**Activities for Attention and Listening**

**For Parents**

Children have to learn to listen and concentrate. Good listening skills are needed to understand what someone is saying.

A child who struggles to attend and listen may have difficulties;

* Attending to the person who is talking
* Remembering what has been told
* Listening to long sentences
* Following instructions

\*Sometimes they may appear naughty but maybe they cannot listen or understand.

We need to make listening easier e.g. turn off or reduce background noise and we need to help children **learn** to listen. This can be done by putting aside 5 minutes per day to complete activities related to attention and listening.

**Activities to start**

* Try and find 5 minutes everyday for ‘special time.’
* This is time to play and talk to your child.
* It can help if you choose the same time everyday, otherwise it will never get done!
* During ‘special time’ turn off all background noise.
* Remove all distractions.
* Remember all the points about interaction.
* Don’t ask too many questions!
* If your child wonders off encourage him to come back for ‘just one more minute’.
* Praise your child for listening and concentrating during ‘special time’.
* Let your child choose from a range of things he likes to play with.
* Let him lead the play so that he is interested in what you are doing**.**

**Games to encourage listening**

* Any toys or games which you have can be used.
* Give your child a limited choice and follow his lead.
* Listen to your child.
* Respond to things that he says.
* Talk about what he is doing and things which interest him.
* Use short, simple sentences.
* If you ask him to do something, or ask a question, make sure you get his attention first by calling his name.
* Use puzzles—make the puzzle up and then take turns to ask each other to find 10 things in the picture.
* Use ‘make –a –scene’ resources—which give a background and small pick’n’peel pictures to stick on the background. These can involve topics like the seaside but also latest films or T.V. characters which might create the interest needed!
* Take turns to tell each other which picture to pick and make a picture together.
* Hide and seek—Tell your child where to hide 6 toys or objects. For example, ’Put the tractor by the T.V.’ Once they are all hidden ask your child to find the toy you name.
* Shopping—Collect empty cartons and boxes. Use these to set up a pretend shop. Ask your child to go to the shop and buy one or two things.
* Pebble game—collect some favourite pictures and large pebbles or stones (or cut pebbles out of scrap cardboard). Stick the pictures to the underside of the pebbles. Use 6 –8 pebbles. Ask your child to find a picture by turning over the pebbles.
* Scrap Pictures—collect pictures from adult and children’s magazines. Together, cut the pictures out. Tell each other which ones to find and stick them on to a sheet of paper to make a collage of things your child likes or likes to wear or eat or do.
* Musical actions—Play some music. When the music stops give your child an action to do e.g. ‘Touch your toes!’ You can gradually make it harder!
* Playdough—use the recipe or buy playdough with cutters. Take turns to ask each other to cut out a shape or make pretend food e.g. sausages, chips, peas, potatoes.
* Ready Steady Cook—use toy food and pretend to be hungry. Can your child find the food you ask for? Teddy might be hungry too—what would he want to eat?
* Run and touch—outside walk around the garden or playground and name various things e.g. washing line, chair, tree, flowerpot. You can then sit down and call your child to you. Ask him to run and touch things e.g. ‘Run and touch the tree.’ He should enjoy this and come back for more!
* Hide and seek—Outside, tell your child where to hide 6 toys or objects. Once they are all hidden your child can run off and find the object you ask for.
* I spy with my little eye—Play this anywhere! For your pre-school child, play I spy but give a clue e.g. ‘I spy with my little eye something that’s big and has leaves’.
* ‘Walking through the jungle’ - Recite this poem: ‘Walking through the jungle, what do I see? I see a tiger looking at me!’ Your child pretends to be a tiger by making the right actions and noise. Next time choose a different animal.
* Grandmother’s Footsteps—your child does not have to listen for this game but he does have to concentrate and children usually love it. The ’Grandmother’ stands 10 metres away and turns her back. The other person walks towards the ‘Grandmother’ but when ‘Grandmother’ turns around the other person must stand quite still. Any movement and the ‘walking’ person has to go back to the beginning! Take turns to be ‘Grandmother’.