

Good listening skills



Explanation

Make it clear what we mean when we say 'good listening'. Practise and reinforce the good listening behaviours.

Good listening can be broken down into:

- Looking at the speaker – or at least in the direction of the speaker. Some children, for a variety of reasons, may find it hard to make eye contact and some differentiation for individuals may be required.
- Keeping still – or at least, fairly still. Some children need to move around a little but any such fidgeting should not be distracting; some may benefit from a 'listening' object, such as a small lump of play-doh to manipulate while they are listening.
- Thinking about the same thing as the speaker.

Children should be given opportunities to practise recognising these (including when they are deliberately done badly!) and commenting on whether they or other children have demonstrated them adequately.

Useful resource: 3

Did you know... Turn it down! High levels of background noise can make it much harder for children to listen to others.

Putting it into practice

In any lesson involving some paired or group work:

1

Recap the good listening components.

2

Demonstrate each in a scenario modelled for the whole class.

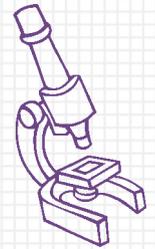
Sometimes having an adult deliberately performing some aspect of listening skills badly, for the children to comment on, can be very effective. It may only be necessary to demonstrate this once or twice before the children will remember what is meant by 'good listening' – for subsequent lessons a simple reminder will be sufficient.

3

Remind the children when they move into their paired work that, alongside the learning objectives, they should remember to demonstrate that they are listening carefully, i.e. that they are showing the good listening skills as discussed.

4

In the plenary/lesson feedback ask directly whether children's partners were listening carefully (and how they know this was the case).



Make it easier to start with...

Spend longer teaching and modelling each of the three components in isolation.

Make it more challenging by...

Deliberately demonstrating poor listening without any prior warning and asking the children what (if anything) was wrong with how the member of staff (or other child) was listening.

Taking it further

Basic good listening techniques are the foundation of the **Saying when you don't understand** and **Clarification** strategies (see strategies 2 and 3).

Photos of children demonstrating each aspect of good listening may also be useful.

These should be modified for older children, e.g. with simplified diagrams.



What works? Use the space below for your reflections on how this strategy worked with your class or group of children. How else can they remember and check that they are using the good listening rules?

