

## ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP ATTENTION AND LISTENING SKILLS

### Stage of Development: Level One (Short attention to 1 item)

#### **What to expect:**

At level one, a child is extremely distractible, their attention flits from object to person or event depending on the most motivating item.

#### **Aim of Activity:**

To attract and keep your child's attention to people, objects and events.

#### **Things you might need:**

Mobiles, flashing lights, music, squeaky toys, rattles and bubbles...

#### **Activities to try:**

- Play 'peep - po' games - encouraging eye contact.
- Shake a rattle on different sides of their face, vary the loudness and help your child to hold and shake the rattle.

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### Stage of Development: Level Two (Single-channelled attention)

#### What to expect:

At level two, a child focuses on one activity they have chosen. They will not allow any involvement from the adult, be it talking or visual.

#### Aims of Activity:

- To allow an adult to be present and take part in an activity.
- To build up the time which your child attends to an activity of their choice.
- To help your child begin to attend to an adult-directed task.

#### Things you might need:

Bricks, inset puzzles, shape sorters. Crayons and paper, playdoh, push and pull toys e.g. cars, prams and trolleys. Large dolls, teddies and everyday items, e.g. bed, chairs, and foods that are child safe.

#### Activities to try:

- Have a second set of toys/equipment handy. Sit next to your child and play with toys that they aren't using.
- Build towers and knock them down.
- Complete puzzles or shape sorters encouraging your child to take pieces from you.
- Creative activities or pretend play (e.g. pretending to feed teddy).

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### **Stage of Development: Level Three (Shifting focus with support)**

#### **What to expect:**

At level three, a child's attention is single channelled but they are developing the ability to shift focus from one activity to another.

#### **Aim of Activity:**

To establish your child's own control of his/her focus of attention.

#### **Things you might need:**

Cotton reels, beads, bricks. Toys such as cars, dolls and picture cards.

#### **Activities to try:**

- Encourage your child to copy your actions.
- Encourage your child to follow short and simple commands, e.g. 'give me the car' from the choice of two or three items put in front of them.
- Matching activities, e.g. matching picture cards.
- From time to time encourage your child to look up and copy you by saying, e.g. "you do it" "do this" and "copy time".

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### **Stage of Development: Level Four (Shifting focus independently)**

#### **What to expect:**

At level four, a child is able to shift their focus from one activity to another without the help from the adult.

#### **Aim of Activity:**

To encourage your child to carry out an activity and listen to an instruction at the same time.

#### **Things you might need:**

Music, chairs/space, stories, everyday objects, shopping toys, bag and doll's clothes.

#### **Activities to try:**

- Musical chairs / bumps / actions (e.g. your child jumps when they hear the sound of a drum).
- "We went to market and bought...."
- Packing a bag for doll as you say what to pack.

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### Stage of Development: Level Five (Two-channelled attention)

#### What to expect:

At level five, the child's attention is now two-channelled. The child is now able to 'listen and do' at the same time. At this stage their concentration span is short but they can work in a small group.

#### Aims of Activity:

- To increase your child's concentration span.
- To help transfer their skills to larger group situations (e.g. classroom).

#### Things you might need:

Rhymes, tabletop games, puppets, musical instruments, sound to picture lotto games.

#### Activities to try:

- "Simon says..." Game.
- Identifying an item by the sound/noise(s) it makes.
- Draw a man barrier game.
- THE KEY WHEN CARRYING OUT THESE GAMES IS TO HAVE A SMALL GROUP OF CHILDREN BUILDING UP...

