

## What children like: - Attending and Listening

*Hearing impaired children without hearing aids*

To want to listen we need something worth listening to in an environment we can hear in.

Hearing children will attend to voice if it sounds interesting.

They especially will be encouraged to maintain their attention if they look up to a smiley face that is looking at them and is interested in them.

Hearing impaired children do this too! But you need to be more conscious about talking and holding their attention when you talk with them. Help their awareness of sound and the pleasure of listening.

### You will need to:

- use a bright encouraging face, possibly with exaggerated facial expressions and reactions.
- give a clear space of time to respond and encouragement through good eye contact to ensure they take a turn in the conversation. (this says "I am interested in you and what you want to say and offer to me")
- work hard at checking your child is attending and understanding. You will need to keep in clear context. (talking about and playing with and making references to what your child is doing and thinking about at the time - *this is called being contingent, and provides predictable language for your child's thoughts*)
- have clear boundaries. So that it is clear that your child knows what is good and what is a "no, no!".
- be organised with toys, so it is clear and predictable what you do with them. That the language you use will become routine and repetitive.
- have clear daily routines with getting up, dressing, mealtimes etc. Language will then be predictable and repetitive.

### *Make sure of your child's attention.*

- *Face to face games*
- *Face to face interaction*
- *Use voice and then 'touch' to gain attention*
- *Make your voice fun to listen to*
- *Intonated voice (motherese) is what young children like.*
- *Try even singing when you feed, change, bath or play with your child.*
- *Repetitive swinging, rocking, moving limbs with songs and rhymes while doing daily activities*

- *React to your child's initiatives: -pointing, giggles, responses to sound, responses to you, offerings of toys, attempts at doing things for themselves.*
- *Initiate activities; offer toys one at a time, maintaining element of surprise and keeping up interest.*
- *Consider background acoustics:- manage the environment so that your child has a chance to hear what you are saying.*
- *Noisy toys can gain an initial reaction, they can encourage investigation if they go off quickly; but if they are constant, they can mask out your talk and the child's own babble. They can really irritate you and they can confuse the child.*
- *Is the 'programmed talking teaching' toy actually something the child can learn from? (Put yourself in the child's view- does this toy make any sense, if I am just at the beginning of listening and understanding?)*
- *Talk and play close to children so that their hearing aids can pick up your voice. The closer you are the louder your voice will be- so you won't have to shout.*
- *Talk, sing during daily routines.*
- *Use calm strokes with calm voice; bouncy movements with lively voice*
- *Lots of eye contact that indicates "I'm interested in you."*
- *Make sure the child knows you are talking to him or her.*
- *Smiles show you are enjoying it too.*
- *Even when hearing aids are off (e.g for a bath) talk and be lively and close.*

### Games that will encourage listening and attending

- Routine songs; counting games; things you say and activities you do as you change, dress, feed, wash your child. The more repetitive you are the more it all makes sense.
- Play with sound making toys. ( choose with care). But don't let sound making toys mask out your voice. Pause when you are about to say something so your child is ready to listen.
- Always be alert to sounds around and draw your child's attention to them.
- Draw your child's attention to things of interest- these give you a reason to talk. Check when you are talking about what you are seeing that the child is looking at the same things.
- Talk about what you are doing and react to your child's reactions.

- Share simple books. The same ones again and again. First sharing and then reading. Add your own ideas and repetitions that you will use again and again.
- Play tickle games
- Repetitive peek-a-boo games
- Hiding finding games.
- Encourage turn taking. Offer turns in your conversation- waiting for your child to take a turn. Give your child plenty of time to reply.
- Give your child something to do or hold in a game. Encourage opportunities for turn-taking. Action rhymes help your child to be involved.
- Anticipation games :- so your child learns to expect something is going to happen (a tickle, a cuddle, a boo, a snap, a roar etc.)
- Sharing books and the same ones again and again - you will be sharing the same focus and so it is clear about what you are saying. Sharing them again and again will allow the same language to be used; help child to anticipate and wait for the sound and action or participate in the expected action.

**Show that you are having fun, and your child will enjoy playing and interacting with you. He will start to anticipate and react. He will be receptive and attend and listen.**

**Attending comes before listening  
Listening comes before talking**

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