

HOW CAN WE HELP?



Supporting the Development of Attention and Listening Skills

Attention and listening skills are the foundation to children's speech and language development. Carrying out simple strategies to support their attention can make a big difference.

- Turn off background noise (e.g. TV, radio, music) where possible to reduce distraction and support the child to focus.
- Reduce distractions in the environment. Try to only have one toy/ activity out at a time to help the child focus.
- Use positive prompts, for example 'good sitting,' 'good listening' etc. Use these verbal cues to both praise when the child is carrying out these behaviours and prompt when they are not.
- Gain the child's attention, by calling their name before instructions are given.
- Keep activities short with regular breaks to complete a favoured/reward activity.
- Use visual objects such as objects, picture, gestures and facial expressions to accompany your spoken language to engage their attention for longer.
- Use motivating activities, between structured activities in order to expand levels of concentration.
- Use the child's interests to facilitate engagement and attention in tasks
- Give a clear idea of the length of a task using a sand timer/time timer
- Use 'finished' after each activity to reinforce structure.
- Be positive and specific about desired behaviours (e.g. 'good waiting and hands down' rather than 'don't snatch the toy')

Here are some practical play activities to trial to support the child's attention and listening skills.

- Pop-up animals
- Rings on a stick
- Inset puzzle
- Threading
- Switch toys
- Bubbles
- Snap beads
- Stacking beakers

If you require any further support/advice please contact via the following email

Walsall.slt@nhs.net

In the subject line please state **FAO the Virtual School Speech and Language Therapy Support team** to ensure your message is actioned by the relevant team.