

## Attention & Listening

Attention and listening skills are very important for children to be able to make sense of words they hear and to respond to others.

Children have to learn to pay attention first to people, then to objects, then to people **and** objects. Children need to develop good attention and listening so they can learn new skills including how to use language successfully.

Children may **hear** what you say but not really **listen** to it – they need to think about what has been said, and with practice, begin to make sense of it.

**Note** Listening skills are different from being able to **hear** sounds. If you have any concerns about your child's hearing, please speak to your Health Visitor or GP.

Age	Minimum Expectations for Child
<b>2</b>	Responds to environmental noise and familiar voices.
<b>2 ½</b>	Enjoys listening to a short story. Still needs help to shift attention.
<b>3-4 years</b>	Concentrates on activity of own choice for 10-15 minutes.
<b>4-5 years</b>	Listens to instructions given to a whole group. Attention span may still be short.
<b>6 years</b>	Listens and respond to a series of instructions.
<b>9 years</b>	Concentrates and focuses on a task even with distractions.

## Here are 5 'top tips' to help

**Note** Children learn best from real experiences and interaction with others. Make sure you give your child lots of chances to play and talk without screens switched on e.g. TV, phones, and tablets

<b>1</b>	Help your child listen more by reducing background noise made by people talking, TV, radio etc as much as possible. This ensures you have their full attention.
<b>2</b>	Use your child's name to get their attention.
<b>3</b>	Encourage your child to stop what they are doing before giving instructions and keep your instructions short and simple.
<b>4</b>	Have fun listening together. Try going on a 'listening walk' and see how many sounds your child can hear e.g. dog barking, puddles splashing etc.
<b>5</b>	Singing simple action songs are a great way of getting your child's attention e.g. row the boat, the wheels on the bus.

