



Attention and Listening: What to expect and when

| Age Range | Stage | Examples of what the child may be doing and suggestions of what to do |
|-----------|---|---|
| 0-1 years | Fleeting attention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Easily distracted Able to look at where another person points Establishing eye contact (few seconds) | ⇒ Child will only attend to activities that they like for a short amount of time. ⇒ Try to establish 'joint attention' - try to draw the child's attention to something interesting so that you are looking at it together. |
| 1-2 years | Rigid attention <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responds appropriately to familiar sounds/auditory cues can concentrate on task of own choosing (cannot tolerate adult intervention) Establishing eye contact Imitate adult actions Spontaneously look for hidden objects | ⇒ Try saying the child's name to get their attention and then 'rewarding' them e.g. giving them a toy to play with. ⇒ Play copying games—you copy what the child does, then encourage them to copy you e.g. make a sound, clap your hands. ⇒ Hide objects under a blanket/behind something and the child should look for them |
| 2-3 years | Single Channelled: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> can switch focus between tasks if adult uses prompts to gain child's attention Parallel play | ⇒ listens to stories—read them together and let the child turn the page ⇒ joins in repeated phrases in rhymes/stories—sing nursery rhymes and pause to let the child join in with repeated phrases/the end of the rhyme. ⇒ plays alongside other children ⇒ able to join in play and sequence together <i>e.g. undress doll, prepare bath, wash and dress doll</i> |

| Age Range | Stage | Examples of what the child may be doing and suggestions of what to do |
|-----------|---|---|
| 3-4 years | Single channelled-focusing attention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> child is beginning to control their own attention focuses on one thing at a time but can independently stop what they are doing to listen full attention (auditory & visual) needed to follow directions Imaginative play and Pretend play: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Likes to play with other children | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concentrate on activity he/she has chosen for 15 minutes. Try using objects to pretend to do an activity e.g. making tea with a plastic tea set. |
| 4-5 years | Two channelled attention: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Carry out task and understand verbal instruction related to task at the same time Follow stories without pictures/prompts | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read stories without prompting the child |
| 5-6 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Integrated attention: At this stage child is able to: To shut out unwanted/irrelevant information and concentrate. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attention is fully developed by this stage. The child is able to ignore a peer talking to them whilst sat next to them and concentrate on what the teacher is saying in the classroom |



Reference List

- Blank, M., Rose, S. A., & Berlin, L. J. (1978). The language of learning: The preschool years. New York, NY: Grune & Stratton.
- Cooper, Moodley and Reynell, (1978), Helping Language Development.
- Elks, L. and McLachlan, H. (2009) Early Language Builders. London: Elklan.
- Gard, A., Gillman, L., & Gorman, J. (1993). Speech and Language Development Chart (2nd Ed.). Austin: Pro-Ed.
- Paul, R. and Norbury, C. F. (2012) Language Disorders from Infancy through Adolescence: Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and Communicating. 4th Edn. Missouri: Elsevier.
- Rossetti L. The Rossetti Infant-Toddler Language Scale – A Measure of Communication and Interaction. East Moline: LinguiSystems, Inc, 1990
- Sax, W. and Weston, E. (2007) Language development Milestones.
- Sharma, A. and Cockerill, H. (2014) From birth to Five Years: Practical Developmental Examination. London: Routledge.
- The Communication Trust (2007) Universally Speaking: The Ages and Stages of children's communication. From birth to 5 years.
- Westby, C. (2017) Marion Blank's Levels of Language Abstraction. Word of Mouth, 29(1).