

Games to develop focus and concentration

There are lots of games that we can play that can support your child's ability to concentrate on the task at hand. Games that require us to listen, think or to use our memory in order to achieve the end goal will support your child to begin to focus in a fun and playful environment.

Some of the games in this resource can be quite challenging and so rough age groups have been advised for some, alongside variations where possible. Remind your children that it is okay if things go wrong. Practicing some deep breathing before playing the games can help too!

These games can be used before engaging in learning tasks. Or if learning feels difficult today, substitute some of these games in their place, allowing today's learning to be about developing focus!

Supermarket game

This game is for children aged roughly 6+ and is played in pairs or groups. Person one starts by saying "I went to the supermarket and I bought an ..." and they say something beginning with the letter A for example apple. Person two then continues and says "I went to the supermarket and I bought some apples and some bread." The next person then chooses something that begins with the letter C, whilst reciting A and B first. The game continues, until someone cannot remember all of the item bought, or the next letter of the alphabet.

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1 - 2 - 3

This game is suitable for children aged roughly 5+ and is played in pairs. If you have more than one child they can take it in turns, it's a fun game to watch as well as participate in.

- Stand opposite your child.
- Start counting from 1 to 3, taking it in turns to say a number each. Once you get to 3, you go back to 1
- Once you get the hang of that part, you are ready for the next step. Instead of saying 1, you are going to clap your hands, so the rhythm would be 'clap,' '2,' '3,' 'clap..' Stopping at this stage might be challenging enough, and if you are finding it easy enough, continue to the next step
- Instead of saying 2, you bend your knees (you can choose a different movement if you would like to). So the rhythm would be clap, knee bend, '3.' If you are feeling really adventurous, move on to the final step.
- Instead of saying 3, you make a sound and an action such as 'kapow!' whilst putting your fist in the air like a superhero. The final rhythm becomes, clap, knee bend, 'kapow!' & fist in the air, clap...

Remind your children that it's okay if you get the rhythm wrong, just go back to the the start and try again!

Count to 20

This game works with 3+ people. The aim of the game is to count to 20, as a group. Only one person is allowed to say a number at a time. If two people say a number at the same time, you must restart from 1. If you are struggling to count past a low number, encourage your children to take some deep breaths. If you want to make it a little bit harder, play with your eyes closed!

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Object grab

Two players stand opposite each other, with an object (such as a bean bag or a ball) between them. They must both have equal distance between themselves and the object. Agree a word that will be the cue to grab the object, such as "spark". When the leader says the word, the players grab the object. The aim is to be the first person to get the object. The leader can support the players to remain focussed by first saying other words that sound like "spark" such as "lark, hark, bark sparse.."

Variation 1: If there are only 2 players, use a countdown timer that beeps when it ends (most phones have these). Set a timer, and as soon as the buzzer goes, grab the object

Variation 2: Add some movement into the game. As your children hop on the spot, squat, reach high and low, run on the spot, do press ups or star jumps and then call out "spark!"

Disappearing objects

Place a variety of objects on the table. Take some time to examine the objects. Explain that you are going to take one of the objects away and your children have to try to notice which object was removed. Swap over and let them have a go at removing objects whilst you guess which one disappeared. Add more objects to make it more challenging and use less for a more accessible game.

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Listening and drawing

Explain that you are going to sit back to back so you cannot see each others drawings. You are going to draw something (something simple using shapes and lines like a house or a flower). You may choose to begin by just drawing shapes such as a triangles or octagon. When you have finished your drawing, you are going to try and describe it to your child, whilst asking them to draw what you are explaining. For example, if you have drawn a flower you might say, draw a circle in the middle of your page about the size of a 2p coin. At the bottom of the circle, draw a straight line that goes down to the bottom of the page. Around the circle, draw 5 semi circles that are all attached to the middle circle. When you have finished explaining, compare pictures. Swap over!

This game can be quite tricky for little ones (and for us big people too) so there are a few variations below.

Variation one: using building blocks, ensure that both you and your child have a matching set of blocks (it's easier if they are all different colours). Sit back to back with your child. Build a tower and try to describe it so that they can build it. For example "put the red block at the bottom with the green triangle resting on top." Once you've both had a turn you start to notice just how much attention you need to pay and how specific your instructions need to be.

Variation two: Check with your child if it is okay for you to draw a shape, using your finger tip, on their back. Ask them to guess what it is. Once they get it right, swap over. You can also draw shapes, animals or letters.

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What are you doing?

This game is suitable for children roughly aged 7 and up and can be played in groups or pairs. Before playing, make an agreement to look after one another during the game. Stand in a circle or opposite one another. Person A begins miming an action and person B says "what're you doing?" Person A keeps miming the same action, but says the name of a different activity. Person B begins doing this activity until they're asked (By person C if playing with more than two people, or by person A if playing in a pair) "what're you doing?" Here's an example.

- Person A mimes playing a guitar
- Person B says "what're you doing?"
- Person A keeps miming playing the guitar but says "i'm painting a picture"
- Person B then begins miming painting
- Person C says to person B "what're you doing?"
- Person B keeps painting a picture but says "i'm baking a cake"
- Person C begins miming baking a cake

and so it continues... So, when you are asked, 'what're you doing?' you don't say what you are doing, you say what the next person is going to do...

Variation one: to make this game accessible to littler ones, you can take it in turns to mime being an animal (or something different) whilst the other person tries to guess what you are being.