

Attention and Listening // Age 9-11

Continue to reinforce the active listening skills (discussed in the handout for ages 7-9).

Children need to know that sometimes they have not understood because they have not listened well enough, but that it may also be the fault of the speaker, e.g.:

- talking too quietly
- talking too quickly
- looking around instead of at the listener
- obscuring their mouth
- fidgeting
- using inappropriate vocabulary
- trying to talk over background noise
- inappropriate posture



Teach your child that it is all right to say that they have not understood and request clarification or information to be repeated. You can also model this, by asking your child and others to repeat when you haven't understood, and giving a reason, for example 'I couldn't hear you then because the washing machine is on, could you say that again a bit louder?'

Challenges

Set your child a challenge to see how long they can remain focused, e.g. on drawing a detailed picture of something, or building a complex Lego model. You can join in the activity to encourage your child to stay focused. Aim for 15 – 30 minutes on an engaging activity.

Messages

Ask your child to deliver messages, e.g. to another member of the family. The longer the message, and the further away they have to deliver it, the more the child's focus of attention will be challenged.

Simon Says

Start off with the simple form of the game, i.e. purely copying. Then introduce the idea of not responding if the instruction doesn't start with "Simon says ..."

Action Story

Read a short story with certain words or characters that are repeated frequently. Tell your child three or four key words or characters they are listening for and show them an action for each word. When you read the story, your child must perform the actions when they hear the target words.