

# Appendix 7

## Our listening work: information for parents

Listening is a special kind of attention – to listen we have to pay attention to sounds. Many children who have problems with listening are good with other kinds of attention. They may be able to sit and watch their favourite film for a long time or they may be able to concentrate for ages on their favourite toy. However, they may find it hard to:

- Listen to stories, especially in a group.
- Listen to you explaining something.
- Wait for their turn in a conversation or a game.

Listening is a really important skill for learning to talk but it is also a very important skill they will need at school. A good listener at school is more likely to understand what they have to do, remember new words and join in conversations with their new friends. In fact, if you're a good listener, you are more likely to be a good learner!

Just telling children to 'listen!' does not really help very much. This is because listening is quite a hard thing to do. It's not just one skill – it is several skills. In our approach to teaching children to listen, we aim to help the children learn the skills that make up good listening:

- **Looking** at the person who's talking.
- **Sitting still**
- **Staying quiet**
- **Listening** to all of the words

You can also help by reminding your child about these rules during the everyday things you do together that need them to listen. You can try:

- **Reminding them of the rule before you need them to listen:**

Look at me – where are your shoes?

I've got a surprise for you. When you're quiet, I'll tell you what it is.

- **Praising them when you can see them using the skills:**

Well done, you kept really quiet and that helped you to do good listening.

Brilliant! You listened right to the end!

- **Being specific about what they're doing wrong when they're not listening:**

You're talking at the same time as me – that makes it very hard for you to do good listening.

This will really help them to use their new skills in real life.