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Shakers: The multi-purpose instrument and speech tool

In my speech therapy sessions with students, I use egg shakers probably more than anything. Children LOVE the sound of these eggs. They are fun and easy to play. You and your children can make many different sounds with them for all types of music and activities.

Here are some of the ways that I use these shakers.

1. Help your child learn the process of imitation and taking verbal and gestural turns. I shake these shakers in all different kinds of ways: up in the air, down low, on my head, on my feet. Use your imagination. I also send these shakers down long tubes such as gift wrap rolls and produce sound effects like "whee", "ready, set, go", and "sh" as they go down into a bucket at the end. I encourage the child to take a turn and do something with the shaker.
2. Help your child follow directions. I often sing a spontaneous song such as "I shake, shake, shake. I shake, shake, shake, and I STOP. Ready set go. I shake it on my head. Shake, shake, shake. I shake it on my feet. Shake, shake, shake." I continue to add body parts as the song continues. Let your child take the lead at times as you follow the directions.
3. Help your child with speech practice. The sound of an egg shaker lends itself to the /sh/ and /ch/ sounds. As you listen to the instrumental tracks on the Vocalocomotion CD or the Rocking and Talking CD, ad lib by producing these consonant sounds, encouraging your child to "jam" with you. You can also use the shaker as you produce other vowel sounds and consonant-vowel sounds, acting like you are the best rock and roll artist around. Getting lost in the moment of spontaneous song is one of the best ways to help a child become more verbal. To stimulate production of /sh/ and /ch/, you may want to try some of our Choo Choo Train songs. The songs, Express Train from Imitation Station and Booga Choo Choo from Vocalocomotion are perfect songs to use with the egg shakers. And don't forget about the song, Scrambled Eggs from our Conversation Station CD. Children can pretend to break the eggs, stir them in a bowl, and cook them as they sing the song.
4. The sound of these shakers can be soothing for softer music such as the Owie song on our Imitation Station CD, and can be exciting for more upbeat songs such as Go from our Conversation Station CD.

Shakers are very successful tools for me in my therapy sessions with young children. I have many of them, and I use them daily. Explore and you will find your own wonderful uses.