

Strategies for Developing Attention and Listening Skills

- Gain **eye contact** with the child before giving them an instruction.
- For small children, get down to the **child's level**.
- Say the child's **name** to gain their attention.
- **Slow down** your rate of speech and use pauses. **Allow time** for slower responding pupils to process instructions / questions.
- **Minimise noise** and visual distractions.
- Use **gestures** and **objects** as cues to gain the child's attention and help them to understand.
- Use **simple** sentences. Break down instructions into smaller parts.
- In the classroom try to **alternate between listening / quiet tasks** and more active ones (allow energy release between activities e.g. outdoor play).
- Remember children will find it difficult to follow instructions if they are focused on an activity.



- Use **class rules** such as good looking / good listening / good sitting / good waiting. Remind children of these often. **Praise** children when they remember and follow the rules.
- Set **manageable goals**. Ensure the previous task is completed before giving a new one. For children who are struggling to maintain their attention, introduce **start/finish boxes**. A reward is given if all the activities are achieved.
- Set **time limits** for children to complete tasks (make these more achievable to start with). Use a timer of some sort to help the children be visually aware of the progress of time e.g. sand timer.

