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"LEARNING ON THE GO" Early Literacy Tips for Tots

We are surrounded by sounds – cars passing by, the hum of a computer, birds singing, the neighbor's dog barking, the heater kicking on, an airplane overhead – but as adults we've learned to filter these out. For young children, however, auditory discrimination - which is important for language development and later learning to read - must be learned. Here are some indoor and outdoor activities to do with your child. Inside: find some objects that make noise (toys, bells, keys, etc.), have your child close his eyes, listen and identify the sound. Or give him a small stick like an unsharpened pencil and tap on all kinds of things in the room to see what kind of sounds they make. Outside: take a "sound walk" together around your neighborhood or sit quietly in a park and see how many sounds you can list. This summer lie in the grass with your child eyes closed listening for sounds; later have your child draw what he heard. Helping your child become aware of sounds in his environment will sharpen his listening skills needed for appreciation of sounds in the spoken language.

Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing before they can actually read and write. For more information and activities check out www.bornlearning.org or contact Healthy Start Council at 728-KIDS or healthystart@parentingplace.net.