

Speech and Language Therapy

# **Early Attention**

## **Lesson number 1 of 14**

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# Early Attention

Attention is a foundation skill for the development of communication and language.

One of the first thing children need to learn is that their movements or reactions to situations gives a signal and that these signals will be acted on by other people.



# Stop, Look and Listen

For children who are at the early stages of development it is essential that adults take time to:

**Stop** - Value the opportunities for development that observing gives you. Some pupils can take more than 10 seconds to form a response to changes in their environment.

**Look** - Observe the child's reactions to changes around them.

**Listen** - Respond to their reactions and signals.

Respond to messages the child is giving you. Do what the child is 'asking'.

By doing this, the child will learn that 'if I do X, Y will happen'.

**Comment** on what the child is doing or looking at. Use one or two word simple phrases.



# Why Special Time?

When you follow the child's lead and build an interaction around their interests, they will be motivated to play with you, the interaction will last longer, and you are likely to have more fun together!



# Adult Communication Strategies

## Things to try during special time...

- 1 - Allow the child to choose the toy and follow what they want to do
- 2 - Sit where your child can see me (being face to face).
- 3 - Watch what the child is doing- What are they focused on, interested in and/or trying to tell you?
- 4 - Wait and pay attention to any interactive lead by the child.
- 5 - Listen carefully to the messages the child is trying to convey with their actions, behaviours or words.
- 6 - Respond to messages the child is trying to convey (e.g. I like this/ I want this/ I don't like this/ I don't want this) accordingly by doing what the child 'asks'.
- 7 - Talk about what the child was doing using simple words? (name things, repeat words, make short, simple comments)
- 8 - Use enthusiasm in my voice so that it sounds interesting and shows excitement



In one sentence, what have you noticed in your play this week?

When I.....,  
my child..... .



# Special Time Diary

Date:

We learnt about

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When my adult

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I...

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Insert picture

