kinesthetic (movement) feedback during play and music & movement activities

- Visual supports reinforce the verbal information that children are already receiving and are seamlessly integrated into school and play routines
- Visual supports can be used to teach young children how to communicate and expand their developmental language skills



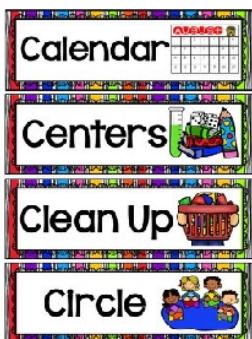
- Visual supports reinforce social-emotional vocabulary
- Children attending school for the first time benefit from visual supports to teach them new school-related vocabulary

## Schedules

- Creating a visual schedule establishes structure to a child's day, as activities are repeated and become routine
- Children experience comfort from predictability in a new environment, which enables them to learn
- Children build an association between an activity and a chunk of time and learn to transition from one activity to the next

- first...then... language

- Schedules help children accept change; new events or activities are easily added to the pre-existing structure





## Classroom and listening rules

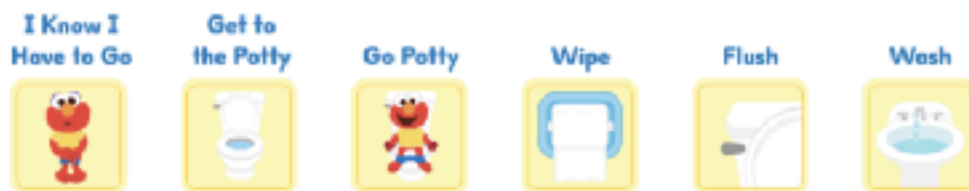
- Children learn to follow school/classroom rules for safety
- The teacher uses classroom routines to build structure, making the new environment conducive for learning
- Listening rules are taught and reinforced via repetition
  - Children enjoy learning the listening song: Eyes are watching, ears are listening, voices quiet, bodies calm

### Visual Aids: Listening Rules



## Bathroom and hand-washing

- Teaching young children to use the bathroom and wash their hands fosters independence
- Visual supports help them remember the sequence



- Hand-washing is especially important for teaching children about cleanliness and germs
- Teach children to wash their hands with soap for at least 20 seconds (sing the ABC song)

## School and fall vocabulary

- Children learn academic concepts: ABC's, numbers, shapes, weather, calendar, centers, and classroom vocabulary

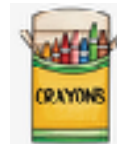
### Classroom and centers



### Actions



### Art



### Toys



### Fall





# Targeting Social Communication Skills



## Requesting and asking for help



- Offer the child choices to visually entice him/her and promote requesting during school routines
  - *Snack: juice, water, chips, cookie, apple, carrots*
  - *Play: cars, trains, blocks, bubbles, play doh*
  - *Art: dot markers, crayons, paper, scissors, glue*
- Remember to withhold a desired item and wait for the child to request it using gestures, pointing, and/or word(s)
- Briefly withhold assistance when a child is engaging in a difficult task to allow the child to ask for help
  - *Examples: tying sneakers, opening the toy box, inserting a straw in the juice box, cutting with scissors, using glue*

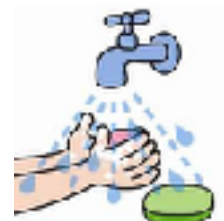


## Commenting

- +1 Rule: increase the child's current level of skill by teaching one new word or concept at a time
  - *Examples: "train," "I see train," "train go," "look train go fast"*

## Asking questions

- Encourage child to ask questions during school activities
  - *Examples: what's this, what are you doing, where are we going, why*



## Sharing and taking turns



- Encourage the child to share a toy with verbal reminders and visual cues
  - *Examples: my turn, timer*
- Facilitate turn-taking during activities
  - *Examples: child waits for his turn to put his picture on the school bus, child waits for his turn to read a book with the teacher*

## Play development

- Solitary play: the child is starting to play on his/her own and to learn about cause-effect
  - *Use visual models to teach the child to throw a ball, pour, scoop, stack, blow bubbles*



- Parallel play: the child is watching and playing alongside other children without interacting with them
  - Imitation skills are improving

- Associative play: the child briefly interacts with another child during a realistic pretend play activity

- *Example: child adds a boat to a friend's water table and comments about it to a friend, "look boat go fast"*



- Cooperative play: children interact and direct each other while playing together

- *Examples: children play dollhouse and coordinate their actions, they build a block tower collaboratively*



# Addressing Language Goals



## Following simple directions

- Follow 1-step routine commands
  - *Examples: sit down, clean up, give me, put on, throw out garbage*
- Follow 1-step commands for spatial words: up, down or actions
  - *Examples: stop, go, play, read, walk, jump, clap etc.*
- Follow 1-step verbal directions for action + object or spatial words: in, out, on, off
  - *Examples: eat cookie, drink juice, throw the ball, color the circle*
  - *Examples: put the ball in the box, take out the car, put on your sneakers, take off the school bus*



- Follow 2-step related directions
  - *Examples: open fridge and take out the apple, put ketchup on your hot dog and eat it*
- Follow 2-step non-related directions
  - *Examples: put the pizza in the oven and give me the spoon, glue the circle and count the triangles*



## Actions

- Talk about actions during play routines
  - *Examples: open, play, blow, drive, build, catch, read etc.*





## Basic concepts



- Teach descriptive words
  - *Examples: open, closed, big, small, clean, dirty*



- Teach quantity words
  - *Examples: count the stars, more, most, all, none*

- Teach spatial words
  - *Examples: under, on top, next to, in front, in back*



## Answering WH questions



- What
  - *Examples: what is the boy holding, what is the girl doing*

- Where
  - *Examples: where do you wash your hands, where is the cow*



- Who
  - *Examples: who is driving the school bus, who is playing with the train*



- When
  - *Examples: when do you put the toys away, when does the teacher read the book*



## Logical reasoning



- What for object function
  - *Examples: what do you use to cut the paper, what do you do with a towel*
- Why
  - *Examples: why do you go to sleep, why do you wash your hands*



## Sequencing

- Teach child how to sequence through multi-step routines
  - *Examples: build a train set, go to the bathroom*



**Step 1: build the train tracks**



**Step 2: put the train on the tracks**



**Step 3: make the train go**



**Step 4: clean up the train set**

## Recommended picture books

- *Rosie Goes to Preschool*
- *Sesame Street Celebrate School: First Day*
- *Wash Your Fins Baby Shark*



## Games

- *Sesame Street Potty Planner*
- *Sesame Street Elmo's School Friends*
- *Sesame Street Super Elmo's ABC Jump*

<https://www.sesamestreet.org/games>

- *ABCya Alphabet Bubble*
- *ABCya Birthday Candle Counting*
- *ABCya Make a Pumpkin*

<https://www.abcya.com/grades/prek>

## School routine songs

- *Good Morning, Who Came to School Today*
- *There are Seven Days, What's the weather*
- *Wheels on the bus, Open shut them, If you're happy & you know it*
- *Eyes are watching, Head shoulders knees & toes*
- *Clean up song, It's time to put the toys away*

## References

Early Intervention, Specific Speech and Language Strategies to Encourage Communication: Handouts for Caregivers

Early Intervention, Targeting Language and Communication in Daily Activities: Handouts for Caregivers

Rayburn, J., Early Intervention Parent Handouts for Speech & Language