

HOW A "LISTENING SANDWICH" CAN BUILD YOUR CHILD'S VOCABULARY

Have you ever heard of a listening sandwich or auditory sandwich? Well, it's a helpful strategy to use with children who are deaf or hard of hearing to support their listening and spoken language development. This strategy combines different listening and spoken language or LSL strategies and techniques. You'll sandwich those, between saying something normally without any visual clues or added emphasis. In this video, I'll explain more about what that means and why this is a great strategy to use with toddlers, preschoolers and school-aged children who are deaf or hard of hearing.

Hi, I'm Dr. Theresa Caraway with Hearing First, we're here to help and support families just like yours who have a child with hearing loss. We want to empower you as your child learns to listen, talk, read and thrive, just like kids with typical hearing.

Okay, so let's talk about the listening sandwich. Think about building a sandwich. You start with two pieces of bread and add layers in the middle, right? So, to build our listening sandwich, we'll start with audition first and only as the bread. Audition first and only is when you have your child listen, without any visual clues or other ways to assist their understanding. In other words, you'll say it normally and focus on ear contact before eye contact. Then if your child has difficulty or needs more support, use an LSL strategy or technique to help your child listen and understand. Then we'll top the sandwich with audition only again. To learn more about Audition first and only, watch the video we have on the Hear It Before You See It Strategy. You can find that linked below.

Why is the Listing sandwich important? Well, it's one of the more powerful strategies we can use. When you're creating a listening sandwich, you're helping your child to:

1. Learn new vocabulary words
2. Understand spoken language
3. Develop clear articulation or production of speech sounds in their words and sentences
4. And trust their hearing and strengthen their auditory skills, a fundamental part of learning to listen and talk.

Let's explore how to use a listening sandwich at home with a young child or new listener to understand spoken language and learn new vocabulary. Okay, let's say your family is getting ready to leave the house together. Using Audition only, you'd probably say something like, "It's time to go. "Carson, go get your shoes" and then pause and wait to see if your child understands. If they didn't get their shoes, then it's time to build our listing sandwich. We already started with the bread when we gave a familiar command through Audition only and saying it normally. Because it seems like Carson didn't understand, it's time to add the middle layer of an LSL strategy or technique. Let's try the Be a Director Strategy. So we'll say, "Carson, listen. "Shoes on, it's time to go. "Go get your shoes." Then pause and wait to observe what happens. If he's still not understanding, we need to add another layer or a different technique. Let's try giving a visual hint by looking or pointing to the shoes. "Carson, go get your shoes." As your child runs to their shoes. Then you'll top off your sandwich with an audition only again by saying, normally, "Yes, go get your shoes."

Now, let's try a listening sandwich to support a child to develop clear sounding speech, so you'll use it when you notice your child has difficulty pronouncing a word, maybe they substitute another sound or leave off of sound. Let's say your family is at the zoo and you've been looking at the snakes and if your child says, "That is a big nake." Well, let's start our listening sandwich. First audition only saying it normally. "Oh, a big snake?" Then pause and wait. Do they self-correct, or they continue to miss the S sound. If the S is still missing, let's add our middle layer of our sandwich. We could help make listening easier. By using acoustic highlighting or putting a stronger emphasis on the target sound. You'll say, "Listen, sssnake." and have your child repeat back, "sssnae." Then you'll finish your sandwich with audition only by saying the word in a complete sentence, without extra emphasis on the sound, saying it as you would normally. "That is a big snake."

And this is one of the many LSL strategies you can use to help your child with hearing loss, learn to listen and talk. We have a great free handout listing all of them. I think it's handy to keep on your fridge or bulletin board as a reminder, and your LSL Intervention Professional, will teach you these strategies and help you develop your own technique and style to target your child's specific goals, during everyday moments together.

Wherever you are on this journey and however you may be feeling you are not alone. Hearing First is here to help you every step of the way. Join the Facebook group to meet other families of children with hearing loss and subscribe to the YouTube channel for the latest videos. Visit hearingfirst.org to find more resources and support for your journey.