

Helping children with attention and listening difficulties

There are lots of different ways parents, carers and other familiar adults can help and support a child's attention and listening skills. These ideas can be used every day and during play activities. They can be used at home or in nursery/school.

Say your child's **name** to get their attention, then give them an instruction (tell them what to do).

Keep instructions **short** and **simple**. Give each instruction **step by step**, pausing between each step.

Ask your child's teacher to sit them near the front of the class and away from anything that may **distract** them.

Ask the teacher to give your child **short breaks** from the classroom.

Remind the teacher your child may need a **stimuli-free** workstation (one that has few displays around it).

This could be giving them a job so they are active in a controlled way, such as taking a message to another class.

Provide your child with **real learning experiences**.

This will give your child the chance to see, touch, hold, smell, taste or hear new things.

Give your child specific **reminders** about the task they are doing, such as, 'finish your math worksheet now'.

The reminders could also be written down, for example, on a small whiteboard.

Tell your child what they **should** be doing rather than what they should not be doing.

For example, say 'Walk, please' instead of 'Don't run'.

Ask your child to **say aloud** what is happening next.

Give your child **rules** for good listening, such as:

- Sitting still
- Looking at the person talking
- Staying quiet
- Listening to all the words.

Your child will also benefit from **visual supports**, such as: visual timetables, now and next boards, and reward charts.

Please see the alternative advice sheets for information on this.

Please call the Speech and Language Therapy department on  **01925 946 686** if you have any questions.