

Parent Guide



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What is this resource and how do I use it?

This guide is aimed at parents to help you to develop your child's listening and attention skills at home. In this helpful parent guide, you will find some useful tips and information, as well as suggested activities that can help to develop listening and attention skills.

What is the focus of this resource?

Speech and Language

Communication

Parent Guide

Further Ideas and Suggestions

For more support for parents, check out our parent guides to [year 1 English](#) or [year 2 English](#) or this [KS1 Spelling, Grammar and Punctuation Terminology for Parents](#). You may also like our [Parent Guide to Speech, Language and Communication in Key Stage One](#).

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A Parent Guide to Developing Listening and Attention Skills at Home

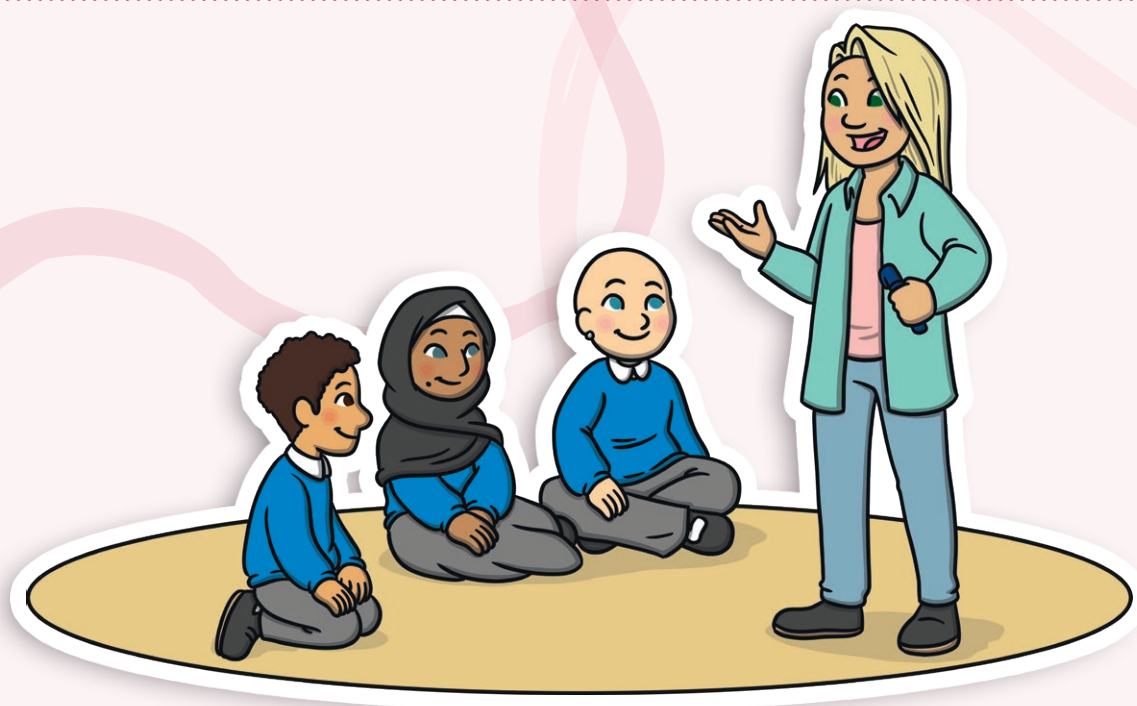


Why are attention and listening skills so important?

Attention and listening skills are the foundation of all learning. We learn by watching and listening, therefore it is crucial that we develop the skills to use our eyes and/or ears to maintain attention and focus. This plays an important role in many different areas of learning, including speech and language development.

Attention and listening skills are fundamental for being able to understand and learn how to speak.

If you have any concerns or questions regarding your child's attention, listening or hearing skills, you can address this with your child's teacher and/or doctor to allow any appropriate assessments or tests to be carried out.



How can I develop my child's listening and attention skills at home?

Attention and listening are two separate skills but they often come hand-in-hand. We have devised a list of activities which may help with listening, attention or both!



Play games

Games where children have to listen to the instructions can help with both listening and attention skills. For example, 'Simon Says' is a great example as children have to listen carefully to the instructions and pay careful attention to whether the speaker says 'Simon Says'. Playing games also adds an incentive for listening as there is a competitive element. Other games that you can play include:

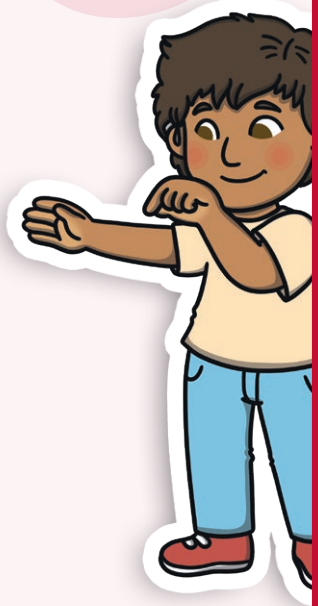
I Spy

What's in the box?

21 Questions

Charades

Musical Chairs



Audiobooks and Podcasts

Did you know that you can get audiobooks and podcasts for children? This is a great way to encourage them to listen. You could even make a little 'listening station' in your house in a quiet space where they can listen out loud or with some headphones.



Story Time

Story time is a great way to develop active listening skills. Read your child a story and ask them questions throughout to ensure that they are listening and paying attention. This also helps your child to develop important comprehension skills.

Questions to ask:

What do you think is going to happen?

What do you think will happen next?

Who is your favourite character?

What was the main event?

Who was the good/bad character in the story?

Why did...?



Following Instructions

Why not follow some craft instructions or bake a cake? This way, your child will need to pay attention and listen carefully to the instructions. If you choose to bake a cake, they will need to make sure that they listen very carefully to the instructions so that you use the correct ingredients so the cake rises! You can encourage them to ask if they need you to repeat the instructions.





Go on a Listening Walk

Listening walks are great for developing your child's sense of hearing. You could go for a walk and encourage them to think about what they can hear. Why not give them a piece of paper and get them to write or draw a picture of everything they hear? Alternatively, you could take them out into the garden and get them to close their eyes and describe what they can hear.

Keep it engaging!

Just like adults, children can get bored if they are not engaged so try to keep them motivated by talking about topics that they enjoy! If you are reading them a story, try to keep them engaged by using intonation in your voice or using different voices for different characters – this can also help with their understanding.



One Instruction at a Time

Children learn to listen to and follow one instruction at a time, before they build up to more complex ones. If you are worried that your child is not listening or following instructions, think about what you are asking them to do – is it too complicated? Try to give one instruction at a time and then build up to two or more.

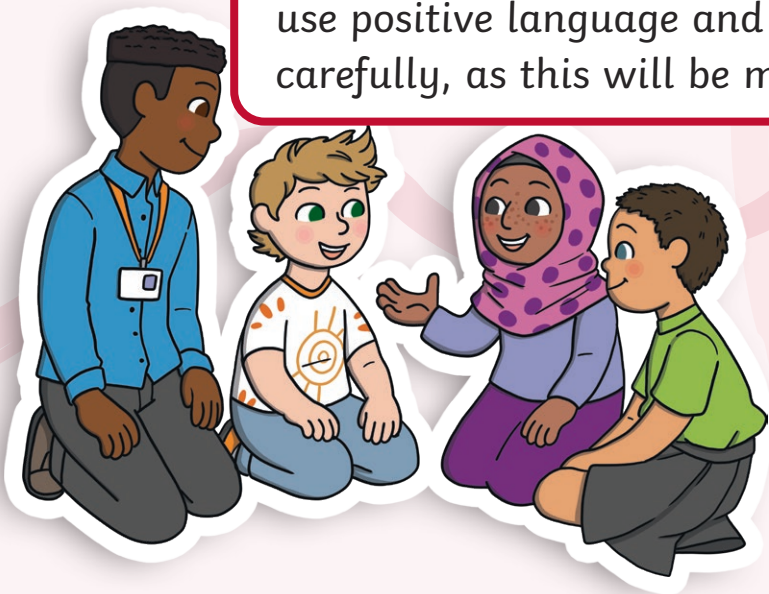
Check In with Your Child

If you think your child is not listening or they are not following instructions, ask, 'Did you hear me?' or 'Do you understand me?' to check that they have heard and understood correctly.



Be Patient

Remember that listening and attention are both skills that we continue to develop as we get older – even into adulthood. Children have a much shorter attention span than adults so they can only focus for short periods of time and if they are tired, they will struggle to maintain focus or listening skills. Don't get mad or frustrated as this won't help and it will only deter them. Instead, meet them with kindness and use positive language and praise when they do try to listen carefully, as this will be much more motivating.

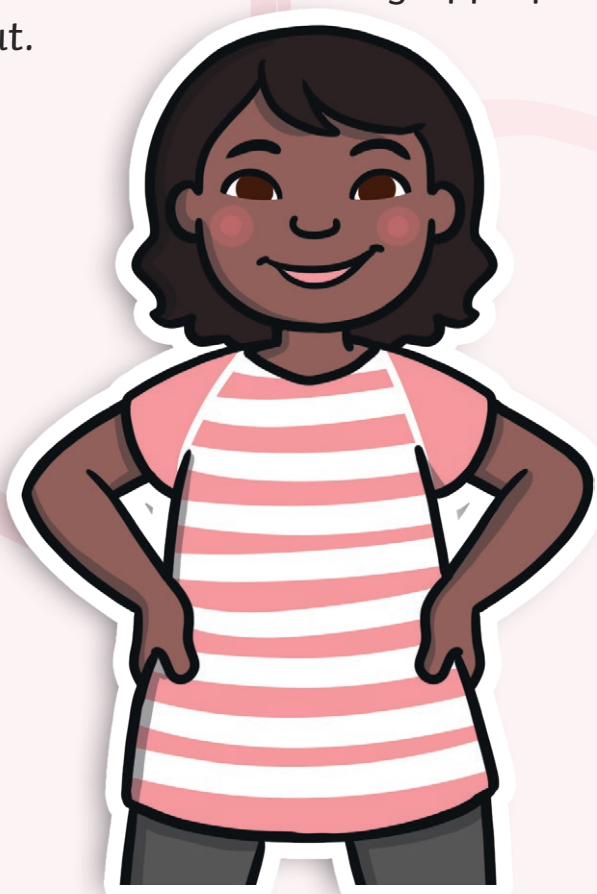


Indications That There May Be Attention or Listening Difficulties

Your child may:

- struggle to listen in a noisy environment;
- have difficulty following verbal instructions;
- become easily distracted during listening activities;
- struggle to follow who is talking in a group setting;
- have delayed responses to instructions/questions;
- frequently ask for you to repeat instructions or questions;
- misunderstand what has been said.

Remember, if you have any concerns or questions regarding your child's attention, listening or hearing skills, you can address this with your child's teacher and/or doctor to allow any appropriate assessments or tests to be carried out.



We hope you find the information on our website and resources useful. As far as possible, the contents of this resource are reflective of current professional research. However, please be aware that every child is different and information can quickly become out of date. The information given here is intended for general guidance purposes only and may not apply to your specific situation.