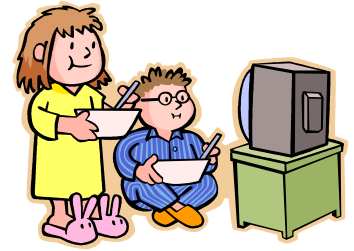


Top Tips for supporting listening and attention skills



These strategies can be used to support the listening and attention skills of all children. They are, however, particularly useful with children with immature listening and attention skills.

Minimise distractions - listening involves the ability to filter out distractions, it may help to remove distractions such as toys or displays from the area where you want the child to listen

Use a name call - If the child is busy doing something, try calling their name before talking to them or giving them an instruction.

Keep your language simple – encourage listening and attention by simplifying what you say. Try ‘chunking’ longer sentences into a series of shorter sentences.

Use your voice and facial expression to keep their interest in activities -Speak in a lively animated voice to make your words sound more interesting. Use lots of interesting sounds, like “Pop!” or “Whoosh!”, to get the child’s attention.

Get down to their level - When talking to the child try and get down to their level so you’re face to face with them. This helps them to know that you are talking to them and allows them to see your face.



Encourage turn-taking - Increasing a child’s ability to take turns at a very simple level, e.g. taking it in turns to put a brick on a tower, will have a positive impact on their listening.

Sit the child who finds it tricky to listen opposite you – This will allow the child to gain maximum benefit from visual and non-verbal clues and will also enable you to monitor their listening and attention levels more closely.

Use visual clues – Using pictures and props alongside spoken language supports listening and attention. Children's listening and attention skills are therefore supported by visual attention.



Encourage participation – Listening is often viewed as a passive activity where children have to keep still. Encouraging and allowing them to join in with gestures, props and movement will help them to listen and maintain their attention for longer.

Repeat, repeat, repeat – Young children thrive on repetition. Repetition of stories, rhymes and activities is even more beneficial for children with delayed listening and attention.

Reduce group size – Children learn to listen during one-to-one situations and then in groups of gradually increasing size. Some children take much longer to cope with group activities than others. Reducing the group size will have a positive impact on listening and attention levels.

Use musical instruments - Musical instruments are a great way of getting a child's attention. Try shaking a tambourine or banging a drum to encourage the child to stop what they are doing and to listen. Encourage the child to copy you.



Activities

1. The Shopping Game

You will need:

pretend food,

a basket or shopping bag

How to play:

- Lay out the food on the table to make a shop
- Ask the child to buy specific items from the shop
- **Step UP** - increase the number of items you ask for
- **Step DOWN** - ask for a single item from the shop

2. Listening to Sounds

You will need:

two sets instruments, a screen or barrier (a book or box is fine)



How to play:

- Play an instrument or bang an object behind a screen
- Ask the child to copy it
- **Step UP** - increase the number of instruments you play
- **Step DOWN** – offer fewer instruments

3. Stop and Go Games

You will need:

any action toy that is motivating or exciting, eg bubbles, car ramp, ball, 'push and go' toy

How to play:

- Hold the toy or activity and show it to the child
- Before doing the action say 'ready, steady..... go'
- **Step UP** - increase the waiting time for 'go'
- **Step DOWN** – say 'go' before the child loses attention

4. The Washing Game

You will need:

pretend washing line, pegs, a range of clothes



How to play:

- Ask the child to hang items on the washing line
- **Step UP** - increase the number of items you ask for
- **Step DOWN** - ask for a single item