Letter Span

Backward Span task

Notes. Read aloud each letter monotonically at a rate of one letter per second.

ABC Phase

(Take out ABC card) Welcome to the letter game! For this game, let us first say some letters. Here I have letters point to each letter as you say it) A, B, and C. Can you say these letters? Point to each letter as the child says it.

(Take out the arrow and place it below the letters facing right) Very good! When we say the letters like this, we are saying them FORWARDS (trace the arrow with your pointer finger from left to right, then remove arrow).

Now can you say the letters starting with C? (point to C, B, A as they say it).

Take out the arrow and place it below the letters facing left and say, Very good! When we say the letters like this, we are saying them BACKWARDS (trace the arrow with your pointer finger from right to left).

Card Items

Practice 1

Take out the A, E card and arrow and place it below the letters facing left. Now let’s try saying letters BACKWARDS with two letters. Pointing to each of the letters, say, Can you say A, E, backwards? Then trace the arrow from right to left and wait for child to respond.

IF CORRECT- Very good! Continue to practice 2.  
IF INCORRECT- Nice try. A, E backwards is E, A. Let’s try again. Pointing to each of the letters, say, Can you say A, E, backwards? Then trace the arrow from right to left and wait for child to respond.

IF STILL INCORRECT- Nice try. A, E backwards is E, A. Let’s try again. Pointing to each of the letters, say, Can you say A, E, backwards? Then trace the arrow from right to left and wait for child to respond. Continue regardless of child’s answer.

Practice 2

Now let's try with another set of letters. (Take out the Q, B card and arrow and place it below the letters facing left). Pointing to each of the letters, say, Can you say Q, B BACKWARDS?

CORRECT - Very good! Continue to Practice 3.  
INCORRECT- Nice try. Q, B backwards is B, Q. Let’s try again. Pointing to each of the letters, say, Can you say Q, B, backwards? Then trace the arrow from right to left and wait for child to respond.  
STILL INCORRECT- Nice try. Q, B backwards is B, Q. Let’s try again. Pointing to each of the letters, say, Can you say Q, B, backwards? Then trace the arrow from right to left and wait for child to respond. Provide feedback (correct or incorrect). Continue regardless of child’s answer.
Now you are not going to see the letters. Listen carefully and say the letters BACKWARDS.

Non-Card Items

Practice 3:
“A – K”
- **CORRECT**: If the child response correctly (K – A), say: Very good! Now let’s try with other letters. Listen carefully and say the letters BACKWARDS. Proceed to Practice 2.
- **INCORRECT**: Nice try, A – K backwards is K – A. Let’s try it one more time. Listen carefully and say the letters BACKWARDS. What is A – K BACKWARDS?
- **STILL INCORRECT**: Nice try, A – K backwards is K – A. Let’s try it one more time. Listen carefully and say the letters BACKWARDS. What is A – K BACKWARDS?
  Wait for child to respond. Provide feedback (correct or incorrect). Continue regardless of child’s answer. Provide feedback (correct or incorrect). Continue regardless of child’s answer.

Practice 4:
“C – J”
- **CORRECT**: If the child response correctly (J – C), say: Very good! Now let’s try with other letters. Listen carefully and say the letters BACKWARDS. Proceed to Trial 1.
- **INCORRECT**: Nice try, C – J backwards is J – C. Let’s try it one more time. Listen carefully and say the letters BACKWARDS. What is C – J BACKWARDS?
- **STILL INCORRECT**: Nice try, C – J backwards is J – C. Let’s try it one more time. Listen carefully and say the letters BACKWARDS. What is C – J BACKWARDS? Provide feedback (correct or incorrect). Continue regardless of child’s answer. Provide feedback (correct or incorrect). Continue regardless of child’s answer.

Introduce the 2 span, say **Let’s try some more.**
Introduce the 3 span, say **Now you are going to have to remember 3 letters.**
Introduce the following spans by saying, **Now you are going to have to remember ## letters**

**Notes.** Be sure to write down their response in the “response” column (next to the letters to be read)!
Read the letters clearly at a rate of 1 per second.
Do NOT give feedback. If a child wants to know how they’re doing, just tell them they’re doing “fine,” and be generally supportive.

Scoring: 0 or 1pt for each response. Item score = trial 1 + trial 2.
Stop rule: when 0 on both trials of any item. Do not give help or feedback.