

28. Silent Speaker

Read my lips!



Themes	Discrimination, Health, Participation
Level of complexity	Level 2
Age	8–13 years
Duration	45 minutes
Group size	6-21 children
Type of activity	Role play, guessing game
Overview	Children read an article of the CRC without making a sound; their team members try to identify the article by lip reading.
Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the difficulties people with hearing disability • To understand the skill of lip-reading and the conditions that favour it • To review articles of the CRC • To understand the need for positive discrimination
Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare cards with selected articles of the CRC for each child. Each card should have the name and number of the article and its child-friendly text. • Cut a box to make a frame like a TV screen for the speaker, or use an existing puppet theatre. • Copy the child-friendly CRC for every child.
Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cards with CRC articles • Copies of the child-friendly CRC • Some kind of frame for the speaker • Bag or basket to hold CRC cards

Instructions

1. Explain that this activity needs a scorekeeper and ask for a volunteer to play this role. Divide the remaining children into teams of three or four. Give each child a copy of the child-friendly CRC. Review the CRC with them to ensure that everyone is familiar with the document.
2. Explain the activity:
 - a. One child from each team will be a 'silent speaker'. The scorekeeper lets that child take a CRC card. The 'silent speaker' then stands in the frame and reads the article, starting with the number and name of the article and continuing to read the whole text without stopping by moving his or her lips but not making a sound. Members of the speaker's team will try to guess which article it is by lip-reading what the 'silent speaker' is reading.
 - b. The scorekeeper writes down the score for each team at the end of every turn. Teams can earn the following points:
 - c. If a team understands both the name and text of the article, they get three points.
 - d. If a team can only guess the name/right of the article, they get one point.
 - e. If a team cannot guess the article by the time the reader has finished, they get no points.
3. Start the activity. When one member from each team has been the 'silent speaker', announce the first round's score. The team with the highest score in that round starts first. Continue until each child has had a turn to be the speaker.



Debriefing and Evaluation

1. Debrief the activity by asking questions such as these:
 - a. How did you feel trying to lip-read? Was it difficult? Was it fun? Was it tiring?
 - b. What conditions made lip-reading easier? More difficult?
 - c. What did you do as the silent reader to help others understand?
 - d. Were some people easier to understand than others?
 - e. Were some sounds or words easier to understand than others?
2. Put the activity in the context of hearing disability by asking questions such as these:
 - a. Some people in our community have to lip-read all the time. Who are they?
 - b. Do you know someone who has difficulty hearing?
 - c. Because of the position of your mouth when you make sounds, lip-reading only allows for about one third of the information you need to decode a message. What do you think it is like if you have to lip-read all the time? Would it be tiring? Would it be fun?
 - d. What are some everyday situations that would be especially difficult for people with hearing disabilities?
3. Put hearing disability into the context of human rights by asking question such as these:
 - a. What do people with hearing disabilities have in order to live and work safely and happily in our community? To participate in our community?
 - b. Do children with hearing disabilities have special needs? How are they met?
 - c. What are some ways in which our community helps people with hearing disabilities? With other disabilities?
 - d. What are some ways in which you could help a person with hearing disabilities?
 - e. Do people with disabilities have a right to have their needs met? Why?
 - f. Explain that Article 23 of the CRC clearly states that children with disabilities have a right to assistance to enjoy their human rights. How could a disability prevent children from enjoying their human rights? What are some kinds of assistance they might need?

Suggestions for follow-up

- The activity 'BLINDFOLDED', p. 67, deals with the special needs of people with visual disabilities.

Ideas for action

- The children can conduct a 'soundless survey' of their school and community to assess situations in which children with hearing disabilities would have particular trouble. They can then investigate what could be done to improve these situations.
- The children can learn that there are sign languages that are now recognized as real languages. Introduce them to the sign language used in their country.
- The children can help make materials for deaf children by imagining visual solutions for sound messages (e.g. starting a race use flags instead of a sound), finding cartoons or visual stories and by reading a text at the same time as an interpreter 'says' it in sign language. Check with your local Deaf Association for suggestions of other actions the children can take.

Tips for the facilitator

- This game should be adjusted to the children's age, reading skills and previous knowledge of human rights. If the children are not skilled readers or have not been introduced to human rights before, you



should simplify the game by asking them to read the names of the rights but not the full articles.

- Keep the emphasis on scorekeeping as low as possible as it may detract from the goal of the activity. Announce the score for a round only at the end of that round and allow the team with the highest score to go first in the next round. Avoid keeping a cumulative score for the activity, although you may get some pressure from the children to do so.
- To get used to the method of the game before starting, you could ask the children to practise by saying the name of another person in the group without making a sound and asking the others to guess which name is being said.
- Clarify whether miming and body gestures are allowed. Younger children may need these extra clues.

