



Child's level of attention	Observations of the child	Strategies to gain, maintain and sustain attention
<b>Level 1:</b> Extremely distractible	Attention will be fleeting, and children may 'flit' between many activities. Will be easily distracted by sensory stimuli e.g., lights, colours, sounds, smells or movements. May move towards or away from sensory stimuli. Cannot attend to what is said. Appears not to hear voices or sounds.	Identify personal interests of the child/young person. Identify any focus of attention and follow the child's lead. Copy behaviour, actions, facial expression, and gestures. Use interesting actions body language and gestures. Use very high interest objects to gain the child's attention. Allow the child to hold or manipulate objects to enable them to engage. Try to engage senses using lights, colour, sound, music or movement.
<b>Level 2:</b> Single channelled - inflexible	Appears to ignore other people. Can focus on a self-chosen activity for long periods of time. Seems <u>very</u> focussed and ignores other stimuli. Speech of others interferes with the activity the child is doing. Needs to ignore other people to concentrate.	Allow the child time to complete self-chosen activities. Gain their attention by calling their name or by using sound. Use gestures and signs consistently. Use consistent language together with objects to engage attention. Use objects and give a 'timer' warning for activity changes.
<b>Level 3:</b> Single channelled – flexible with support	Attention is still single channelled, but the child begins to attend to others. Behaviour may change to indicate listening e.g., pause action. Is likely to listen if something interesting is suggested or offered. Can listen if they stop an activity and look at an adult, but they are likely to need support to do this. Will need support to refocus on a task or an activity.	Say their name before speaking. Encourage 'good looking and listening' when in conversation. Identify preferred activities and engage alongside copy actions and provide simple commentary. Use timers to stop activities. Use now and next (objects) to move from one activity to another.
<b>Level 4:</b> Can switch stimulus to stimulus	Looks automatically when an adult speaks. Needs to focus on a single stimulus. Can independently shift attention from task to speaker and back to task.	Say their name and indicate it's time to listen by using sign/gestures. Use signs with clear and consistent verbal instructions for routine activities. Use photographs pictures and symbols to indicate expectations and sequence instructions.
<b>Level 5:</b> Attends to more than one stimulus	Can integrate attention for short periods of time. No longer needs to look at speaker. Can take on comments and instructions whilst completing a task. Can listen to information whilst completing an unrelated task.	Develop attention to task slowly from a few seconds to begin with. Offer suggestions, ideas or instructions to extend attention skills. Practice moving attention from task to speaker and back to task. Use tools of communication to support integration and development of attention skills. Acknowledge good listening behaviour.
<b>Level 6:</b> Attention is well established and integrated	Listens and attends well. Can focus attention in a busy environment with multiple distractions.	Reduce potential distractions to improve quality of listening attention and manage levels of tiredness/anxiety. Plan frequent breaks away from noisy or highly distracting environments.