

Attention & Listening

Attention and Listening

Attention levels in typically developing children (Cooper, Moodley, Reynell 1997)

Stage 1. 0 -1 year

Fleeting attention. Extreme distractibility. The child's attention is held momentarily by whatever is the dominant stimulus in the environment and is easily distracted by any new stimulus.

Stage 2. 1 -2 years

Rigid attention. Attention inflexible. The child can concentrate for some time on a concrete task of their own choosing. The child has difficulty tolerating intervention or attempts to modify the task by an adult.

Stage 3. 2 -3 years

Single channelled attention. Some flexibility is developing in that they can tolerate a well timed intervention or interruption more readily. The child can only cope with doing one thing at a time.

Stage 4. 3 -4 years

Attention focus under voluntary control. The child is beginning to control their own attention. Attention is still single channelled but it can be stopped /restarted under the child's control without adult support

Stage 5. 4 - 5 years

Two channelled attention. At this stage the child can do 2 things at once. The child's attention span may be short but they can be taught in a group. The child is ready for whole class teaching.

Stage 6. 5 -6 years

Integrated attention. Well established and sustained. The child can easily listen to information whilst doing something else at the same time even in a distracting environment. The child can cope in a group learning situation for long periods of time.

Useful References and Links

Cooper, Moodley, Reynell 1997