

3 Program Information: Group Sessions

3.1 Section Overview

In this section of the handbook you will find a guide to the elements that make up each session.

This section contains:

- an overview of the core session elements
- a structure for the introduction and plenary elements of each teaching session
- timing guidance for the group sessions.

A session-by-session guide and clear instructions for teaching vocabulary and narrative skills in each session are given on pages 35–145. To support your session delivery, target vocabulary ('Special Words') are in **bold** and script suggestions are in *italics*.

3.2 Core Group Session Elements

3.2.1 Active listening

Developing listening skills is a vital part of the Nuffield Early Language Intervention. In the first session, students are introduced to a teddy bear called Ted who will come to every session to join in with the games and activities. Ted has four Listening Rules that students should try to follow in each session. These rules are revised at the beginning of every session and good listening is rewarded using the Best Listener award (adapted from *Time to Talk* by Alison Schroeder, 2001).

The Best Listener award is an opportunity to reward a member of the group who has tried hard to follow the Listening Rules in the session. The Best Listener is chosen by Ted at the end of each session. The student who is awarded the Best Listener award is allowed to put his or her name label on the Best Listener board and to wear the Best Listener badge. In the individual sessions you will not be able to award the Best Listener award, but you can give the student praise for using the Listening Rules.

3.2.2 Introduction

The introduction is an opportunity for you to settle all the students into the session and encourage good listening. We would like you to follow the same pattern for the introduction in every session, both group and individual, with the exception of the Best Listener award in the individual sessions (see Section 4, page 28). Note that there is no listening game to play anymore in the introduction, as this has been replaced by the letter-sound and phonological awareness activities explicitly described in the session-by-session guide (see pages 35–145). Box 3.1 (page 18) outlines the structure of the introduction to be followed in each session.

Box 3.1: Introduction

Greeting

Begin the session with a greeting. You say, *'Hello, everybody,'* and the students reply *'Hello, Ms/Mr ..., Hello, everyone'*. You should encourage this in every session. Students may need some help with this early on. You may prefer to greet each student individually from time to time so that each student is encouraged to greet you back.

Days of the week

Introduce the day of the week with reference to the Days of the week board. You say, *'Who can tell me what today is?'*, *'That's right: today is ...'*, *'What day was it yesterday?'*, *'That's right: yesterday was ...'*, *'What day will it be tomorrow?'*, *'That's right: tomorrow will be ...'*, *'Who can tell me all the days of the week?'* Point to the correct day on the board or let students find the correct day of the week among the Day of the week cards. You or one of the students can stick (using Blu tack) the correct day of the week on the Days of the week board.

Introduce Ted

You can vary how you introduce Ted in each session. You might keep him in a magic bag or box and ask one of the students to get him out, or you might hide him somewhere in the classroom and ask a student to find him. Vary this activity from session to session.

Listening Rules

Revise the Listening Rules in each session. Ask students to repeat Ted's Listening Rules with actions. Given that the students may have been using Ted's Listening Rules for a while already, we would like you to advance the work on the Listening Rules by:

- asking students why it is important to look, listen, sit still and be quiet
- encouraging students to look at you while you are talking but also to look at each other when they are talking
- thinking about situations other than the program sessions when the Listening Rules are important.

Additionally, revisit the Best Listener board. You could ask, *'Who was the Best Listener on ... day?'* Encourage good listening in this session by saying for example, *'Let's all try hard to be the Best Listener today,'* or *'Shall we ask Ted who was Best Listener today?'*

3.2.3 Letter sounds and phonological awareness

Part 2 of the Program is supplemented by a new section aimed at promoting letter-sound knowledge and phonological awareness. It is an extension of the Part 1 listening games, which incorporated ideas from *Letters and Sounds: Phase 1* (UK Department for Education and Skills, 2007). Box 3.2 gives you an overview of important terminology and teaching principles for teaching letter sounds and phonological awareness.