



WHY DO CHILDREN HAVE ATTENTION AND LISTENING DIFFICULTIES?

Nowadays the world around us is very visual. Television is the main example of this, but other things concentrate on using the eyes rather than the ears, e.g. computers, games machines, large advertisements, etc. When sound is used, it is often in the form of a very loud noise, or constant background noise, e.g. traffic and music. The volume is sometimes so great that children learn to “shut off” the noise rather than listen to it. All this can result in children finding it difficult to listen to quieter sounds like speech. This can affect their speech and language development.

Children with long term mild to moderate hearing loss (for example as caused by glue ear) might have attention and listening difficulties.

There appears to be a genetic predisposition – therefore parents with attention and listening difficulties are likely to have children with similar difficulties.

Diet might play a role. Some studies have shown that sweets and other confectionary and the artificial colours they contain might cause attention difficulties.

Children from chaotic and disorganised families present with a higher risk of developing attention and listening difficulties. However, it is likely that this is merely an outcome of genetic interplay, as parents with attention and listening difficulties are likely to lead disorganised lives.



The ability to listen and concentrate is an important part of all children's speech and language development. For children with delayed or disordered communication skills, it is even more important that they are encouraged to develop good listening and attention skills.

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Written on November 2012
To be updated on November 2013