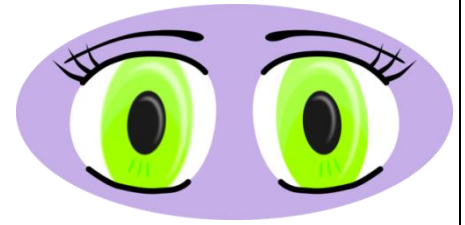


Strategies to Improve Attention and Listening



- Focus attention before giving an instruction e.g. “Ben...listen...” and refocus them when necessary.
- Use an appropriate level of language for the child/young person.
- Encourage movement breaks when lethargic or fidgety e.g. getting up and moving around, jumping up and down, wall push ups etc.
- At school, include errands during lessons, for example, cleaning the whiteboard, handing out pencils/books/glue sticks, taking messages to another part of the school.
- Allow ‘fiddle’ objects like blu-tac during listening activities as long as they don’t become a distraction.

Ideas for Games

1. **Copy Me!** – Clap out/drum a short sequence, make a noise, do an action or a sequence of actions for the child to copy. Take it in turns.
2. **Go!** – Give instructions, but tell the child/children they are not allowed to do them until you say Go! For example, “Clap 3 times. Go!”, “Pull a silly face. Go!”, “Close your eyes and jump. Go!”
3. **Thumbs up! Thumbs down!** – Think of lots of true/false statements and get the child/children to give you a thumbs up if it is right and thumbs down for wrong, e.g. “dinosaurs are extinct”... “I have 3 eyes”... “an elephant is smaller than a hamster”... “dogs have 4 legs”.
4. **Squashed Bananas** – All you need is a list of questions. The child can only answer “squashed bananas”, but they must try not to laugh! For example, “How old are you?”, “What’s your brothers/sister’s name?” etc.
5. **Listen for a word** – The child listens to a piece of text (book, magazine, short story) and every time they hear a certain word or an action word e.g. jumped, walked, looked... put a tick in a box/a counter in a jar etc.