

Attention and listening activities

The following activities are designed to increase your child's ability to look, wait, take turns, listen and concentrate.



Waiting/ anticipating

'Ready Steady Go!' games are any activities where your child has to wait until you say 'go!' for an exciting thing to happen.

- Play 'peek-a-boo'
- Make a ramp by leaning a piece of card against a piece of furniture. Your child waits for 'ready, steady, go!' to let a car go down the ramp
- Blow bubbles and get your child to wait for 'go!'
- Play musical bumps
- 'Jack-in-the-box' - Crouch down on the floor with your child and both jump up when you clap your hands or bang a drum
- Other toys you can use are pop up toys, marble runs, running races, musical instruments - any toys that are exciting and your child will be motivated to anticipate



Doing things together

- Draw your child's attention to sounds in the environment when you are out and about – cars/ buses/ diggers/ tractors, police cars/ fire engines, birds, music, phones ringing, announcements etc.
- Sing songs and do the actions:
 - Wheels on the Bus
 - Wind the Bobbin Up
 - Incey Wincey Spider
 - Heads and Shoulders
- Try leaving out a word from a song the child knows well. Can they fill in the gap?
- Sing songs or put songs on the stereo and beat a rhythm at the same time with your hands or an instrument.
- 'Copy me' – do an action for your child to copy
- Reading is a good shared activity – build it into a bedtime routine
- Bath time is a time when there are a limited number of toys and less distractions. Spend time together pouring, splashing and dropping things in etc.



Taking Turns

Use the words 'MY turn' and 'YOUR turn' and prompt him to wait.

- Build a tower, taking turns to add the bricks.
- Take turns putting in pieces of a puzzle or putting a piece on 'Mr. Potato Head' (Try other games like 'Kerplunk' and 'Buckaroo' where you have to add pieces until something happens)
- Take turns rolling a ball or car between you on the floor.
- Post things into a posting box taking turns
- Fill a bucket with sand one spade full at a time in turns
- Take turns threading large beads onto a string.
- Use pairs of noisemakers (shakers, tambourines, drums). Take turns making sounds.
- Kick a ball between you or take turns kicking it at a goal or target
- Set up skittles and take turns to roll the ball and knock down the skittles
- Whatever you are doing with your child, you can take turns – stirring the dinner, putting toys away, dusting etc.



Listening Games

- Hide a toy that makes a noise around the house somewhere e.g. under a cushion, behind a curtain. Can your child listen and find it?
- Play 'copy the claps' where you clap a rhythm and your child copies it (use noise-makers or musical instruments as well)
- Put some toys or objects on a table and pretend they are in a shop. Give your child a bag, and a short list of 2 or 3 things to buy from 'the shop'
- Lotto game – choose a picture and describe it, to see if your child can listen and tell you if he has the picture.
- Link an action to a sound e.g. a drum means jump, a shaker means sit down, a clap means sleep. Can your child listen to the sounds and do the right thing?
- 'Listening for the sound' games – Play an instrument or bang an object/rustle some paper etc, behind a screen and get the child to copy it when you remove the screen.
- Play 'Simon says' – your child must do the action you say.
- Cut holes in some boxes so you can post things in. Stick a picture of an animal on each box. Your child must feed the right animal with something when you make an animal sound. You can also play this with teddies or puppets – your child has to listen for what the puppets want to eat and feed them (this could even be the child's finger, arm, leg, hair, nose!)

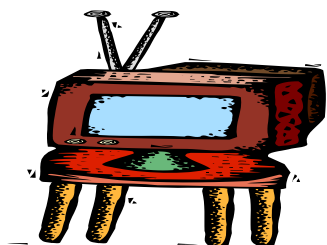


Looking

- Encourage your child to look at you before you say 'Go', in Ready Steady Go games. Praise him/her for doing 'good looking'.
- Get down to your child's eye level and look at them before pointing to something, giving an instruction, asking a question etc. Remind them to look at you as well before you speak.

When to Play

Find a time when you and your child are not too tired and try to get rid of other distractions e.g. Turn the television off.



Make your voice as **EXCITING** as you can, the more excited you are about playing, the more exciting the game will seem.

Brothers, sisters and cousins can join in as long as they take their turn properly and understand that they are joining in with *your child's* game. It may be very distracting so try this once and see if it works. If it doesn't, don't include other children again.

Make it **FUN** and stop playing while it is still fun. This way your child will want to play again tomorrow.

