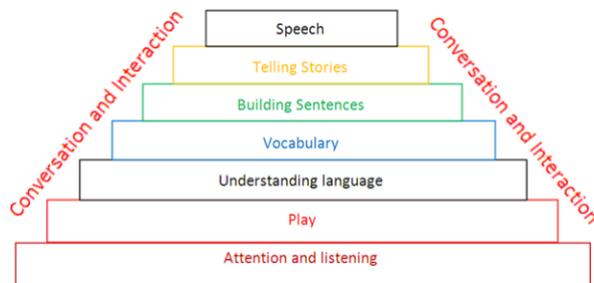




L is for listening



A child develops their attention and listening skills by listening to everyday sounds around them such as a telephone, washing machine, animals noises etc. They will also need to focus their listening on spoken language before they can learn to speak for themselves and communicate effectively with others. Below is an example of attention and listening milestones per age range according to the Buckinghamshire Speech and Language website's communication carousel and examples of activities to aid your child's listening skills.



As you can see from the communication pyramid, Listening and attention is the foundation of conversation and interaction.

2-3 Years

Saying a child's name before talking to them will help them to gain attention. Saying words such as 'look' and 'watch' will start to shift their attention from task to direction. In this age range children should:

- Recognise and respond to many familiar sounds, e.g. turning to a knock on the door, looking at or going to the door.
- Show an interest in play with sounds, songs and rhymes

Recommended **activities** for this age range are:

- Copying sounds using musical instruments or even pots and pans with wooden spoons. Make it fun, sing, bang loudly, tap quietly, bang faster, tap slowly.
- Nursery Rhymes told or sung, leaving out words and seeing if they can fill them in. "Humpty Dumpty sat on a" "Baa Baa Black"
- Ready, Steady, GO.....This is my favourite early listening game as it can be played anytime and anywhere. Blowing bubbles "Don't pop them yet...Ready, steady, GO!" "Stay at the top of the slide, wait for it, Ready, steady, GO!" "Lets have a running race, Ready, steady, GO!" the options are endless, but it encourages anticipation and listening skills.



3-4 Years

Children of this age are beginning to be able to control their own focus of attention. They must still give their full attention (both looking and listening) in order to follow directions. Model good listening skills to your child, if they are talking, go down to their level and comment on what they have just told you. I know it's easier said than done as my children always want to have in depth conversation when I'm cooking dinner or mid paragraph like now!

Children will start to:

- Listen to others one to one or in small groups, when conversation interests them.
- Listens to stories with increasing attention and recall.

Recommended **activities** for this age range are:

- Make sure all distractions are kept to a minimum, read a story with your child and ask them questions about different aspects of the story. Attention and recall is a skill.
- Whilst reading a new story leave the ending and see if you child can tell you what they think might happen.



4-5 Years

Children of this age are able to carry out one activity and at the same time attend to someone else giving them directions. This is called dual channelled attention. Most children will have well established dual - channelled attention by the time they begin full-time education.

Recommended **activities** for this age range are:

- Action games such as Simon says, head, shoulders, knees and toes and musical bumps and statues are fantastic games to play to aid listening and attention skills.
- Pairs card games are also great for memory retention, listening and attention.

