

Communication and Language	
Ideas/Strategies to support the development of Listening and Attention	
Age	Typical behaviour
Birth to 11 months	<p>Turns towards a familiar sound then locates range of sounds with accuracy Turn off distracting noises then carry the baby around the environment listening for noises- find and name any noises you can hear ‘ I can hear...’ Make the noise yourself ‘I can hear the clock ticking –tick, tick, tick’ If the little one is startled by a noise name the noise and describe how he might feel ‘Oh, it’s the phone. What a surprise’ If the noise stops comment on that ‘Oh! It’s stopped’ If the environment is particularly quiet, comment on that too When the child is in a comfortable position- on your knee, in a baby seat and engaged in listening to you talking to him/ watching your face, have another adult make a sound using a favourite ‘noisy’ toy behind the child’s back and see if he will turn round to find it. Vary this by activating the toy in other parts of the room</p> <p>Listens to, distinguishes and responds to intonations and sounds of voices. Talk to the child about what you are doing while carrying out the care routine cares, and vary the pitch and volume of your voice</p> <p>Reacts in interactions with others by smiling, looking or moving Wait for baby to smile then smile back Copy any noises they make and take turns with these</p> <p>Looks intently at a person talking, but stops responding if speaker turns away. Quietens or alerts to the sound of speech. Have a ‘conversation ‘with the little one, respond to their facial expressions, body movement etc., and then after a little while turn away. The little one will stop (momentarily at least) before trying to regain your attention. Delay looking at or responding at all to the little one for a short while (but not until they become distressed) and then begin talking to them and looking at them again.</p> <p>Listens to familiar sounds, words or finger play Support the little one with cushions or sit them facing you on your lap, and sing and do actions for action songs/ rhymes- <i>This little piggy, Round and round the garden</i> are good songs for this age- but sing whatever you prefer.</p> <p>Fleeting attention- not under child’s control, new stimuli take whole attention Use what the baby is interested in. Playing with the same object in different ways can help to develop attention span Adding surprise to games will help add enjoyment and interest e.g. hiding things or wrapping them in paper Don’t continue with something the child has lost interest in; wait a while before introducing another toy</p> <p><i>It is important to face the child when doing everyday activities, so you</i></p>

<p>22 to 36 months</p>	<p>Listens with interest to the noises adults make when they read stories Make the stories sound interesting even if the child doesn't understand every word. Use plenty of intonation when reading aloud; vary the pitch of your voice and vary your facial expressions</p> <p>Recognises and responds to many familiar sounds e.g. turning to a knock on the door, looking at or going to the door Very simple sound lotto games Quiet times to listen to the sound around them Go on a listening walk around the setting/ environment Keep background noises to a minimum e.g. Use music to signal certain activities but don't leave it playing constantly</p> <p>Shows an interest in play with sounds, songs and rhymes Vary the speed, volume and pitch when singing familiar songs and rhymes. Use words that rhyme or sound similar in conversation occasionally e.g. 'home on the bus, the rusty bus', 'Here comes Nana; is it Nana Anna?'</p> <p>Single channelled attention. Can shift to a different task if attention fully obtained- Using child's name helps them to shift the focus of attention Call child's name, say 'look', 'listen', but don't give the instruction until you have established eye contact. Keep instruction short and simple; the instructions will need to relate to the task child is involved in If the child doesn't respond to calling his name, do NOT keep calling it- the more you call a child's name the less likely they are to respond; gently touch the child on his arm or hand to act as a physical alert, getting close to the child and down at the child's level, to make it easier to gain eye contact.</p>
<p>30 to 50 months</p>	<p>Listens to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them. When involved in a small group activity, talk about what each child in the group is doing but allow time for each child to respond/imitate before you say the next comment. Don't ask questions or expect a response. It's fine to be repetitive. E.g. 'Frankie, You're digging a big hole in the sand. Chloe, you're digging a big hole in the sand too' Use lively intonation, keep it light-hearted</p> <p>Listens to stories with increasing attention and recall Tell well known stories over and over, pausing for child to join in at key moments. Ask child to say what happens next in a familiar story- prompt if necessary; no answer is wrong- it's important to give positive feedback to encourage child to remain engaged.</p> <p>Joins in with repeated refrains and anticipates key events and phrases in rhymes and stories Changing the expected word or rhyme to a different one occasionally will attract attention e.g. 'Bear Hunt' story and change 'we're going to catch a small one'; we can't go over it, we can't go under it, we'll have to fly'</p> <p>Focussing attention- still listen OR do, but can shift own attention Is able to follow directions (if not intently focussed on own choice of activity) It is still important to check you have the child's attention before giving them directions. Alert the child by making a comment e.g. 'that's good'</p>

	<p>then maybe suggest a way they could modify the task. Give the child time to refocus his attention before giving instructions.</p>
<p>40 to 60+ months</p>	<p>Maintains attention, concentrates and sits quietly during appropriate activity When the child can concentrate for short periods 1:1, introduce another adult to the activity; later on another child can be included in the activity. The next step is to work in a small group; it may be necessary to scaffold attention initially as attention will not be as good as in 1:1 situations. Two channelled attention- can listen AND do for a short span Slowly teach child to carry on doing what they are doing whilst listening to what you say- initially this might just be that you alert him with a comment, and if he stops what he is doing you encourage him to stick with what he's doing, then give him a very simple instruction to follow. Suitable activities include Jigsaws, colouring, play-dough, symbolic play with small world toys, construction games, sorting activities, etc. In a small group play musical chairs/ bumps – use cushions on the floor</p> <p>Use short sentences with simple grammar and vocabulary which is easy to understand. Stress important (key) words; use objects/pictures/gestures to make it easier to understand and remember DON'T MAKE THEM WAIT: If you make the children wait too long before carrying out the instruction, they will forget, so let them carry out instructions straight away</p>

NB: ANY CONCERNS ABOUT A CHILD'S HEARING REFER THEM TO AUDIOLOGY FOR A HEARING TEST (use Physical Health Request for Assessment Form)