



Training Young Children to Use Headphones for The Listening Program®



Young children and sensitive listeners can enjoy the beautiful therapeutic music of The Listening Program® (TLP) with headphones, but sometimes they may need a little time getting comfortable wearing them.

The goal for every TLP listener is to feel safe, relaxed and receptive to listening training. To accomplish this, we are happy to share some success tips we've heard from parents and TLP Providers over the past 20 years.



What Are Headphones?

Like anything new, most children are curious and excited to learn about headphones. For a child who may not have experience with them, simply showing each part of the headphone and giving them a quick explanation could be interesting to some kids. Put them on your head so they can see you wearing them, then say something like:

“ *Headphones allow you to listen to music when you plug the cord into the iPod. The sound comes through the headphones into your ears. Do you want to try?*

Be prepared to play music you are confident the child will enjoy, at a very gentle volume. Some kids will want to see themselves in a mirror wearing their headphones. You could even have a favorite doll or stuffed animal to place the headphones on.

Why Are We Using Them?

Headphones allow the brain to receive the therapeutic benefits much more effectively with a more direct pathway to the auditory system. There are numerous neuroacoustic modifications that provide gentle auditory training, including TLP's exclusive spatial training, which provide a 360 degree sound experience. These therapeutic enhancements lead to numerous exciting outcomes in language development, sensory processing skills, fine and gross motor coordination, memory and thinking skills, emotional wellness and more.



How Often Do We Use Headphones?



The child will be wearing the headphones 4-5 days per week for 9-30 minutes each day. When it is appropriate, explain what you expect from them. At the same time, suggest some fun things they can do while they are wearing the headphones and listening to The Listening Program. Here is an example of what you can tell them:

“ *You will be able to enjoy some fun activities like coloring, playing with play dough or relaxing while you are wearing your headphones each day in the morning or afternoon during the week.*



PROFESSIONAL TIPS

Sally Bober, a seasoned TLP Provider shares how she and her families have been able to achieve a 99.9% success rate with even the most sensitive young children. Here are a few prompts she has found effective:

Always talk in positive statements: *“It’s time to do our listening”* - *“It’s time to put on our headphones”*, and maintain an upbeat attitude. Sometimes the parents are so concerned about their child being resistant that the child can sense their hesitation. It’s important to have a great attitude and know that most children take to headphones right away!

Be firm and state your expectations – hands down compliance. When possible, don’t let the child touch the headphones. If the child attempts to take the headphones off, stay positive and say: *“Uh-uh, Headphones*

on please – headphones on.” Then place the headphones back on their head and try to distract them with something the child can play with during their listening.

If these steps don’t work (they usually do), and the child really doesn’t want to wear the headphones, tell the child you want to count to ten and you expect them to wear them until you get to ten. Then, keep putting the headphones back on (staying positive and encouraging) and tell them to keep them on while you count to ten. You should then be the one who takes the headphones off, while congratulating the child for wearing them for 10 seconds. Each day, you can increase the amount of time they wear the headphones. By the end of the week or weeks maximum), the child should be wearing the headphones without any compliance concerns.



Other Ideas

- If the headphones are slipping off, place a headband around their head to keep them in place.
- Have the child engage in an activity they enjoy, then put the headphones on after they are distracted by the activity.
- Make a “TLP Listening Activity Box”: Rotate fun and engaging activities the child will look forward to in the box. Include the child when selecting creative and relaxing activities.
- Some children are more comfortable sitting in your lap with some deep pressure during they are introduced to headphones.
- Keep the headphones stored on a stuffed animal that the child gets to hold while they wear the headphones.
- Use a splitter, so a parent/caregiver can listen to TLP, along with the child using separate headphones.
- Consult a TLP Provider for suggestions for sensory sensitive individuals, or those with special needs.
- Give them a token for a prize at the beginning of the listening – and explain that they’ll pick out their prize after they’re done listening.

Safety Notes

- The volume should be carefully checked prior to every listening session.
- Ensure the volume is set to a comfortable level, never causing pain or discomfort for the listener.
- Everyone has different listening comfort levels, so the volume should be loud enough to clearly hear the music, but not so soft so the listener will strain to hear.
- Keep the device out of reach of the child so they don’t accidentally adjust the volume.
- Be sure the headphones are on correctly. The headband should be across the top of the child’s head and the right and left ear cups need to be placed on the correct ears.





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