

Developmental Area: Auditory
Skill Strand: Auditory Attention
Skill Phase: At First

Auditory Attention Skill Step **4**

Skill Step: I take part in an adult-directed task for a short period one-to-one even if this is not a favoured activity. I respond well to praise.

You may be wanting to facilitate this skill step with most of your children if you are considering targeted skill progression and creating firm foundations for progression. You may want to facilitate this skill step with just a few children or with an individual target child as this is their next step.

Whatever the reason, this Practical Ideas Sheet will help you to reflect on your current practice and maybe to get some new ideas. Where possible, the practical ideas are grouped into the three layers of your practice.

Interactions

When interacting with a child in order to facilitate this skill step, remember the following interaction principles. These will support the child's ability to stay focussed on you, filtering out distractions as they do so. The strategies will also support the child's receptive language which strongly influences a child's capability to listen. There is also a focus on keeping the interaction and child's engagement going for a little bit longer. Useful strategies include:

- Where possible, position yourself so that you can be face-to-face with the child and on the child's level.
- Use simple language with gaps in between short sentences. This will give the child time to process what you have said but also to take a turn in the interaction and the activity.
- Use exaggerated facial expression and non-verbal communication such as smiling and clapping to indicate praise as well as verbal praise.
- When the child begins to get distracted, use praise and encourage them to have "one more turn." Don't keep them too long but balance this out with gently stretching their ability to maintain focus.

Targeted Use of the Learning Environment and Daily Routines

Identify resources and other opportunities in your learning environment and in your daily routines that you can do together but which only take a short period of time. These should be hands-on activities rather than listening activities. Examples can include anything from helping to get snack ready, to planting seeds, completing a form board jigsaw or making a sandcastle.

To target this skill step, use these opportunities in a more focussed and frequent manner than usual in order to target this specific skill step. In reality, you will be doing these things anyway, it is just a case of doing them more often and with a greater sense of clarity as to what you are trying to achieve.

If all of the other children are functioning at higher skill steps, your provision may naturally be mainly made up of group interactions, even in child-led learning. If this is the case, you will need to find ways to create some time and space for more one-to-one interactions with the target child so that you can backtrack to this earlier level.

In addition to this, identifying resources and opportunities within your learning environment and daily routines that lend themselves well to one-to-one turn taking routines. This might include taking it in turns to build a tower of wooden blocks together, to pour water through a water wheel or to roll a car down the ramp of a garage or a click-clack-track.

This actually is the same as targeting Conversation & Group Skill Step 5. However, turn-taking and Auditory Attention are strongly correlated. Facilitating progression in one usually causes a positive knock-on effect with the other. Therefore, if you are wanting to boost Auditory Attention, having a strong and specific focus on turn-taking throughout your provision can really help.

Focussed Activities

This skill step is much more suited to interaction strategies alongside opportunities and your learning environment than focussed activities. Where a target child is older but needs significantly backtracking to this skill step, you may choose to do some of the above at times when the child is finding group listening and learning simply too demanding.

Where such a child does need to engage in group activities, sitting the child opposite, using visual support, simplifying your language and giving the child something to hold may help. Group activities that also focus on doing (hands-on activities and physical movement) will also be easier for a child such as this.