

Attention and listening

Attention and listening skills are key to communication and interaction.
We need to gain a child's attention before they can listen.



Good attention and listening skills mean that a child will be more engaged, have increased concentration, be better at co-operating in a task and be able to take turns in conversation.

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TOP TIPS

- Remember the impact of noise and distractions in the child's environment.
- Gain the child's attention before talking to them; use their name; look for eye contact; be sure they are listening.
- Get down to the child's level so they can look at you or the game or book you're sharing.
- Give the child time to process information.
- Be an interesting speaker- vary your pitch and voice.
- Keep it interesting and fun - children learn by seeing, doing and touching.

More information

You can try these games and activities to promote attention and listening skills:

- Peek-a-boo
- Action songs and rhymes e.g. row your boat
- Ready, steady, go games
- Responding to noises: make noises with rattles, keys, instruments, then see if your child turns to the noise
- Building towers then taking turns to knock them over
- Taking turns completing jigsaws, posting items
- 'Simon Says'...
- Lotto, snap and pairs games
- Sharing story books
- Musical statues, musical chairs, pass the parcel

You can use visuals such as gestures, photos and objects to reinforce what you are saying. This can help to support the child's attention, and also their understanding of language.

