

Learning Links' Tip Sheet

Reducing noise in child care settings



Excess noise in our environment muffles spoken language, making it difficult to hear others and to sustain spoken communication.

Preschool and childcare settings are environments where noise levels may rise due to children's activities and programs. There are several ways to help reduce noise at preschools or child care centres to help children hear spoken language at conversational levels and have a better chance to develop spoken language.

1. Decorate the room in soft furnishings. This could include:
 - ~ curtains on the windows,
 - ~ materials on the wall, especially near noisier activities such as block construction or home area,
 - ~ material on the back of wooden dividers (children could participate in decorating the back of a shelf or divider by pasting scraps of material to a big piece of material or paper that could sit on the back of a book shelf or shelf situated in an area which is visible to the room), and/or
 - ~ hanging soft material loosely from the ceiling in some parts of the room.
2. Cover tables with soft cloth (felt if possible or plastic table cloths with soft backings, material, etc.) Cloth could be used for tabletop activities such as puzzles, construction at tables and the home area.
3. Ensure all chairs and tables have rubber tips on their legs.
4. Consider noise sources in the room when you are interacting and speaking with a child or during group times. Noise sources may include a running tap, a table being dragged, lawns being mowed, people talking, music played during the session, stacking chairs, heating/air conditioning units, fans, musical instruments and preparation of morning tea.
5. Carpet areas except those used for wet play, toilet areas and activities such as painting. You may be able to pick up carpet offcuts from carpet dealers for mats in these areas.

The information in Learning Links' Tip Sheets is prepared by experienced early childhood professionals. Each child is unique and this material is not necessarily suitable for every child, parent or carer. We recommend you discuss this information with your child's therapist or education professional prior to using these tips.