



Attention and Listening

Why is attention and listening important?

It has an effect on all areas of learning; if a child has difficulties listening and paying attention, they will be unable to process information they are given.

How does attention and listening help language development?

It forms the basis of understanding; if a child has difficulties listening and paying attention, they will be unable to understand what is said to them. A child must learn to listen to the spoken language in order to understand and use words and sentences.

What can I do to help?

- Gain **eye contact** with the child before giving them an instruction
- Get down to the **child's level**
- Say the child's **name** to gain their attention
- **Slow down** your rate of speech and use pauses
- **Minimise noise** and visual distractions
- Use **gestures** and **objects** as cues to gain the child's attention and help them to understand
- Use **simple** sentences; break down instructions into smaller parts
- Use **class rules** such as good looking / good listening / good sitting / good waiting and **praise** children when they remember and follow the rules
- Set **time limits** for children to complete tasks; use a timer of some sort to help the children be visually aware of the progress of time e.g. sand/egg timer
- **Use start/finish boxes** to extend the amount of time the child can sit and attend to an adult led task; use of boxes/baskets helps the child visually see what they are expected to do before a reward e.g. a sticker/free play



What activities can I use to help?

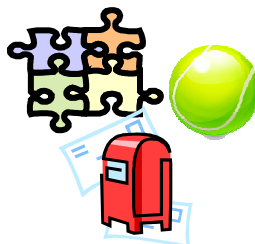
Ready steady go games - encourage the child to sit and wait for 'go' before they do an activity:

- Roll a ball/car between you and your child
- Build a tower of bricks or stacking cups together and knock it over
- Your child pinches the end of an inflated balloon and waits for "go" before they let go of the balloon
- Play with a click clack track/garage - the child waits for "go" before sending the car down the chute/track
- Use shakers or drums - the child waits for you to say "go" before they can play the instrument
- The child waits for you to say "go" before they can run to pop the bubbles



Turn taking games - sit in a circle and take turns to play simple, motivational games:

- Add a brick to a tower
- Put a piece in a jigsaw
- Post pictures in a post-box
- Roll a ball to each other
- Lotto
- Feely bag





Action Songs and stories - encourage the child to sit in a group and join in with songs or stories. Pause before the ends of sentences and wait for the child to fill in the gaps:

- “the wheels on the(bus)”
- “we’re going on a(bear hunt)”



Sound games:

- Listening walks - Listen to the sounds around the nursery school and talk about the different sounds that you can hear. Make a list or a drawing of all the sounds the child can remember e.g. children talking, water splashing, door shutting, aeroplane, birds etc
- Music games - Play musical statues or musical bumps and when the music stops the child has to do an action e.g. clap hands, stamp feet etc
- Sound lotto - The child listens to the sounds and puts a counter on the matching picture