



**Attention and Listening Games and Activities**  
**to play and do with your child**

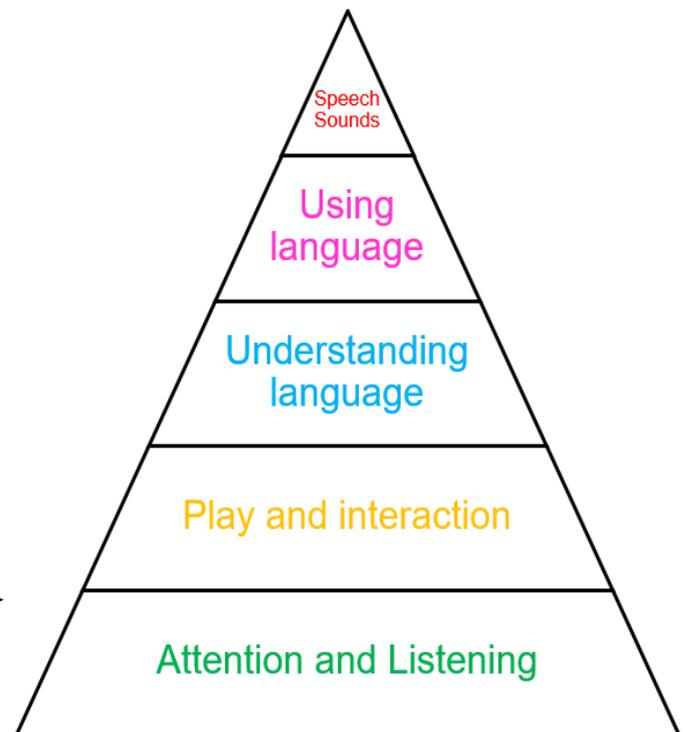
Attention and listening games and activities are a great way of helping your child to:

- Develop communication
- Develop learning skills
- Understand how to pay attention and respond to others
- Share fun experiences

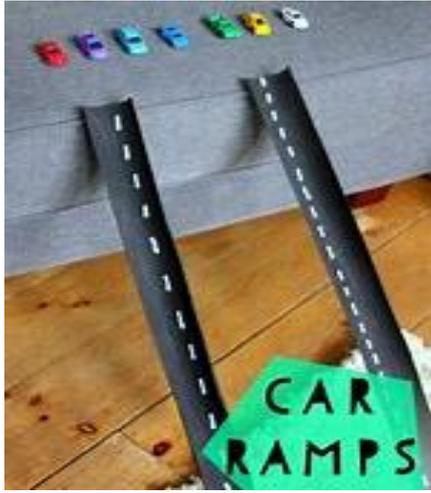
- ✓ The more fun and entertaining you are the more successful the game or activity will be.
- ✓ Try to be in front of your child and at their level - be prepared to sit or lie on the floor.
- ✓ Do not worry if the game or activity does not work to start with or your child appears to dislike the toy, just try something else from the list below to find out what your child's interests are.
- ✓ Try to find a quiet distraction free time and space ~ Turn off and put away all electronic devices.
- ✓ When you find a game your child likes, play it lots of times - repetition is a powerful way to master a skill.
- ✓ Give lots of praise using your child's name.



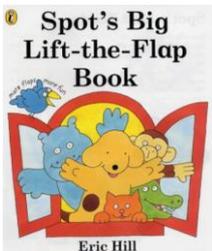
Attention and listening skills are the basis for Speech, Communication and Language development



Activity / Game	What you need	How to do it
For when your child can pay attention for approximately 1 to 3 minutes.		
<b>Calling your child's name</b>	Reward such as motivating toy / bubbles  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every so often call your child's name. You must have a reason for doing this, e.g. to give him / her something, or even just to give him / her a hug.</li> <li>• The point is that he / she is rewarded, with a hug or toy. If you don't reward him / her each time, he / she will realise there is no reason to run and respond to his / her name and won't always listen and pay attention when you call.</li> <li>• Try blowing bubbles when you call his / her name. He / she may need someone to show them how to burst the bubbles.</li> </ul>
<b>Ready, Steady, Go</b>	Bricks or shape sorter  A set of toy cars A tray or board to make a slope  	Build brick towers / shape sorter: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Initially build a small tower and give your child permission to knock it down after 'Ready, Steady, GO!' has been said.</li> <li>• Gradually build up the height of the tower so that the whole task takes longer and lengthen the time between 'Steady' and 'Go'.</li> <li>• This game can also be used with a shape sorter. Your child posts the correct shape into the box on 'Go'.</li> </ul> Cars: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold the car at the top of the slope.</li> <li>• Wait and keep the car at the top of the slope, don't let it go until you have said 'Go'. You can let your child hold the car but keep your hand over his / her hand so that</li> </ul>

		<p>the car is not released until the word 'Go'.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Repeat the activity until your child understands to only let go of the car when they hear the word 'Go'.</li> </ul>
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For when your child can pay attention for approximately 3 to 5 minutes.

<p><b>Games with an end</b></p>	<p>Jigsaw puzzles Stacking toys Threading toys</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give your child four cotton reels to thread onto a lace. This gives them a clear beginning and end to the task.</li> <li>Once your child can attend at one level, the attention span can be increased by increasing the length of the task, e.g. add another two or three cotton reels to thread.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sharing books</b></p>	<p>Simple books, preferably with one picture per page</p> <p>Try books with things to do in them, such as flaps to lift, e.g. 'Spot the Dog' books</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help your child to develop their attention for looking at books, encourage them to join in by turning the page or lifting the flap</li> <li>The aim is to keep the book fun so if you need to, skip through some pages quickly and get to your child's favourite page</li> <li>Encourage your child to point to pictures to make the book more interactive e.g. 'Where's Spot?'</li> <li>When looking at a book, see how many pages your child can sit for.</li> </ul>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Next time you read the book, read an additional page from last time, until your child can sit for the whole book.</li> </ul>
<b>Egg Timer game</b>	<b>Egg Timer</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make sure the room is quiet and hide an egg timer in the room.</li> <li>• When the timer sound goes off, ask your child to find it.</li> </ul>
<p>For when your child can pay attention for approximately 5 to 10 minutes.</p>		
<b>Animal sounds</b>	<p>A homemade posting box</p> <p>Objects or pictures of animals start with 3 and build up to 6</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Show your child one small world animal / picture and ask them to make the animal sound. They may need to copy you if the animal sound is unknown.</li> <li>• Encourage your child to post the animal into the box when the sound is made.</li> <li>• Continue until all the animals are in the box.</li> </ul>
<b>Noisy Stop and Go Games</b>  	<p>Items that make a noise:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drum</li> <li>• Wooden spoon</li> <li>• Saucepan</li> <li>• Shaker</li> </ul> <p>Actions that make a sound:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clapping</li> <li>• Stamping</li> <li>• Clicking fingers</li> </ul> <p>Homemade instruments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plastic bottle with some stones, beads or dried peas inside</li> <li>• Seal the lid very tightly Decorate the shaker together and wrap the paper around the bottle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain to your child the game is all about making noise and listening to instructions about when to stop.</li> <li>• Tell your child to make lots of noise until you say 'Stop' and when you say 'Go' start again.</li> <li>• Be prepared for lots of noise.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Listening Box / Bag</b></p>	<p>Colourful bag or box with lid Different objects that make a sound:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set of animals</li> <li>• Musical instruments</li> <li>• Set of vehicles</li> </ul>  	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lay the objects out on the floor, name them and demonstrate the sound they make. You can make the sound if you need to.</li> <li>• Place each object back in the box and sing 'What's in the listening box today?' to the tune of London Bridge is falling down.</li> <li>• Open the box, make the sound of one of the objects inside then quickly close the box to build up anticipation.</li> <li>• Ask your child what they think is in the box. If they need a clue, repeat the sound and slowly bring part of the object out of the box so it can be partially seen.</li> <li>• Wait to see if your child can name the object. Praise them when they have named the object correctly. If they do not guess correctly, model the word clearly e.g. 'It's a car.'</li> <li>• Do this with each object in turn.</li> <li>• Limit the objects to 1 or 2 to start with then build-up to 5 to make it more difficult.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Object cards and posting box</b> (Make sure your child knows what each picture is. Objects are a good first step then work up to pictures.)</p>	<p>A homemade posting box</p>  <p>A collection of familiar objects or pictures of familiar objects such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bike</li> <li>Cat</li> <li>Book</li> <li>Towel</li> <li>Apple</li> </ul> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lay four objects / pictures on the table and ask your child to identify the object / picture by name, e.g. 'Can I have the apple?'</li> <li>• To make it more difficult ask for two objects / pictures at a time, e.g. 'Can I have the cat and the book?'</li> <li>• To make it even more difficult ask your child to identify the object / picture by its function, e.g. 'Can you find something we eat?' (Apple), or 'Can you find something for cleaning teeth?' (Toothbrush), or 'Can you find</li> </ul>

	Toothbrush Umbrella	<i>something we use when it rains?</i> (Umbrella). When the object / picture is identified, your child can then post it in the box.
For when your child can pay attention for approximately 10 minutes or longer.		
<b>Shopping Game</b>	<p>Four to six common objects, e.g. a cup, a plate, an apple, a cake, a doll/teddy and a banana</p> <p>Shopping bag or basket</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Put four to six common objects on a table. You and your child sit a few steps away from the table.</li> <li>You hold a box or shopping bag and then ask your child to get one item, e.g. the apple.</li> <li>Your child is required to listen to and follow the instructions. Your child gets the item and puts it in the bag or basket. When your child has collected all the items, you could have a picnic with the doll / teddy.</li> <li>To make it more difficult ask your child to collect two items or move further from the table so your child needs to remember the information for longer while travelling a short distance.</li> </ul>
<b>Action cards and posting box</b>	<p>A homemade posting box</p> <p>Six action cards, simple pictures of a child: Jumping Drinking Running Sleeping Eating Washing Brushing</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Take six action cards and set them out in front of your child.</li> <li>Allow your child time to look at the pictures on the cards. Name the actions on the cards as your child looks at the cards. You could also demonstrate the actions e.g. if your child picks up a card that shows the action 'brushing', you could say '<i>brushing</i>' and show the action of brushing.</li> <li>Once your child has had a few moments to explore the cards, collect them in and explain you are going to play a game.</li> <li>Lay out two cards in front of your child at a time. Ask your child to</li> </ul>

		<p>show you an action from one of the cards e.g. <i>'Where's girl eating apple?'</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If your child appears not to understand, show them the action to help them.</li> <li>• When your child shows you the correct action card praise them to keep them motivated to carry on.</li> <li>• Your child can then post the card in the posting box.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Musical Bumps Games</b></p>	<p>It is not necessary to have any particular type of music, banging a spoon on a lid is just as effective.</p> <p>You can adapt this activity so that your child 'dances' on their bottom/knees.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your child dances to the music and when it stops, they must sit down.</li> <li>• This game is aimed at increasing your child's listening ability; as if he / she is not quick enough he / she will be out.</li> <li>• The game is best played with other children, such as brothers and sisters, but can be played by just one child and an adult.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Musical Action Games</b></p>	<p>Everyday objects that you can bang together to make a noise</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make up a set of actions with your child to match a set of sounds.</li> <li>• The sounds do not need to be complex but should be sounds that can be made by everyday objects or yourself.</li> <li>• When you make the noise, your child must carry out the corresponding action.</li> <li>• Once your child is able to respond consistently, increase the difficulty by making similar sounds. This means that your child needs to listen more carefully and so improves his / her listening skills.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Matching musical instruments / sounds</b></p>	<p>Two sets of identical instruments</p> <p>These can be real instruments or home-made ones</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First go through each instrument, and demonstrate the sound it makes, with your child.</li> <li>• Then hide the instruments so that they cannot see them. Play one of the instruments and see if they can select the same instrument from his/her set. Once your child can do this consistently, play him / her a sequence of instruments (e.g. 2 / 3) and see if he / she is able to reproduce it on their instruments.</li> <li>• Make sure the instruments sound very different from each other.</li> </ul>
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**To find out more / Useful links**

- <https://ican.org.uk>
- <https://www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/slt/attention-listening-early-years/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/eyfs-early-years/z6bgnrd>