10 Rules of Listening in Young Learner Classes

1. Although listening is a receptive skill, the students are not and should not be passive while listening; in other words, they should be engaged and/or work in the listening task **actively.**

2. The students should be engaged with different listening tasks according to their age, learning style, listening capacity and phonological awareness.

3. The language teachers should **train** the students to listen to the English sounds carefully.

4. The teachers should train the young learners to follow **simple instructions** to get them ready to develop other language skills.

5. Different listening **tasks** should be addressed in class:
   - Listen & Do
   - Listen & Draw
   - Listen & Colour
   - Listen & Mime
   - Listen & Predict
   - Listen & Respond
   - Listen & Write (needs literacy)
   - Listen & Identify (may need literacy)
   - Listen & Match (may need literacy)
   - Listen & Complete (needs literacy)
   - Listen & Read (model for pronunciation)

6. The students should be given a different task **each time** they listen to the same text. (i.e.: First, listen to have a general idea; second listen to complete the blanks; third, listen to check your answers)

7. **Input** through tapes, videos or teacher modelling should be provided; the audio tools should be in good quality.

8. The teachers should be aware of the importance of **familiarity** (with the context, language, task, voice ...etc.), **difficulty** (what is expected as the output) and **teacher’s language** (repeating, simplifying, and using gestures, intonation and formulaic expressions that help children to figure out the intended meaning)

9. It is important to **embed** listening into stories, games, routines, rhymes, songs. They may not understand every word, but they can understand the meaning from the context, visuals, and gestures as in real life.

10. Both **bottom-up** (requiring linguistic knowledge) and **top-down** (requiring world knowledge) listening should be addressed.
10 Rules of Speaking in Young Learner Classes

1. Although it is a productive skill, the children may not feel ready to produce oral language, so teachers and parents should be **patient**.

2. Short practice activities can help students build productive language to use in discourse. Speaking starts with practicing drills, set phrases (junks and formulaic expressions), repeating models, so it is important to use such activities to make them familiar with **repetitive** language. However, the language should be used meaningfully in the classroom, not just in isolated chunks.

3. Children need **experience** of a range of discourse types to increase their skills, so the tasks designed for in-class use should be varied.

4. The teachers should take into account the **developmental stages** in L1, those in L2, and students’ **age** to design the speaking activities.

5. **Correcting** each and every mistake is discouraging and they need help to acquire fluency. Before the speaking, we may teach them the **necessary language** and the vocabulary items to prepare them for the tasks.

6. Designing **authentic** activities, such as role-plays and dialogues based on real life conversations, motivates the students, so they willingly take the role of an imaginary person. However, the meaning and purpose of discourse needs to be made comprehensible to the learners.

7. The teachers should be aware of the **problems** young learners may have while articulating phonemes. It is important not to ignore the pronunciation, intonation and stress: Using tongue twisters, mirrors, imitating native speakers in movies can be some of the useful activities.

8. Speaking is not an individual skill; they need to be encouraged to **practice in pairs** and in groups.

9. A good speaking activity should **involve all** students not some of them.

10. When the class is **noisy** in a speaking activity, trying to shout over children is not a good idea: Using the lights, symbols or music may help.

Adapted from: