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METHODOLOGY FOR WORKING TO DEVELOP AUDITIVE PERCEPTION AND TEACH PRONUNCTION

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Annotation: This article highlights the work on developing auditory perception and teaching pronunciation, demonstrating that the development of residual hearing creates a sensory basis for the formation of speech perception and pronunciation skills based on auditory and visual perception, and that improving pronunciation skills largely contributes to speech perception through both auditory-visual and auditory-only methods.

Keywords: Pronunciation, residual hearing, conditioned movement, reflection, correction, non-speech sounds, speech signals, hearing distance.

Development of Auditory Perception and Speech Training

The work on developing auditory perception and teaching pronunciation is aimed at forming children's oral speech, that is, its perception and recall. The development of residual hearing ability expands the sensory basis for perceiving speech through hearing and vision, as well as for forming pronunciation skills. At the same time, improving pronunciation skills largely contributes to the perception of speech both through auditory-visual means and through hearing alone.

From this perspective, these two areas of teaching children with hearing impairments can be considered as an integrated whole. However, for the convenience of presenting the material, methodological recommendations are provided separately for the development of children's residual hearing abilities and for pronunciation training.

Development of auditory perception

The methodology of corrective work is described according to four main areas of instruction:

Developing a conditioned motor response to sound;

Familiarizing children with environmental sounds;

Teaching the auditory perception of non-speech and speech signals;

Teaching the auditory perception of speech material.

FORMING A CONDITIONED MOTOR RESPONSE TO SOUND

Work on the development of auditory perception in preschool children who are deaf or hard of hearing begins with teaching them to respond to the sound of non-speech and speech signals through a

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specific movement, for example, assembling a pyramid in response to a sound stimulus. These exercises are conducted without sound amplification devices.

The teacher seats the child in front of them (at a table or on the floor) at a distance of 0.5–1 meter. Pyramid rings (buttons, pegs, etc.) are placed in front of the child. The teacher places one ring (or a large button, etc.) near the child's hand, beats a drum several times, and guides the child's hand to place the ring onto the pyramid rod (or put the button into a box, etc.). This exercise continues until the child independently (without prompting) begins to place the pyramid ring on the rod or perform another action in response to the signal. This may require several sessions.

The teacher then stands behind the child (at a distance of 0.5 meters) and beats the drum several times. In response, the child assembles or disassembles the pyramid (or performs another similar action).

If the child stops responding while listening to the drum sound, it is necessary to beat the drum several more times so that the child can see and hear the strikes (while placing a pyramid ring in response or performing another action), and then the teacher should again stand behind the child. Once it is established that the child is hearing the drum sound through their ears, the teacher gradually moves farther away to determine the maximum distance at which the child still responds to the drum sound.

The same work is carried out with other sound-producing toys (such as a tambourine, accordion, etc.), but it begins at a closer distance of 15–20 cm from the child's ear. To maintain the child's interest, the didactic material should be varied. For example, when working with a drum, the child may assemble and disassemble different pyramids; when working with an accordion, the child may "load" buttons into a toy truck, and so on.

Alongside the development of a conditioned motor response to toy sounds, children are also taught to detect speech signals (syllable combinations and words).

The teacher sits next to the child at a table where there is a pyramid (or nesting doll) and mosaic pieces (pegs, etc.), and teaches the child to respond to speech sounds perceived through both hearing and vision. For this purpose, the teacher directs the child's attention to their lips, pronounces a syllable combination at conversational volume (for example, papapapa), and simultaneously guides the child's hand to place one ring onto the pyramid rod (or place one mosaic piece, etc.). The exercise continues until the child independently begins performing the action while the syllables are being pronounced.

Next, the teacher pronounces a syllable combination (for example, pupupupa) at conversational volume directly near the child's ear without using a screen. In this case, the stream of air from the speaker's breath serves as an additional cue. If the child does not respond to the sound, the teacher guides the child's hand to place a ring on the pyramid rod (or perform another action) while the sound is being produced. The exercise continues until the child begins to perform the action independently while the teacher pronounces the syllables.

Finally, the teacher pronounces the same syllables at conversational volume while using a screen, which may be the palm of the hand or a sheet of paper (rigid screens should not be used because children may not hear the voice behind them). At this stage, the child must respond to syllable combinations perceived only through hearing. In response, the child assembles and disassembles a pyramid, nesting doll, and similar objects.

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If the child ceases to respond to the syllable sounds when the airflow cue is removed, the teacher may slightly increase the loudness of the voice. Once a clear response to a louder voice has been established (which occurs in nearly all children), the volume should gradually be reduced to conversational level. As soon as the child develops a response to syllables pronounced near the auricle of the ear, the teacher gradually increases the distance by moving 5–10 cm farther away while continuing to use the screen.

If the child responds to conversational-level speech at a distance of 1 meter or more, the teacher should assess the child's ability to perceive whispered speech using the same methodology described above. In this case, syllables such as papapa and tututu are whispered near the child's ear behind the screen. If there is initially no response, the teacher again guides the child's hand to place a ring on the pyramid rod while pronouncing the syllables and later encourages the preschool child to perform the action independently.

In some hard-of-hearing children, responses to whispered speech may be observed not only at the ear itself but also at a certain distance from it.

This work is carried out during each individual session initially and then at least once a week during the first six months. Later, it is recommended to conduct such exercises at least once a month to encourage the child to respond to soft sounds. Usually, either a sound-producing toy or a syllable combination is used. The syllable combinations employed in these exercises should include low-frequency sounds such as pupupu and tutututu, medium-frequency sounds such as papapa and tatata, and high-frequency sounds such as sisisi and chichichi.

During each session, the teacher begins work at the maximum distance previously recorded for that child and gradually attempts to increase it. If the child does not respond to the toy sound (or whisper, or voice) at their maximum distance, the teacher gradually moves closer. Once the child responds at a shorter distance, the teacher returns to the initial maximum distance. In subsequent sessions, efforts are made to increase this distance further.

The following points should be kept in mind:

The teacher should play a musical instrument or pronounce syllable combinations (such as pupupu or papapa) at varying time intervals.

The teacher must ensure that the child cannot see their face through a mirror or any other reflective surface using peripheral vision.

The screen should not touch the child's ear; otherwise, the child may perceive vibrations.

The teacher should not immediately remove the screen covering the face and airflow after pronouncing syllables or playing a flute, drum, or other instrument. Likewise, the teacher should not look directly at the child immediately after producing the sound. Otherwise, the child may respond to visible actions rather than the sound itself.

The teacher should neither require nor expect the child to repeat the sounds. The child's task is simply to respond to the signal with a specific action. No words or sounds other than the target signals should be produced during the exercise.

After a conditioned motor response to toy sounds and speech without amplification devices has been established, the same exercises are conducted using individual hearing aids. In this case,

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children's ability to detect sounds increases significantly: they may perceive sounds from distances of 1.5–2 meters or more and hear toy sounds produced at distances of 2–3 meters or greater.

FAMILIARIZATION WITH ENVIRONMENTAL SOUNDS

The more meaningful and significant auditory information is for deaf and hard-of-hearing children, the more successfully they make use of their residual hearing. Special attention should be given to introducing preschool children to the sounds that surround them in the classroom, outdoors, and at home. They should be taught to respond to a variety of everyday sounds, such as knocking on a door, the noise of household appliances (vacuum cleaner, mixer, drill, etc.), the sound of a chair being moved, the noise of a falling object, traffic noises and signals, a ball bouncing against a wall, floor, or ground, the creaking of a swing, a dog barking, crying, laughter, coughing, sneezing, and similar sounds.

This work does not require special lessons; rather, it should be carried out throughout the day by all hearing adults who interact with the children. At the initial stage, the most important task is to be attentive and observe each child's reactions. With individual hearing aids (and sometimes even without them), children can hear many sounds. When they hear a sound, they may freeze, blink, or, less frequently, attempt to locate its source. If these auditory reactions are not reinforced, they gradually fade away, and children may eventually stop responding even to loud sounds, such as the crash of an object falling nearby. This indicates that work on developing auditory perception is being carried out formally and ineffectively.

The task of adults around the child is to show the child what has been heard. For example, if something falls, they should point to it and say, "Oh! It fell." If a vacuum cleaner is running, they should bring the child closer to it, switch it off so the sound disappears, and then turn it on again so the sound returns. If a car honks loudly outside, a baby cries in a stroller, or a dog barks, adults should draw the child's attention to these sounds, demonstrate them, repeat them, and encourage the child to imitate or "talk about" them.

The emotional response of a hearing adult to sounds is extremely important in developing these skills. When a sound occurs that the adult wants the child to notice, the adult should use their entire appearance, posture, facial expressions, and natural gestures to show that something has happened. They should direct the child's attention to the event and, if possible, reproduce the sound or show its result. For example, a cup has fallen and broken, or a door has slammed shut because someone has arrived. The child should also be taught to respond emotionally to sounds.

Gradually, children begin to listen to the sounds around them, enjoy familiar sounds, and become interested in new ones. Children with hearing ability have access to a wide range of sounds; the key is to make these sounds interesting and meaningful to them.

However, this alone is not enough. Children should also be purposefully introduced to sounds and taught to respond appropriately to them. For example, they can be taught to react to a knock on the door or a doorbell, as loud sounds are generally easier to perceive. This work is best carried out at home.

The child is intentionally brought near the door while someone knocks loudly from the other side. The child may show some reaction to the signal but will not yet understand what it means or how to respond. The mother asks, "Who is it?" and opens the door. At the doorstep stands the father holding a toy, or he greets the child with a hug and picks them up. By repeating this activity every day

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or every weekend, parents teach the child to respond to knocking or a doorbell. Eventually, the child begins to run joyfully toward the door on hearing the signal. If the child initially does not react to the knock, their hands can be placed on the door to feel the vibration, after which they are given another opportunity to hear the knock.

In a special preschool group, it is useful to have an album or display board containing objects or pictures representing the sounds the children have heard during the day or week in the classroom and outdoors. Maintaining such an album at home can also be beneficial. The child brings it to preschool, where the teacher or teacher of the deaf discusses with the children the sounds they heard at home. The children then attempt to reproduce those sounds in the classroom.

As preschool children grow older, they should be taught not only to respond appropriately to sounds but also to establish cause-and-effect relationships. For example:

Noise on the roof or in the yard means that an uncle is working.

Music coming from the hall means that an aunt is playing music.

Children's voices outside mean that children are out for a walk.

The creaking of a swing means that children are swinging.

The sound of running water in the kitchen means that the mother is washing dishes.

Such exercises should be carried out throughout the day, making use of both naturally occurring situations and situations deliberately created by adults. The effectiveness of teaching children to perceive environmental sounds depends largely on how actively adults support the child's interest in sounds and how enthusiastically they respond to every reaction the child shows, even if the reaction is incorrect.

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