

# HOME ECONOMICS GUIDE



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## Learning Is Child's Play

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# Sound Cans

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How many times have you missed hearing something because you simply weren't listening? Often our minds are on something else and we shut out what others say. Some of us have never really developed very good listening skills. But, the ability to listen is important and should be developed in young children.

An easy way to begin developing this ability is by playing sound games, games where children have to pay close attention to be able to tell if sounds are the same or if they are different. Children who are unable to do this have difficulty pronouncing words and understanding their meaning because so many words sound alike to them. These are the children who think "husks" are something on an elephant's head, etc. Poor listening skills may develop into reading problems when a child is old enough for reading instruction.

### Description

*Sound Cans* is a game that is played using small, capped metal or plastic film cans which have different objects or materials inside. You can also play this with empty plastic medicine containers that have been covered with contact paper or any small containers that look alike. It's important that these cans are not transparent so the children must match them by listening to the sound of the material inside.

Arrange the *Sound Cans* into two sets. Each set should contain one can filled with unpopped popcorn, elbow macaroni, sunflower seeds, straight pins, rice cereal, and thumb tacks. Any small object can be used, but you must make sure the two sets are identical (same type of filling, size, amount, etc.).



*Sound Cans*

### Purpose

The purpose of the toy is to teach children to listen closely to sound and be able to identify sounds as the same or different.

## Game I

Divide the sound cans into two equal sets (each set would contain one can holding a paper clip, one that was empty, etc.). Put one set of sound cans in front of the children and one set in front of you. Most children will be curious and want to shake the cans and open them to see what is inside. It's fine to let them play with and shake the cans but it's best if the lids are difficult to remove. Otherwise, the children may become distracted from the game's objective of matching sounds by absorbing themselves in discovering what's inside each can.

When you're ready to begin the game pick up one of your cans and shake it. Invite the children to shake it and then find the can in their set that makes the same sound. If they choose the wrong can, shake both cans again and tell them, "Your can does not make the same sound as mine. See if you can find the can that makes the same sound."

To make the game harder change the materials inside the can. Different sized dried beans, for example, would be a real challenge to many preschoolers. If the game

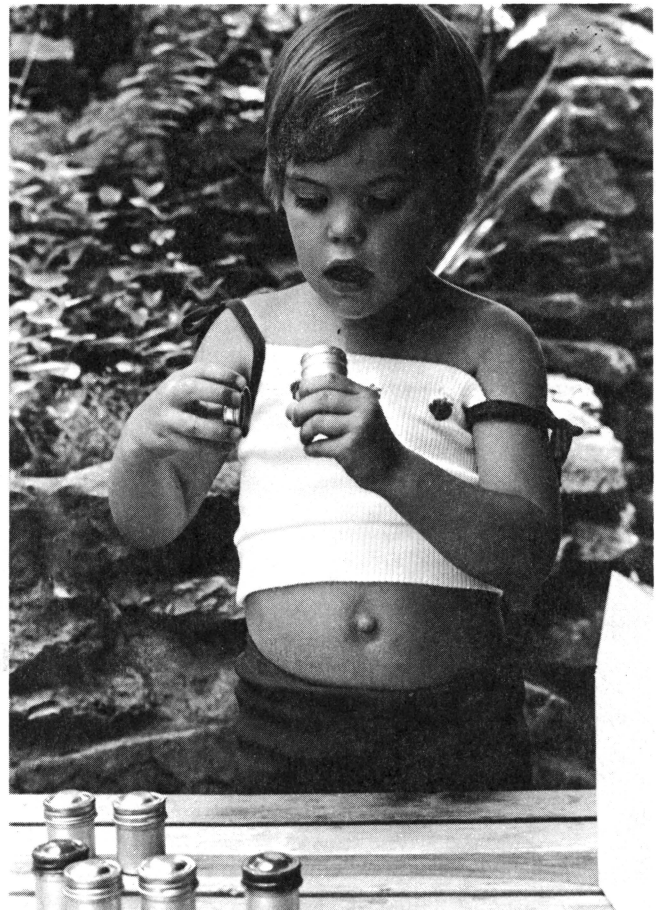
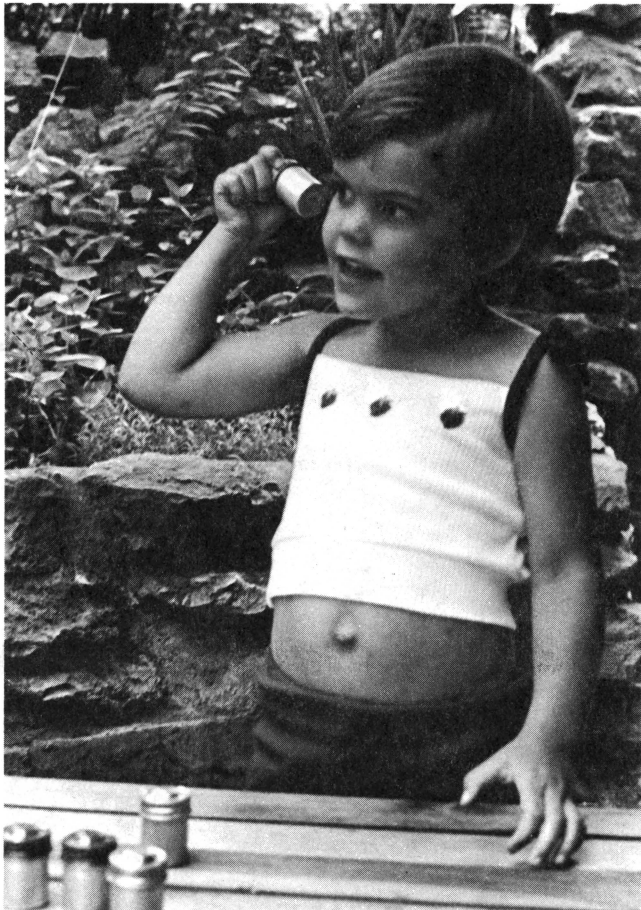
seems too difficult go back to sounds that are easier to identify. For example, see if the children can identify or match animal sounds, bells, a door slamming, or water running.

In addition to *Sound Cans*, try playing a game sitting quietly for a short time and listening carefully for as many sounds as possible. Ask your children questions about what they heard and let them question you.

## Summary

Careful listening is an important skill to develop. An easy task to begin developing listening skills is identification of common sounds such as a door slamming, a dog barking, etc. Toys like the *Sound Cans* help a child develop the difficult skill of identifying sounds as the same or different.

Sounds carry messages, and listening is an important way of learning about the environment. Listening games are fun and help children become more aware of the messages about their surroundings that sound brings them.



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