



Attention needs

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Agenda

- Development of attention and listening
- What affects attention?
- What might attention needs look like/feel like?
- What can you we do to support children?



Attention



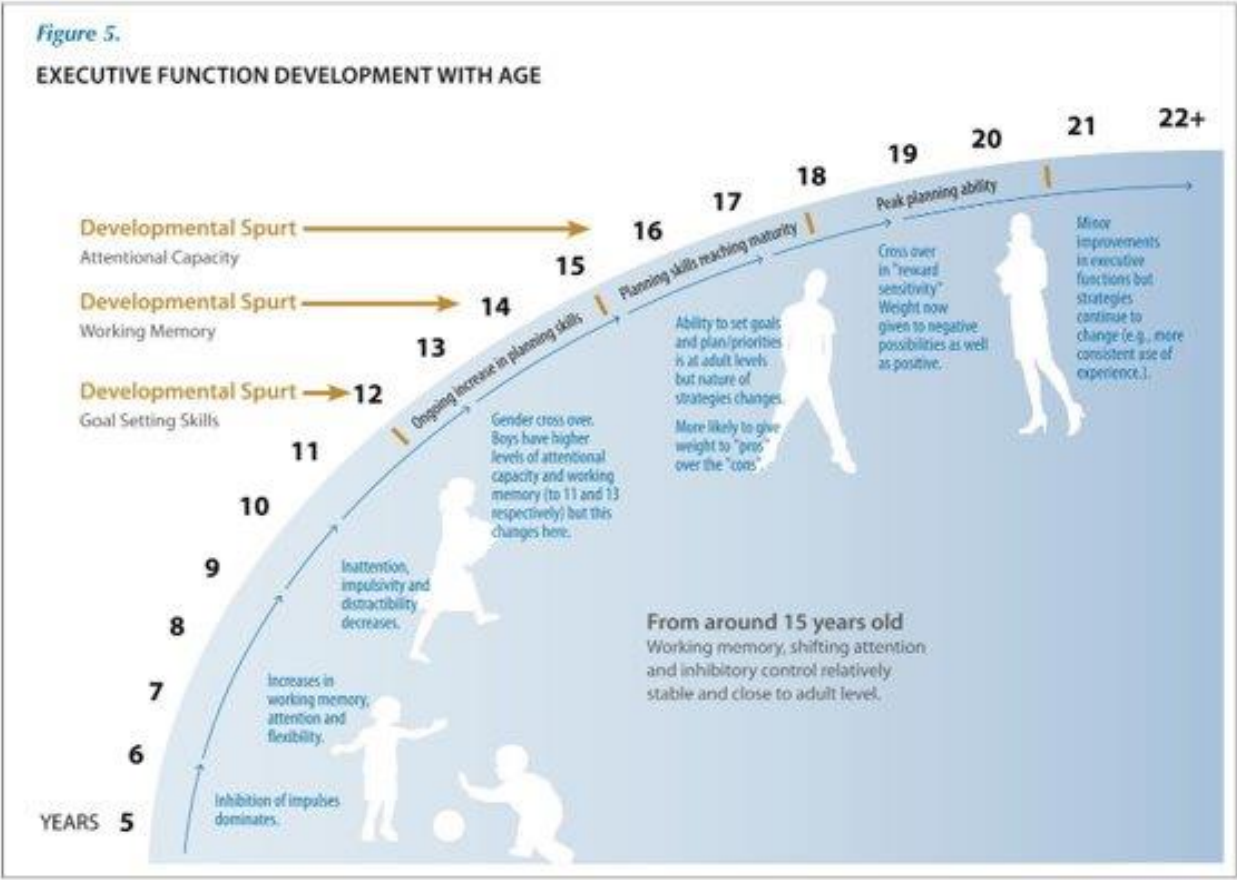
What do we mean by attention?

- Sustained attention
- Flexible attention
- Selective attention

Developing executive function skills



Development of attention



Attention with age...every child is different!



NHS Oxford Health
https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/13/2019/10/AS-D-Advice_Attention.docx



What affects
attention?

Attention can be influenced by...

Medical e.g. glue ear

Neurodiversity

Technology

Emotions

Stress

Difficult life experiences

Genetics



Environment

Motivation

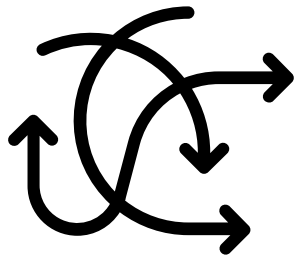
Difficulties with learning

And more...

What might attention differences look like?

Organisation

- Difficulties organising thoughts and following instructions
- Forgetful – forgets routines
- Loses things easily



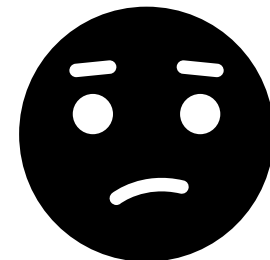
Hyperactivity/ impulsivity

- Restless, fidgety, need to move often
- High energy level
- Engages in activities with no consideration of possible consequences
- Talkative – may interrupt



Attention and concentration

- Sensitive to distractions
- Finds it hard to settle to a task
- Does not complete tasks
- Does not seem to listen to what is being said to them
- Avoid or dislike tasks that require focused mental effort, such as homework



What attention difficulties can feel like for child?

- Emotional dysregulation
- Confused
- Constantly being told off or not getting things 'right'



What can we do to support?

Reinforce
positive
behaviour

Diet and sleep

Physical
activity

Expressing
and managing
emotions

Supporting communication and processing:

- Explicit teaching of skills that connect to planning, organizing and self-regulation
- Predictable routines and schedules
- Clear rules and expectations (positively shared)
- Non-verbal signs (as agreed with child) and cues
- Contained choices
- Specific praise



Supporting wellbeing

- Engaging in child led play/positive time together
- Self-regulation activities - breathing
- Sharing their strengths and engaging in activities that connect to these
- Helping to label their feelings "I wonder if you are feeling..."
- Empathy and compassion for difficulties they experience "it's hard when you don't understand, I find I feel frustrated when I cannot do what I wanted to"



Supporting working memory

- Repeat instructions, break them down – one step at a time
- Provide visual and verbal cues where possible
- Memory aids – checklists, visual timetables.
- Encouraging storytelling



Managing unstructured time

- Promote physical activity with a focus – provide space and equipment for this e.g. obstacle course, sensory circuits (alerting, organizing and calming stages)
- Buddy approach
- Ending of unstructured time – provide calming activities



Maximise attention

- Consider environment (minimize distractions)
- Get to their level and improve chance they will attend and process information (eye contact, minimise distractions, use of their name first).
- Realistic time goals for focus, shifting attention.



Managing hyperactivity/impulsivity

- Games that develop impulsivity
e.g. musical statues or simon says
- Teach stop and count to 10
- Movement whilst
focusing/engaging in a task
- Drawing/doodling whilst listening
- CYP voice and ask for their view
on what has happened, involve
them in the problem solving?



Access to support:

- Families, Local Offer, Resources and Advice (FLORA) - provide information and advice for children and young people with additional needs and their parents and carers. For more information, email flora@bristol.gov.uk with your name and phone number. The team will contact you as soon as possible. You can also call FLORA on 0117 352 6020.
- Bristol Parent carers group: [Bristol Parent Carers](#)
- Inclusive play sessions: Incredible Kids - [Book a session - incrediblekids.org.uk](#)
- Becky Hancox or Sophie Sowden (SENCo's) if have further concerns.

Other support for parents

- Prioritising your own wellbeing is important to supporting your child's needs. What brings you joy and makes you feel calm?
- [Murmuration Community Therapy](#) - Nurture groups (small groups with parents of children with SEND - aimed to support mental wellbeing and monthly community gatherings for connection and idea sharing.
- Understanding your own EF skills can help you support your child's areas of strength and weakness [Parent Questionnaire \(cimlearning.com\)](#) [ESQ \(smartbutscatteredkids.com\)](#)
- Support around diet and sleep - Cerebra sleep service [Sleep Advice Service - Cerebra](#)
- Diet [Diet behaviour and learning in children \(thrivingfamilies.org.uk\)](#)



References

- Ideas/games that support Executive Function skills [Enhancing-and-Practicing-Executive-Function-Skills-with-Children-from-Infancy-to-Adolescence-1.pdf \(harvard.edu\)](#)
- Information on sensory circuits [sensory-motor-circuits.pdf \(wyevalley.nhs.uk\)](#)
- Information on attention development [ASD-Advice Attention.docx \(live.com\)](#)
- Guidance from British Psychological Society on supporting attention - [New DECP guidance encourages the use of non-pharmacological support for children and young people with difficulties with attention, activity and impulsivity | BPS](#)



Thank you
Any
questions?

Cat McFadden

Please speak to class teacher first
then Becky Hancox or Sophie
Sowden (SENCo's) if concerns
continue.