

Especially for infants with disabilities

Making Noise Is a Lot of Fun

Sound Awareness

Most young children like making lots of noise by squealing or vocalizing. Some children with disabilities need help to make sounds. This practice guide includes ways to encourage young children who have difficulty vocalizing to make sounds. Children are more likely to vocalize when their parents respond to their cooing and squealing by smiling and imitating their sounds.

What is the practice?

This practice will make it easier for a young child to make sounds. Make it easier for a child to make sounds and listen to what he is hearing with these simple things.

What does the practice look like?

Imagine a young child who cannot make sounds loud enough to hear herself or for others to hear. You can use devices like sound amplifiers, computers, and karaoke machines to make a child's sounds louder. Making her own cooing or other infant sounds "louder" will likely capture your baby's interest!

How do you do the practice?

Here are some things you can try to help your child make "lots of noise."

- Start with a comfortable and quiet place so there are no distractions. Use whatever sound amplification device you have to show your child how to make sounds "louder." Encourage your child to make sounds by making sounds yourself that you know your child already makes. Turn the activity into a "my turn/your turn" game—you say something and then your child says something.
- Record whatever sounds your child makes. Play them back to him a little louder to get him to listen and repeat his own sounds. Sometimes it encourages a child to "say more" if you have him wear headphones while listening to or making sounds.
- Listening to a favorite nursery rhyme will often get a child to make different sounds. Computer software that has cartoon characters reciting nursery rhymes often increases a child's interest in making sounds.
- Try voice-activated devices that turn on favorite music or a video when sounds are made into a microphone. The more your child likes the music or video, the more she will make sounds to make something fun happen.
- Gently bouncing a child on your knees or a bed while making familiar sounds will help her vocalize. Play the bouncing game where sound echoes to get the child to repeat what she hears.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Are your child's sounds becoming easier to hear?
- Does your child try to say or repeat sounds more often?
- Does your child seem to enjoy saying and listening to sounds?



Take a look at more FUN with sounds

Sing Out!

Julia makes sounds like *ah-ah* and *goo* but she is hard to hear. She especially likes it when her mother or father repeats the sounds she makes. Julia's father has found a fun way to make his daughter's vocalizations louder. Dad uses a children's karaoke machine Julia's brother received as a gift. He places the microphone near Julia's mouth to be sure her sounds are "picked up." The first couple of times she hears her own voice, Julia is a little startled. But soon, just the sight of the karaoke machine gets her excited. Louder and louder sounds pour out of her the more she gets to "sing."



I Made It Happen!

Damon is a 12-month-old child who makes few sounds and not very often. His mother and Damon's teacher have come up with a way to get him to make more sounds. Damon loves lap games like peek-a-boo. Mom places him on her lap and begins the game. Damon crows with glee when Mom uncovers her face and says, "Peek-a-boo!" Mom asks Damon if he wants to play some more. She waits patiently until he makes a sound, then the game begins again. Damon has figured out that his voice makes the fun happen again and again.

Turn Up the Sound

Emilio likes to "sing along" when he sees his older brother use earphones to listen to music. Emilio has a hearing loss, but his brother's loud singing catches Emilio's attention. Mom has found a way to use Emilio's interest in his brother's activity to get Emilio to listen to and be part of nursery rhymes. She uses a microphone to "turn up the sound" of her voice and a head set—just like his big brother uses to listen to music—for Emilio to listen to her say rhymes. As she recites a nursery rhyme, Emilio says some words or makes some sounds. They go back and forth. Mom says something, Emilio says something. He is now saying more and more.

