

# SEND Bulletin NO. 16

## Listening and Attention



Listening is the ability to attend to sounds across a range of stimuli.

Attention is the ability to listen carefully and sustain concentration. Pupils with listening and attention difficulties have one of two problems. Either they cannot screen out what is unimportant from what they hear and so listen to everything, or they may not be very skilful at controlling attention and thereby miss large chunks of information.

Children with difficulties in this area may:

- have problems with hearing (make little response to environmental sounds)
- be easily distracted by noise and movement
- tend to daydream and be in a world of their own
- find it hard to focus on one activity at a time
- find it hard to follow instructions - this makes learning and socialising difficult
- often make mistakes because of an inability to attend to detail
- have poor organisational and self-help skills (getting dressed, finding tools for a task)
- avoid tasks that require sustained attention
- be unable to concentrate during tasks involving turn-taking
- have constant movement of hands and feet
- have kinaesthetic strengths and learn better through using concrete materials and practical experiences
- have visual strengths and enjoy learning through using visual materials (charts, maps, DVDs, demonstrations).

### Activities to develop listening and attention skills

#### Listen and do

Follow specific instructions to complete an activity.

#### Sound walk

Listen carefully to sounds; draw 'sound maps', paint or compose poetry related to sounds heard.

**Simon says**

The familiar game - listen carefully to specific instructions, then do the actions.

**Shared reading**

Use the interactive whiteboard to focus attention on both visual and written cues.

**Circle time**

A variety of listening activities (the person who is speaking can hold an object to indicate that everyone else must listen).

**Listening centre activities**

These may include stories, information, poems, rhymes, jokes, jingles, etc. Discuss details of the texts.

**Who am I?**

Miming activities that can be related to topic/subject (story characters, historical figures, occupations, etc.).

**Parachute activities**

Listen carefully to instructions as part of a team game or activity.

**Chinese whispers**

Pass an action message round the circle; the last child to receive the message must perform the action.

**Messages**

Recall verbal messages containing one or two elements,  
a) requiring a yes or no reply; b) requiring a simple sentence reply.

**20 questions**

Pupils ask 20 questions (yes/no answers only) to find the identity of a hidden object.

**Hot-seating**

One pupil plays a familiar story character, or famous/historical character and sits in the hot-seat; other pupils ask questions to discover the identity of the character.

If you have any particular items you would like information on or any interesting information or resources which you would like to share with your colleagues via this fortnightly bulletin please e-mail them to me:

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Many thanks

Anne