



Parent Manual

Safe and Sound Protocol: A Portal to Social Engagement™

Navigating the Sony Walkman and Using the Safe and Sound Protocol (SSP)

Note:

The player comes with a partial charge. Please fully charge the player before using the Safe and Sound Protocol (SSP).

Set up:

Connect the headphones to the player by inserting the 3.5 mm jack into the bottom of the device.

Power:

Press and hold the OPTION/PWR button

Navigation:

Press the BACK button until you see 6 icons, this is the “Home Screen”. Use the direction buttons to navigate to the Playlists icon (bottom middle). Choose the appropriate program and press the center Play/Pause to select. Press Play/Pause to begin the music.

Volume:

Before the session each day, use the Daily Volume Test Track to set the volume level. The volume control is on the right edge of the player. The suggested volume for someone with normal hearing is 70db; this level is attained at the volume setting of 23 on your player. If that sounds too low or too high, you may adjust the volume, but only to a level that is comfortable. The volume should not be adjusted again that day even during points when the music will seem very soft. Once you set a comfortable volume, you are ready to begin.

Each day's hour-long session has one playlist with two 30-minute parts. You should complete both parts (a and b) on the same day. If a break is necessary, the optimal time is between the a and b parts. If you don't take a break, part b will begin right after part a.

Play/Pause:

When the music is paused, the Play/Pause button will appear in the top left corner of the screen.

Screen Lock:

Slide the small switch on the right edge of the device to **Hold**. This will prevent the user from ending or switching the current session.

To turn the player off:

1. Pause the music (pause icon will show)
2. Press and hold the **OPTION/PWR** button until **POWER OFF** appears. Your player is now off.

If you forget to turn the player off, it will go into a **HOLD** mode to conserve the battery.

Tech Support:

Call Integrated Listening Systems (iLs) for questions regarding operation of the unit.

iLs Tech Support: 303-399-4183
service@integratedlistening.com
8am-5pm Mountain Time
2821 S. Parker Road, Suite 065
Aurora, CO 80014 USA
www.integratedlistening.com

Administering the SSP with Your Child

The Safe and Sound Protocol is designed to work with a person's nervous system. When the child feels safe, calm and relaxed his/her nervous system will be receptive to new acoustic stimuli within the frequency band of human communication and this will maximize the effectiveness of the intervention. While feeling safe, calm, and relaxed may be difficult for many children, you can help by attempting to create this calming environment for the intervention administration.

Quiet location: By maintaining a quiet location, the child will be able to (1) feel safer and relax without worrying about distracting noises; and, (2) focus on listening to the intervention. As the sound level of the music fluctuates through the intervention, at times it will seem very quiet to the child, and a quiet environment will help them pay attention to all parts of the intervention. Keep in mind that children with sound sensitivity may be bothered by everyday noises that otherwise go unnoticed by others. All sounds should be minimized as much as possible, including human voice, outside and inside of the room where you are administering the program.

Outside the room: Ensure there will be no distracting noises outside of the room that could be heard in the room. Examples include people talking outside the door, lawn maintenance, telephone ringing, loud air conditioner, etc. Try to create a quiet zone outside the room to help keep the outside noise level at a minimum.

Inside the room: Create a comfortable space to conduct the program. Soft chairs and soft (non-fluorescent) lighting can create a calm environment and help the child feel comfortable. Please make sure that all cell phones are silenced and that video games are not accessible to the listener. Be quiet, and, if possible, refrain from speaking. Also, please limit interruptions during the program by reducing the number of

entries/exits while you are administering the program.

Family: The child should feel comfortable with the person administering the program. Only one person is needed to stay with the child. Young siblings should not be permitted in the intervention room, since they may create a distraction for the child during the intervention. The atmosphere should be pleasant, friendly and encouraging to the child.

Instructions for Proctoring the SSP

The role of a parent or caregiver in the proctoring of the Safe and Sound Protocol is to: (1) communicate expectations to the child on his/her level, (2) help the child feel safe and comfortable during the intervention, and, (3) ensure the intervention is delivered correctly.

Before the SSP begins: Talking with your child about what to expect.

- A. Depending on the child, an explanation along these lines should suffice:

“You are going to be listening to some music that is going to help your ears and your brain listen better. You will be listening to music for about an hour per day, for 5 days in a row. The music may sound a little funny to you; and, sometimes, it will sound very quiet. All that we need you to do is listen to the music. If it sounds too quiet, keep listening and it will get louder. We do not want you to adjust the volume.

While you are listening to the music, try not to talk or sing along. If you need something, let me know quietly, and I will pause the music. However, I would like you to listen to the whole program without breaks, if you can. While you are listening to the music, you can play quiet games (like cards or coloring or doing puzzles or play with Legos or kinetic sand - any quiet activity you have available).

You may not have your phone while you listen for the next hour (if applicable).

(Depending on age): When you finish the music program for today, I want you to tell me if you recognize any of the songs, and which songs are your favorites.” (This will give the child a reason to attend to the music.)

- B. Make sure the child has taken all breaks necessary (restroom, water, etc.) before you begin.
- C. If you are working with a younger child, encourage them to select an activity BEFORE you begin the music.
- D. Make sure that the child is not hungry and offer a snack before starting.

During the SSP: Help your child feel safe and comfortable by following these steps:

- A. Be helpful, friendly, and smile! Thumbs-up encouragement and other non-verbal communication are encouraged.
- B. Know the child’s boundaries and respect his/her social space. If he/she is not comfortable when you sit next to him/her, simply move to a more comfortable distance. You do not need to be actively involved with the child during the intervention. However, if you see them becoming bored or restless during the intervention, you can try to engage them in a joint activity (cards, puzzles, Legos, etc.).
- C. The child is welcome to hug, sit in your lap, communicate non-verbally, write notes, etc. We want the child to feel comfortable to maximize the effectiveness of the intervention.
- D. Many individuals feel comforted when eating or drinking, so the child is welcome to drink or eat soft foods during the intervention (no crunchy foods). Goldfish crackers, portable yogurt, string cheese are generally good snacks. Beware that sugary snacks and caffeinated beverages may cause hyperactivity during the intervention, which could interfere with the child’s ability to sit

quietly and listen to the music.

- E. A note about cell phones, videos, video games. Due to the cognitive dissonance that can occur with any of these items (i.e., focusing on the video so much that the individual “tunes out” everything else – including the intervention!), we discourage use of these items during the intervention, even if the sound is muted. Be available to them; you don’t want to miss the opportunity to return a smile or gesture they may initiate.

During the SSP: Ensure the intervention is delivered correctly.

- A. Monitor the child at all times. Make sure he/she does not interfere with the music device (adjusting volume, skipping tracks, removing headphones, etc.).
- B. Ensure the child maintains an appropriate behavioral state. Please discourage excessive movement (running or dancing to music). Increased activity can move the nervous system out of feeling “safe” and reduce the effectiveness of the intervention. Walking around the room is acceptable. Puzzles, coloring, looking through picture books, playing with PlayDoh, etc. are all appropriate activities to do while listening. Try to find a time in the day where the child’s energy is at an appropriate level.
- C. If the child insists on a break from the music, please pause the music and allow a break to occur. Try to minimize the number of breaks and keep the duration shorter than 10 minutes. The ideal time for a break is between the “a” and “b” segments of any given day.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does the SSP need to be 5 consecutive days, or can we skip a day?

The intervention is tailored to the functioning of the middle ear muscles. Listening during the intervention may fatigue the middle ear muscles, and the child may appear to be exhausted. Be attentive to these potential changes in behavioral state. If you feel you must skip a day for the child to reorder, simply resume where you left off.

What if the child becomes ill, and misses two or more days of the intervention?

If the child misses two or more days of intervention, wait until the child is healthy, then re-start the intervention sequence from the beginning.

Does the SSP need to be scheduled for the same time each day?

No. You can schedule the intervention at different times on each day. The goal is to select a time of day when the child is alert, and a schedule that works for both the child and the professional.

My child does not like to wear headphones. Can the SSP be administered via speakers instead?

No. Due to the filtering of the music, the SSP needs to be administered via headphones with ear cups. For individuals who do not wear headphones, ask the child/parents to practice using headphones at home prior to the intervention. Have the child select a few favorite songs to listen to via headphones each day.

Can my child use earbuds instead of headphones?

No. The filtered music is difficult to hear at different times during each session. The volume will appear to decrease and increase as the different frequencies of music are removed and re-added. Furthermore, the ear-cup on the headphone helps to block out environmental noise to help the child attend better to the music.

My child refuses to complete the intervention. What can I do?

If the child becomes overwhelmed or feels anxious, pause the music and give the child a 5-10 minute break to walk around, use restrooms, get a drink of water, etc. If the child feels pain, stop the session. For these children, you should cautiously wait until the pain subsides. If a child is pain free, perhaps in a day or two, restart the SSP using short sessions (i.e. 10-30 minutes).

If the child is having a “bad day”, ask the child what can be done to make the situation better, and then try again. If all else fails (and positive reinforcement doesn’t work), try to reschedule the intervention (see the first two questions above).

What if the child seems tired or over-stimulated?

The intervention involves five days of one hour of listening per day. Most people can accommodate this length, but if they seem to need a break, by all means, do take one. Signs of needing a break are: looking bored, fussing, whining, posture shifts indicating lack of interest. If you notice these, pause the music, offer a snack, get them to move their body, take a bathroom break and then start the listening again. The best time to take a break is between the “a” and “b” segments within each day’s playlist (at the half-hour mark). If necessary, the two half-hour sessions can be done separately in a single day with more than just a few minutes break separating them. It’s best to take your cues from the child as to what they can accept.

I'm interested in using the SSP myself. Can I use the SSP while my child is not using it?

We do not recommend anyone over the age of 13 doing the SSP without the supervision of a trained therapist.

Looking For and Supporting Changes in Your Child after the SSP

The SSP is a portal to the Social Engagement System, and it can have powerful impacts on how your child interacts with you and the world. Resulting new behaviors reflect an increased sense of safety in the world, yet they are fragile and can be disrupted if not recognized and responded to in a positive manner. Essentially, the SSP is opening the system for greater engagement. What comes after the SSP can cement and extend the gains. It is the repeated and consistent responses from the people around your child that will enhance their new sense of safety and reinforce the new behavior.

The following guide can help you and the other people in your child's life know what to look for and how to support your child.

a. Look: Your child may now be making more eye contact with you, family, friends and teachers. Eye contact is a sign that your child is feeling safe and receptive to social behavior. Eye contact should not be forced or bribed, but when you see it, respond with a smile and encouragement. When children attempt eye contact that is not reciprocated, they may stop trying or feel like the other person does not want to engage. Reciprocal eye contact and smiles will help the child identify other "safe" people that are part of a "safe" environment where the child can relax and be friendly and loving.

b. Listen: Your child may now start understanding speech better. You may not have to repeat yourself when you ask the child a question or ask them to do something. Your child may stop complaining about loud noises or stop covering their ears when loud noises occur. By completing the SSP, your child's ear muscles are now better able to "ignore" loud noises, and allow them to focus on speech instead.

c. Regulate: Your child may now have better emotional control and

expression. Meltdowns and outbursts are typically a sign of dysregulation, or uncontrollable feelings. Meltdowns can occur for a lot of reasons, some of which are addressed by the SSP. For example, if a child has a temper tantrum because he/she wants to leave the park NOW, but feels like the parent is not listening to him/her because parent does not leave the park NOW, these feelings may be calmed now that the child can make eye contact with parent, and listen to parent, and feel like he/she is part of a reciprocal conversation about when it is time to leave the park. When your child does experience a tantrum, try to keep a calm demeanor – soothing voice, eye contact. After the intervention, the child will be more responsive to social cues and will be learning how to control temper by watching you!

d. Play: Your child may now have better play behaviors with other children. Play involves reciprocal interactions, and communication between the players is eased by eye contact and listening to each other. For now, take a more active role in playdates or sibling play so you can support the interaction and talk to your child afterward about what you noticed.

e. Love: Your child may now be more expressive of love to other people, including more smiles and hugs. Do your best to reciprocate those behaviors when they occur! This will be easy. Be aware, though, of the child's personal space; unwanted hugs (or hugs from unfamiliar people) can make child feel defensive instead of relaxed.

f. Additional Support: The SSP is only one way to help your child improve looking, listening and regulation. Other ways you can continue to help your child include:

- playing woodwind instruments (exercises breathing control and ear muscles)
- singing alone or in a choir (exercises breathing control and ear muscles)
- yoga (exercises breathing, posture and self-control)

- meditation (exercises breathing, posture and self-control)

g. Support: Keep maintaining a safe and pleasant environment for your child. Things that parents find comforting may not be the same things the child finds comforting, so talk to your child about what things help him/her feel relaxed. Some ideas: soothing environments, vocal music, gentle lighting, soft surroundings and fabrics, pleasant fragrances, and avoiding loud or abrupt noises.

h. Working with Your Child's Therapist: The SSP is designed to work with treatment, not to replace it. By providing a means for children to feel calmer and be more socially engaging, it will allow the therapist/clinician to better engage your child in intervention, and will help your child to respond better.