

Help Sheet

0 – 25 Specialist Teaching And Support Service

How to support a child to develop listening and attention skills.



Why?

- This is to support a child to develop listening and attention skills.
- Listening and attention skills enable a child to communicate, interact, play and learn.
- Attention skills will support a child to understand the meaning of words, gestures and visual cues.

How to support listening and attention.

- Adapt the environment. Try to reduce visual distractions and noise level.
- Gain the child's attention by saying their name first, if necessary accompanied by a light touch.
- Get down to their eye level.
- Reduce language and keep instructions short e.g. "Yasmin drink" or "Yasmin coat".
- Remember to pause to give the child time to process what has been said.
- If you feel they didn't fully attend to your instruction, after giving them time, carefully get their attention again, and repeat the instruction.
- Some children find it very difficult to process and understand which word is the key word instruction, e.g. "Yasmin will you please go and find your coat" is better reduced to "Yasmin coat".
- Use gestures/makaton, and be animated to gain and keep the child's attention.
- Try varying the tone of your voice.

Things to note:

It may be necessary to seek support from a health professional if you suspect the child has a hearing impairment or loss.

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Reference / Evidence base – informed by:

Cooper, Moody and Reynell (1978)