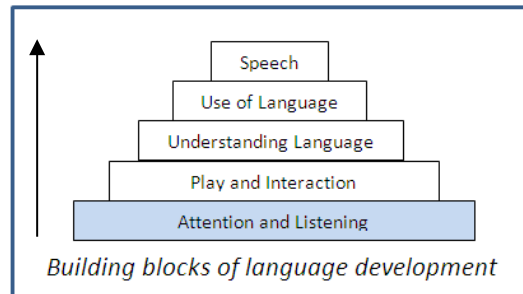


# Attention and Listening



Children need to be able to listen and pay attention to sounds and language used around them before they are able to talk.

Many young children have a short span of attention, and those with communication difficulties may have particular problems with concentration.

Your child may need help in learning to listen and concentrate so that their speech and language skills can develop.



## Top Tips for developing attention and listening

- ✓ Reduce background noise as much as possible – children find it difficult to ignore background noise like TV, radio, traffic noise. They will find it easier to listen and concentrate in a quiet setting, so turn off the TV, radio and even close windows when you're playing together.
- ✓ Reduce distractions in the room – put other toys away (e.g. in boxes), so there are only 2 or 3 to choose from.
- ✓ Make use of the time when you are alone with your child (5-10 minutes is enough) to play together when there are no other children needing your attention.
- ✓ Be face to face with your child, at the same level, opposite and close together.
- ✓ Make sure your child is looking and listening to you before speaking to them: if necessary hold their hand or call their name to attract their attention.

## Attention and Listening Activities

Here are some activities you might like to try to develop attention and listening skills:

- ✓ Sit together in a quiet room and **talk about the sounds you can hear** around you (e.g. cars on the road, a dog barking, birds singing).
- ✓ Find a **noisy toy** or object (e.g. a loudly ticking clock) and hide it around the room. Encourage the child to find the noisy object.
- ✓ **Jack-in-the-box** - All crouch down and spring up when you hear a drum bang/ clap etc.
- ✓ Musical Bumps/ Statues - Play music and children must sit down/ **stand still when the music stops**.
- ✓ You will need some musical instruments/ noisemakers for this activity (2x of each type). Use one instrument/ shaker behind a screen. Can your child come and **find the one that matches?**
- ✓ **Sing action songs** like these, for younger children: 'Wheels on the Bus', 'Heads and Shoulders', 'Wind the bobbin up', 'Here we go round the mulberry bush', 'Incy Wincey spider', 'Two little dicky birds' etc.
- ✓ Collect two identical sets of farm animal toys. Hide one of the animals under a box and imitate the noise it makes. Encourage the child to **listen and find the animal** that makes the same noise then check if it matches the animal under the box.
- ✓ Hide two or three objects, letting your child watch you as you do it. See if they can go and **find each object** as you ask for it.

