

## Early Learning Newsletter: March 2022

### Supporting listening and attention – school readiness

Some of the children will soon be going off to the next stage in their learning in school. As part of our 'School Readiness' programme, we will be helping children to listen and pay attention to what is being said to them in the pre-school so that they are ready for the challenges that lie ahead.

What you might see as being 'challenging behaviour' at home, might just be that your child doesn't yet know how to listen or pay attention to what you're asking them to do or not to do. Listening and attention comes in very distinct 'phases' of development and you can help your child if you know which stage they're at right now. You can help with this at home.

**Fleeting attention:** your child might run off when anything new or exciting attracts their attention. It can be interpreted as not listening or being disobedient. This isn't necessarily the case. It's just an earlier stage of development.

**Rigid attention:** is when your child appears not to hear or understand what you're saying to them. This is usually because they're engrossed in their own play and are very focussed. This can be misinterpreted as being wilful, but really it's simply because they are very interested and reflects their phase of development. Calling their name might help to gain their attention.

**Focusing attention:** is when the child still needs an adult to help them to shift their focus if you want them to attend to what you say. They usually need objects, pictures or some kind of action to be focused for more than a couple of minutes. It is unrealistic to expect your child to pay attention or be focussed for longer than this without something to help them.

Consider these points to check whether you are helping your child to develop into their next stage of listening and attention:

1. Is the amount of distraction and background noise helping? Is the TV or radio on all the time? Can they actually hear what you're asking them to do?
2. Is what they are watching on the TV/Tablet appropriate? Will it maintain their attention? Is it at the right 'level' for their understanding?
3. If the TV or other digital device is being used, is it being used to occupy your child or can your child share the experience?
4. Is there someone who can talk about the TV/Digital experience afterwards? Could the experience lead to sharing a book, comic or playing with toys based on the TV programme with a suitable adult?
5. Is value given to quiet, one-to-one times, even for a couple of minutes a day? Sharing a story, talking on the way to the shops or pre-school about what you can see? Meal-time family chat, bedtime story, bath-time chat or talking about his day in the car?

Remember, if your child is learning English as a new language, they will be very tired and may not concentrate as well, particularly after coming home from pre-school, so your time spent with them, reading or talking in your home language is essential to help them to relax, unwind and feel confident.

### THRIVE approach

Some of you may be aware that we use the THRIVE approach in school and pre-school to support children's emotional well-being and to help them to self-regulate their behaviour. Sharron Stabler is our Licenced Thrive Practitioner, with a specialism in Early Childhood. Feel free to chat with Sharron or your play partner to find out more about how the approach works or if you would like to know more about how it might help your child.

Happy Talking and listening together!

The Pre-school team