

Silent Speaker

Read my lips!



Complexity



9-13 years



45 minutes



4-30



Discrimination



Health



Participation

Type of activity

Role-play, guessing game

Overview

Children read an article from the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) without making a sound; their team members try to identify the article by lip reading.

Objectives

- To understand the difficulties experienced by people with a hearing disability
- To understand the skill of lip-reading and the conditions that favour it
- To review the articles of the CRC

Preparation

- Copy a set of the CRC cards.
- Cut a box to make a frame to represent a TV screen or use an existing puppet theatre.
- Copy the child-friendly CRC for every child.

Materials

- Cards with CRC articles
- Copies of the child-friendly CRC
- Some kind of "TV frame" for the speakers
- A bag or basket to hold the CRC cards
- A bell or other sound to introduce the speakers

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 articles.
2. Explain the activity:
One child from each team will be a "silent speaker". The speaker takes a CRC card from the scorekeeper, and after the starting bell has rung, 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. However, the speaker should make no sound: s/he only moves his/her lips while reading the card. Members of the speaker's team have to try to guess which article is being read, by lip-reading the "silent speaker". The scorekeeper writes down the score for each team at the end of every turn. Teams can earn points in the following way:
 - If a team can give the name and text of the article before the "speaker" has finished, they get three points.
 - If the team can give an example of the right being violated, they get one point.
 - If the team has not guessed the article by the time the reader has finished, the reader's team gets a point.

3. Start the activity. When one member from each team has been the “silent speaker”, announce the score at the end of the first round. The team with the highest score in each round starts the next round. Continue until each child has had a turn to be the speaker.

Debriefing and Evaluation

1. Discuss the activity using questions such as:
 - Was it difficult to guess the article? Was it fun? Was it tiring?
 - Which was easier: reading the lips or being the silent speaker? Why?
 - Was there anything which made lip-reading easier? Were some people easier to understand? Why?
 - What did you do as the silent reader to help others understand?
2. Relate the activity to people who are hearing-impaired by asking questions such as these:
 - Some people in our community lip-read all the time. Who are they?
 - Do you know anyone who is hard of hearing or has a hearing impairment?
 - 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 would be like to have to lip-read all the time? Would it be tiring? Would it be fun?
 - What are some everyday situations that would be especially difficult for people with hearing disabilities?
 - Some people who are hearing-impaired prefer not to lip-read but use sign language to communicate instead. Why do you think this might be?
3. Relate hearing impairment to human rights by asking question such as these:
 - What are some of the ways that you could support a child who is hearing-impaired?
 - What are some of the ways that the school or community could support such a child?
 - Do people with disabilities have a right to have their needs met? Why?
 - Explain that Article 23 of the CRC clearly states that children with disabilities have a right to assistance to enjoy their human rights. How does society prevent children with disabilities from enjoying their human rights? What can we do to support children with disabilities to enjoy their rights?

Suggestions for follow-up

The activity ‘Blindfolded’ deals with the special needs of people who are blind or have a vision impairment.

Ideas for action

The children can conduct a “sound survey” of their school and community to identify places or activities where children who are hard of hearing or hearing-impaired are likely to 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 recognised as languages. Introduce them to the sign language used in their country. Charts illustrating finger spelling are widely available and provide children with a useful and interesting skill.

The children can help make materials for children who are hard of hearing or hearing-impaired by imagining visual solutions for sound messages (e.g. to start a race, flags could be used 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 for suggestions of other actions the children can do with a local association for people who are hard of hearing or hearing-impaired.

Tips for the facilitator

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

Do not overemphasise the scorekeeping: it might detract from the main objectives of the activity. Announce the score for each round 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, even though children may pressure you to do so.

To familiarise children with the method of the game before starting, you could ask them to practise by saying the name of another person in the group without making a sound and asking the others to guess whose name is being said.

Clarify whether miming and body gestures are allowed. Younger children may need these extra clues.

The facilitator can facilitate the activity and be the scorekeeper at the same time. All the children should take part in the activity.