

~Attending and Listening~ Children with Hearing aids, BAHAs, Cochlear Implants

To listen we need **hearing aids, BAHAs or implants on and working** all the time. To want to listen we need something worth listening to in an environment we can hear in.

Children with a hearing loss will attend to voice if it sounds interesting. They will be encouraged to maintain their attention if they look at a face that is looking at them and is interested in them.

You will need to hold their attention when you talk with them and help their awareness of sound and the pleasure of listening. In those early days post implant, or if their hearing is down due to conductive overlay, you will need to work hard at holding their attention.

Ideas to develop attending and listening

- ❖ Use a bright encouraging face, possibly with exaggerated facial expressions and reactions but not exaggerated lip patterns
- ❖ Make your voice fun to listen to and use an intonated voice ('motherese') as this is what young children like
- ❖ Talk and play close to children so that their hearing aids can pick up your voice. The closer you are the louder your voice will be- so you won't have to shout
- ❖ Use calm strokes with calm voice; bouncy movements with lively voice
- ❖ Give lots of eye contact, face to face interaction and games that indicate, "I'm interested in you!"
- ❖ Use voice and then 'touch' to gain attention
- ❖ Make sure the child knows you are talking to him
- ❖ Smiles show you are enjoying it too

- ❖ Try singing when you feed, change, bath or play with your child during routine activities
- ❖ Consider background acoustics, manage the environment so that your child has a chance to hear what you are saying
- ❖ Give a clear space and encouragement through good eye contact to ensure they take a turn in the conversation as this says “I am interested in you and what you want to say and offer to me”
- ❖ Keep the context clear by talking, playing with and making references to what your child is doing and thinking about at the time - this is called being **contingent** and provides predictable language for his thoughts
- ❖ Have clear boundaries. So that it is clear that your child knows what is good and what is not
- ❖ Be organised with toys, so it is clear and predictable what you do with them. This will support the language you use to become routine and repetitive
- ❖ Use repetitive swinging, rocking, moving limbs with songs and rhymes
- ❖ React to your child’s initiatives of pointing, giggles, responses to sound
- ❖ Give clear responses when your child offers toys, attempts at doing things for themselves
- ❖ Initiate activities; offer toys one at a time, maintaining an element of surprise and keeping up interest
- ❖ Noisy toys can gain an initial reaction, they can encourage investigation if they go off quickly; but if they are constant, they can mask out your talk and the child’s own babble
- ❖ Is the electronic teaching to talk toy actually something the child can learn from, does it make any sense to a young child?
- ❖ Even when hearing aids are off (bath time) stay close, talk and be lively



Information about the SENSS local offer is available at:

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/content/services-support-children-learning>

Further strategies and resources available at: <https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/public-site/early-years-sen-toolkit>