

## Using the Listening Song Resources

Songs and rhymes can reinforce children's learning. Using the Listening song to gather children at story time will help to establish good listening habits as part of their routine and develop these vital skills.

- The poster has been deliberately left blank to allow you and your children to establish your own good listening guidelines. Ideas to encourage good listening could be discussed during circle time or as part of a PSED session. The children can decide which suggestions should be included on the poster. An adult or child can write these on the poster, these suggestions could be shared with different classes or rooms.
- You may want to carry out this activity at the beginning of the term, or when new children join your setting.
- Once you and your children have established these guidelines, place the poster where the children can see it, at their eye level. Referring to these guidelines during story time, singing, circle time etc will reinforce these skills.
- When children change rooms or classes, their Good Listening poster could be taken with them. These good listening guidelines can be revisited and revised as the children mature.

## Top Tips for Supporting Listening and Attention Skills

The following strategies can be used to support the development of listening and attention skills in **all** children. They are, however, particularly useful with younger children and for those with delayed listening and attention skills.

- **Minimise distractions** – Listening involves the ability to filter out distractions which is more difficult in a distracting environment. It helps if you remove distractions, such as toys, displays, open shelving and clutter from the area where you want children to listen.
- **Reduce group size** – Children learn to listen during one-to-one situations and then in groups of gradually increasing size. Some children take much longer to cope with group activities than others. Reducing the group size will have a positive impact on listening and attention levels.
- **Keep your language simple** – Children who are young and/or have delayed listening and attention usually do not understand as much as we think. We can encourage listening and attention by simplifying what we say and “chunking” longer sentences into a series of shorter sentences.
- **Maximise non-verbal communication** – Using exaggerated facial expression and gestures as we talk helps children to listen and understand.
- **Use visual clues** – Using pictures and props alongside spoken language supports listening and attention. Children's auditory skills are therefore supported by visual attention.
- **A balanced approach**—although visual clues are important, children should be given opportunities to listen without visual support e.g. oral story telling without a book. This will fine-tune their listening skills and develop their imagination.
- **Encourage participation** – Listening is often viewed as a passive activity where children have to keep still. Encouraging and allowing them to join in with gestures, props and movement will help them to listen and maintain their attention for longer.
- **Repeat, repeat, repeat** – Young children thrive on repetition. Repetition of stories, rhymes and activities is even more beneficial for children with delayed listening and attention.
- **Sit the child who finds it tricky to listen opposite you** – This will allow the child to gain maximum benefit from visual and non-verbal clues and will also enable you to monitor their listening and attention levels more closely.
- **Give the child who finds it tricky to listen something to hold** – This helps many children to listen and decreases the need for children to seek out their own things to touch and feel.
- **Encourage turn-taking** – Most children with delayed listening and attention also have difficulties taking turns. Increasing a child's ability to take turns at a very simple level, e.g. taking it in turns to put a brick on a tower, will have a positive impact on their listening.