

# STRING TELEPHONE

DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different, and these are only suggested adaptations and activities. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this suggested play activity. Consult your pediatrician, physical therapist (PT), and/or occupational therapist (OT) first.

**STEM Concept(s):** Sound, Structure & Properties of Materials

Help your child recognize and understand how **sound** is produced and how it sounds using **different materials**. Sound waves are made by vibrations traveling through different mediums like air, water, and/or objects. Extend your child's learning by using different types of cups and strings.



## STEM IDEAS/WORDS

- Sound & sound waves
- Vibrations
- Properties of materials

## MATERIALS

- Cups (paper, plastic, safety-cut cans)
- String (different types, lengths, or widths)

## OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

- *What happens if we use a shorter/longer string?*
- *What happens if the string hangs loose/is pulled tight?*
- *What happens if we use different types of cups/string?*



# STRING TELEPHONE ADAPTATIONS

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## ENVIRONMENT

- Minimize distracting sounds and activities
- Put materials within reach
- Provide borders for the areas to stand when using the string telephone
- Make sure your child has a comfortable place to sit or stand during this activity

## MATERIALS

- Have child's assistive technology ready and available, including augmentative & alternative communication (AAC) device
- For children with physical disabilities with fine motor/grasping needs, consider using tools/assistive devices (e.g., grabber, reacher, Velcro strap, cups with handles)
- For children with hearing impairment, have the child hold the cup and ask what they feel when speaking into it
- Provide a variety of different cups (plastic, wood, metal, sizes) and strings (yarn, ribbon, rope)

## INSTRUCTION

- Use a variety of methods of communication (e.g., sign language, gestures) to meaningfully engage children
- Model and demonstrate how to interact with materials
- With a third person, make sure the child can experience and try both ends of the phone with support. Start close together and slowly move apart
- Use visual and verbal prompts when it is your child's turn to listen or make a sound.
- Allow longer waiting time for child to respond and/or process this activity



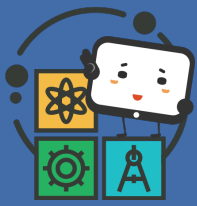
*Follow your child's lead and interests. Enthusiastically ask your child questions about what they are doing and what they like.*



*Answer your child's questions. If you do not know the answer, work together with your child to discover the answer.*



*Encourage your child to participate in the activity as much as possible. Praise your child's efforts and successes.*



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# ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

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- Hum a familiar tune, make a familiar animal sound, or say a familiar word through the phone to see if your child can recognize it. Then encourage your child to do the same while you listen.
- Find additional materials and explore whether sound will travel through those as well.
- Make a real phone call to a family member or friend and compare/contrast that experience to the string phone.
- Check out these great books about telephones:
  - *Telephone* by Mac Barnett
  - *Eva and the Impossible Tin Can Telephone* by Victoria Roth
  - *Making a Telephone* by Brooke Rowe

