



Promoting Attention and Listening Skills

Many young children find it difficult to learn to wait, share and take turns. Your child may play happily for a short while with something he has chosen to do but find it difficult to concentrate on a new activity or listen to ideas that you suggest. This short attention span may slow down your child's ability to learn new words and speech sounds.

Remember:



Turn taking

- You may need another adult so your child can sit on their lap to help focus their attention and take their turn.
- Use language such as “my turn, your turn”.
- If your child is reluctant to take turns, let him have two turns to your one turn. If he is still unwilling, remove the toy altogether and come back to it later.



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1. **Give and take games**, e.g. rolling a ball back and forth to each other. You could vary this game by playing with other toys, e.g. cars, bean bags, wind up toys.
2. **Posting boxes** – e.g. take turns to post a shape into a box, or tidy toys away.
3. **Mirror** – take turns to pull funny faces in the mirror.
4. **Sharing out food** – “one for you, one for me”
5. **Echo** – copy noises your child makes. Wait for your child to respond to you before making your next sound.



Listening and Waiting

To start with, try:

1. **Copying noises** – put together a selection of noise-makers (e.g. saucepan lid and spoon, plastic box with peas). Get your child to copy different noises. Make a noise behind your back and see if he can choose the right noise-maker. **Noisy sensory bottles – please see activity sheet attached.**



2. **Ready Steady Go** – Have a ball to throw, or an object ready to run and fetch. Explain to your child that he cannot do the action until you say “go”. Gradually increase the time between saying “ready, steady “ and “GO”.
3. **Hide and listen** – hide a noisy object (e.g. loudly ticking clock). Ask your child to listen and find it.
4. **Musical Bumps** – Get your child to listen to the stop and start of the music, i.e. sit down when the music stops.



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5. Animal and toy sounds – put out 3 or 4 toy animals or pictures. Make an animal noise. Ask your child to show you the right picture or toy.

Once your child can do these games, try:

1. Stories - Read a story to your child. Get him to do something (e.g. stand up/clap hands) every time he hears a particular word.

2. Following instructions – Ask your child to do a series of actions. Say “go” after you’ve given the instruction and see if he can remember it all. You can make these as hard as you like (e.g. *clap, then hop, then sit then turn around and touch the wall ... etc*).

3. Guessing Game – present a selection of objects or pictures. Give pieces of information about one of the objects or pictures. Your child must guess which one you are talking about, e.g. *it’s crunchy, it’s orange, you eat it* (carrot). How many clues does he need before he guesses correctly?



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Musical Shakers / Sensory Bottles

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

- 1 dry bottle
- Half a cup of twirly pasta
- Half a cup of Rice
- Funnel (or make one out of paper)
- Superglue tube or tape

Have a go at filling some clear, plastic bottles with rice and pasta.

Talk about the sounds you can hear when the pasta hits the bottle and mimic the sounds with your child.

Screw on the lid and glue or tape shut. Have fun shaking your musical shakers, making your own sounds.

You could also experiment with other materials, like pom-pom, sequins, water, or you could have fun collecting natural materials from your garden, such as twigs, and pebbles.

