Listening Checklist

Attention and listening skills develop as children grow and mature. In the early stages children's attention span may only be a couple of minutes and for some children it will be less than this.

Supporting the development of attention is important because it's a foundation skill for language and learning. Children need to be able to attend to language and activities in order to develop all areas of learning including social interaction, independence skills and literacy. Children need to be able to listen in order to hear and learn words and we know from research that vocabulary development is key to literacy.

This checklist looks at how adults can support listening in play/learning environments, groups and routine.

LISTENING CHECKLIST: PLAY/ LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

Quiet Time To Talk:

Are there opportunities for Quiet Time to Talk when the children can hear each other talk? Are there spaces where visual distractions are reduced?
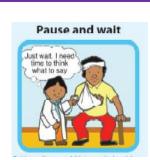
Pause and Wait:

(count up to 10) before starting an interaction with a child so they take the first turn: seeing you watching, listening and waiting for them to take a turn is the best model for listening and attention. When we follow child's lead in play and interaction their attention will be more focussed

Face to Face:

Can adults get Face to Face easily with the children in the environment? Can adults cross the room to get to children quickly? Can adults access all the play environments alongside children?

Play and Talk Together:

Create opportunities for adults to follow the children's lead in play. Modelling and commenting on listening skills as they arise in the play will allow you to scaffold children listening skills in play and interaction naturally "Sarah, look at Euan, he wants to tell you something"

LISTENING CHECKLIST: GROUPS

Quiet Time To Talk:

Is the environment as free from visual and noise distractions as possible?

Face-to-Face:

Can the children see with no distractions: being in a circle or semi-circle means all the children can be face to face with the adult and see each other too.

Small Groups:

Consider splitting whole classes into smaller teaching groups; this helps children to focus their listening (and we can adapt our language input too)

Play and Talk Together/ Be Careful With Questions:

Match your language to the children's language. Plan for vocabulary and repetition within group activities.

Remember Questions don't teach language; use a comment or a developmentally appropriate question.

Show:

Use gesture, pictures and objects to help children focus their attention and understand what you are saying.

Tell:

children what you mean by listening and give them concrete praise for using those skills "Robert, I can see you looking at me, so I know you're listening"

LISTENING CHECKLIST: ROUTINE;

Time:

Remember children's attention span may developmentally be for a few minutes. It is better to have short focused listening times spread out throughout the day with more active times in between.

Show:

- Use **Visuals** to let children know there is a change in routine; you can use gestures, objects, pictures or symbols alongside your words. A visual timetable can be used to show a routine. A now/next board can be used to support a shorted transition. Symbols can also be used to support daily routines such as handwashing, toileting or getting ready for a curricular activity. More information on visual timelines and routines can be found on bumps2bairns.

- use **listening visuals** to help children learn about listening.

Tell:

- **Signal** to children that you are about to talk or that there is about to be a change in routine: use a shaker, music or a gesture. Some children might need you to say their name.

- Use Visuals to let children know there is a change in routine; you can use a visual timeline

- use **simple language** to help children learn about listening: 'You're all looking at me (show eyes picture) so I know your listening to me...here comes some important news....it's tidy up time...