

ACTIVITIES TO HELP YOUR CHILD'S ATTENTION AND LISTENING SKILLS

Children need opportunities to look and listen. A good attention span is needed for developing language, for learning, for joining in and for taking turns. It takes time to learn attention and listening skills.

REMEMBER, TRY TO ALWAYS:

- Praise your child
- Encourage them to look at you
- Check they are listening before you speak
- Show them how to look and listen
- Be patient

EVERYDAY ACTIVITIES:

Encourage turn taking during everyday routines, such as:

- 1) On the slide and swings at the park
- 2) When playing pat-a-cake
- 3) Stirring cake mixture
- 4) Sorting the washing
- 5) Putting away the shopping

SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES:

DURING ACTIVITIES REMEMBER:

- To turn off the TV
- To try and find a space to play one to one with your child
- To make sure there are no other distractions in the room: put other toys away and give any other children a safe activity to do in another room
- To focus on your child's success, however small
- Use "my turn", "your turn" when taking turns
- If your child doesn't want to take turns, let them have two turns for every one that you take
- Initially your child may only be able to manage taking a few turns of a game before losing interest
- If your child doesn't co-operate, encourage them to take one more turn of the game and then stop and try again later

1) Swapping objects

For example: Rolling a ball back and forth. Sit opposite the child and say "my turn" and then roll them the ball. Then say "your turn" and wait for child to roll the ball back. You may need to show your child what to do first

2) Building towers

Build a tower together, each taking it in turns to put on the next brick. You can ensure your child takes turns by handing them a brick when it is their go

3) Puzzles

Complete a puzzle together. Try putting the puzzle pieces into a small cloth bag and hand the bag to the child when it is their turn. This will stop them grabbing pieces and completing the puzzle quickly

4) Bubbles

Take it in turns to try and blow bubbles. Sit opposite the child and say “my turn” and then blow a bubble. Then say “your turn” and let your child try and blow a bubble.

5) Feely box

Put some interesting objects in a box. Open the lid and encourage the child to put their hand inside and feel it. Take the object out and name it for the child. Play with the object.

6) Matching and Sorting

Put two items in front of your child (you can add more later) then hold up a matching item and ask your child to find one the same
Try sorting things into groups e.g. all socks together, all spoons together, all toy cars together

7) Let your child choose a favoured game or activity

To start with play it for a short time remembering the points above
Each day make the time spent playing together a little bit longer

WHAT TO DO NEXT

Choose some more activities or games:

- Play each for a longer time
- Try playing two, one after the other
- Build up the amount of time you spend playing them
- Invite one other person to join in

REMEMBER:

- The aim is to increase the time, the range of activities and the number of people who join in
- Try to do a little every day
- Make it part of your daily routine
- Try to keep it fun

Children’s Speech and Language Therapy

0121 722 8010

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