

Attention and Listening Skills

Children's Speech and Language Therapy
Acute and Community AHPs

Introduction

This leaflet is produced for parents who may have concerns about their child's attention and listening skills. We hope you find this information useful. If you require further information, please telephone us on 01902 444363.

Attention and listening skills

Attention and listening skills support the development of learning to talk. Children have to learn to focus their attention - first with people and then objects (physical items such as toys). Then they learn to share their attention with people and to focus on objects and events. In this way they learn how to listen.

Typical levels of attention and listening development

Level 1 Typical age 0-1 year	Children at this level are distractable. Their attention moves quickly between objects, people and events. Any new item or activity will distract them.
Level 2 Typical age 1-2 years	Children can concentrate on a task of their own choosing. They will block out any verbal and visual distractions to concentrate on what they are doing. Attention is single focussed.
Level 3 Typical age 2-3 years	Attention remains single focussed but they can shift their attention with adult support. For example, they will look up in response to a spoken instruction but will stop engaging in the activity.
Level 4 Typical age 3-4 years	Children will still need to alternate their attention between the task and the distraction. They are now able to do this without an adult needing to help them to refocus their attention.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

Level 5 Typical age 4-5 years	Attention is now 'two channelled'. Children follow verbal distractions without interrupting their activity to look at the speaker. Their concentration span may still be a short, but they do tend to focus within a group.
Level 6 Typical age 5-6 years	Attention levels are established and attention can be sustained throughout tasks. Children can begin to shut out verbal and visual distractions that are not relevant to them and concentrate on essential aspects.

Strategies to develop attention

- When engaging in tasks, try to reduce distractions. Turn off the TV, background music and remove other toys so that your child can pay attention
- Follow their lead and their interests. Join in with what they like to do
- Keep the child's interest by using toys in different ways, e.g. rolling a ball and bouncing a ball. This will help to keep their attention
- Keep activities short and move to another activity when the child loses interest
- Keep your child's interest by using different tones of voice and facial expressions
- Use pauses in play to encourage anticipation. For example, in ready, steady games, pause before saying 'go'
- Bring items to eye level, to encourage eye contact
- Call the child's name before giving them an instruction

Further information to support your child can be found in these leaflets:

- Receptive Language
- Expressive Language
- Speech Sounds
- Social Communication Skills

All are available from the website.

How do I get in touch?

Speech and Language Therapy Service

The Gem Centre
Neachells Lane
Wednesfield
Wolverhampton
WV11 3PG

Telephone: 01902 444363

E-mail: rwh-tr.Speech-And-Language@nhs.net

Website: <https://www.royalwolverhampton.nhs.uk/services/service-directory-a-z/speech-and-language-therapy/>

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。