



Listening tactics for parents and teachers

There are a number of ways in which you can improve the listening situation for your child. This leaflet suggests some tactics to help you if you have concerns regarding your child's listening skills.

General listening

1. Your child will benefit from eye contact and being able to see your face when you talk.
2. Gain your child's attention before speaking; do this by saying their name or touching their shoulder.
3. Your child may find it easier to listen when they are closer to the source of the sound. Therefore, moving closer to your child and getting down to their level when speaking to them may help.
4. Talking over a distance, such as from another room, may well be less effective.
5. Try to reduce unnecessary background noise, e.g. turn the TV down or shut windows/doors to exclude noise that cannot be turned down.
6. If you have some important instructions, try and find quiet, calm places to talk.
7. Use visual clues, e.g. ensure clear facial expressions and hand gestures to help understanding.
8. Encourage your child to remember to watch and listen so that he/she gains the visual as well as auditory (sound) clues.
9. Give time for your child to process the information and then check their understanding by getting them to repeat back what you have asked.
10. Try to re-phrase a conversation in a different way if you feel your child may not understand what you are saying.
11. Speak slowly and clearly but try not to over-exaggerate or shout.
12. Don't cover your mouth while you are talking.
13. Certain acoustic environments can be more difficult to listen in than others. Where possible, avoid conversations in large rooms that echo. Soft furnishings, carpets and lower ceilings can help, especially when practicing speech or helping with academic work.

Additional tips for school / learning environments

1. Your child may benefit from sitting closer to the teacher; this can help with hearing and listening and optimise concentration. Sitting them away from extraneous noise such as doors and windows will also help.
2. Checking a child understands a task can help; getting them to repeat what they need to do and providing clear, bulleted information to consolidate verbal instructions if needed.

3. Other support staff may be able to check a child has heard and understood what tasks need to be completed.
4. Explaining a longer set of instructions or undertaking listening tasks/skills may be more productive when undertaken in a quieter environment.
5. Break down verbal information/instructions into smaller, simpler “chunks” and ensure a child has understood at each stage.
6. The listening tactics described on the previous page are also useful for the school environment if there are concerns with hearing and/or listening skills.

If you have any further questions, please contact:

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Website: www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk/services-and-departments/audiology/childrens-hearing-services

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