

Strategies to encourage listening in school

The consistent use of all the general strategies that we would expect staff to adopt with deaf children and young people:

- Use of personal radio system, appropriate seating, good lighting
- Gain attention first; either "I want you all to listen"; providing an introduction to instructions e.g. "I want everyone to...." followed by the required action rather than simply "Come and sit down"; use an action or music or repeated words that the children know signals the need to listen
- Rephrase rather than simply repeat instructions / information etc.
- Know child's listening & language stage / level and adjust pace and length of listening required appropriately
- Be sound-aware and repeat if there's an unexpected interrupting noise
- Tutor the child to be proactive / take responsibility for own listening & learning
- Alert child to noise that needs ignoring so that they learn to understand their acoustic environment
- Be able to discern visuals that support and those that distract
- Use pre-tutoring to promote listening skills rather than impart facts / knowledge

Strategies for encouraging listening in groups

- First gain attention
- Be clear about how we show that we are attending and listening; praise and reward those children who are sitting still and who are looking at the person who is talking – this is usual practice in good classroom management
- Decide on the length of the listening task and make it clear. Tell the child that they are going to stay with the group to do some listening for say five minutes. You might need to have a clock, sand timer etc. to help them visualise this.
- Give the child something to listen for. The easiest way to start is with the register. Listening and responding for your name and learning to anticipate where you come on the list of children is one of the first large group listening skills most children master. Giving children something to look at alongside listening may help to focus their attention and make the meaning clearer; however it may distract their attention from listening – use visual aids, pictures etc. cautiously.
- Use questions at the child's Level of understanding. They may not be able to answer questions at the same level as the rest of the group but it is important that they do have questions. Anticipating that they are going to get a question will help to focus their listening on what is important. If necessary, tell the child in advance what their question is going to

be about and that you will ask them later. Don't accept them calling out the answer as soon as they realise it. This is all about training them to listen and hold onto the information for a bit longer.

- Participation e.g. use props. e.g. Give the child a key word or picture to respond to. For example, each time you say 'the nasty wolf' the child has to growl or wave their wolf puppet. Lots of early stories have a set phrase, which comes up time after time. Help the child to recognise and join with that phrase even if the rest of the story is too difficult

Check how effectively the child has listened by assessing the outcomes. For example:

If you have been telling the class about some work you want them to do and the equipment they will require, ask the deaf child to get the equipment for their group. Initially you may need to tell the child at the beginning that this will be their job; later they should understand their responsibility to listen attentively at all times. Alternatively, the child could be responsible for repeating instructions to their partner or a group