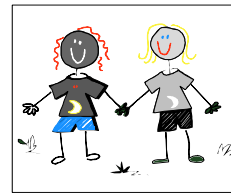


Information and advice from:



**Early Development and  
Inclusion Team**  
Supporting Inclusion at the Early  
Years Foundation Stage



# Developing attention skills

- Being able to focus on activities, to concentrate and to cope with suggestions made by others is essential for language learning.
- There are different levels of attention, and the activities needed to help depend on your child's ability.
- The activities here will help children pay attention to important information and to maintain their concentration (attention).
- Try doing an attention activity everyday.
- Short activities are best and can be built on as your child's attention improves.
- Remember to give your child praise for 'good looking' and 'good listening'.

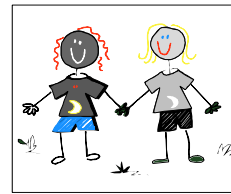
## Stage 1 attention

At this stage your child will be easily distracted and their attention flits from one thing to another (e.g. to a noise, to a toy, to someone walking past etc.)



- **Choose high motivating toys** to gain your child's attention. Try – pop up toys, squeaky toys and rattles, bubbles, finger rhymes (e.g. round and round the garden, this little piggy went to market, two little dicky birds).
- **Help your child to explore** the toy. What it feels like/smells of/sounds like. What it can do – shake/roll/bang etc.
- **Repeat the activity** saying 'Let's do it again/do more'. This will help to keep your child's interest/attention for as long as possible.
- **Stop when your child loses interest.** Wait a while before bringing out another toy.

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## Stage 2 attention

At this stage your child can concentrate on a task they have chosen but will find it hard to cope with adult interference.

- **Play alongside.** At first your child may not be able to share their toys, so sit beside them and play with your own set of toys. For example, if your child has bricks, build a tower with your bricks. This might encourage them to watch, copy or interact by knocking your tower down. In each case you have caught their attention.
- **Vary the play.** Model how to use the toys in different ways to give your child ideas for making their play more varied. For example, model how to build a tower or a bridge, model poking, squeezing, pressing playdough etc.
- **Suggest ideas.** Once your child is happy with you playing alongside and is copying your ideas, begin to suggest ideas for their play. For example, push a puzzle piece to them and say where it goes, put a brick on their tower and say 'that goes on top', hand them a different colour pen and say 'try this one'.

## Stage 3 attention

At this stage your child cannot listen and play at the same time. They need an adult to help them to focus on an instruction and then focus back on the activity again.



- **Keep activities short and simple.** Try puzzles, dolls, cars, books, duplo, mark making, bricks etc.
- **Get your child's attention first.** Call their name and encourage them to look at you. If necessary, gently stop play before you talk.
- **Give simple instructions** to do with the activity. For example, 'put the cow in', 'give dolly a drink', 'let's push the car', 'show me the cat' etc.