

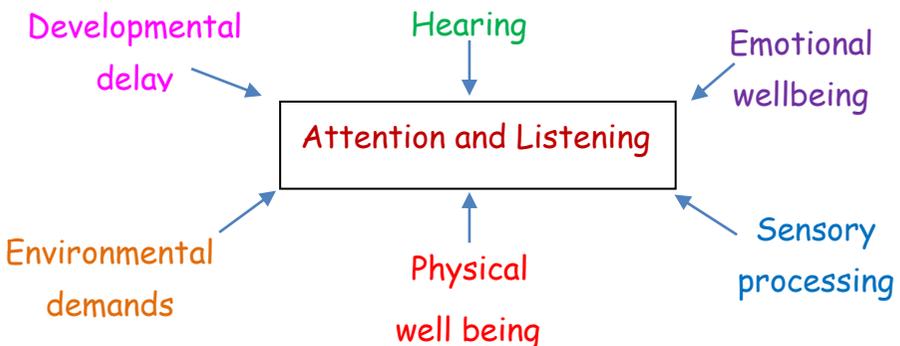
ATTENTION AND LISTENING DIFFICULTIES



**PRACTICAL
STRATEGIES TO
HELP AT HOME**

Attention and listening skills describe the ability to focus and maintain attention on what is heard or on a chosen task or activity. In developing attention and listening skills children typically move through several stages. Initially attention will be fleeting. By approximately 6 years children should have integrated attention and be able to attend to more than one thing at a time.

Several factors may affect this development:



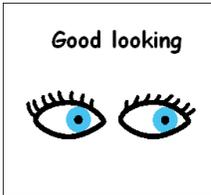
Children with difficulties with attention and listening may:

- be very fidgety, or find it difficult to stay still
- be easily distracted by things going on elsewhere in the room
- be quiet and withdrawn and be 'in their own world'
- have difficulty following instructions and answering questions

Strategies to help at home

You can help children with attention and listening difficulties by:

- talking about the rules of "Good Listening"



- being specific when praising your child, e.g. 'that's lovely sitting, well done!'.
- using your child's name to gain their attention before giving them an instruction.
- reducing background noise and distractions or providing a quiet area to work e.g. for home works
- keeping instructions short and repeating if needed
- checking your child has listened and has understood your instructions by asking 'what do you have to do now?'.
- encouraging your child throughout tasks to help refocus their attention.
- creating a structured environment with lots of routine



Activities to develop attention and listening

- Ready, steady, go games: Give your child a car to place at the top of a track. Your child has to wait until you say 'Go!' before they let go of the car.
- Simon Says: Give simple instructions, e.g. 'Simon says touch your nose' or give more complex instructions, e.g. 'Simon says clap three times then touch the leg of the chair'
- Kim's game: Gather a tray of items, e.g. keys, hairbrush etc. Show your child the objects and explain you're going to take one away. They have to work out which item is missing.
- Musical statues
- 'Which instrument?': Collect 2 sets of matching instruments and divide them by a barrier, e.g. folder. Take it in turns to go behind the barrier and make a noise with one of the instruments. The other person has to then copy that sound using their instruments. This game can be made more difficult by making it a sequence of sounds.

