



## ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP ATTENTION & LISTENING SKILLS

It is very important for all kinds of learning that children have well developed attention and listening skills. Here are some ideas for you to work on at home to develop these skills with your child when s/he is at a **twelve- to twenty-four-month** stage of development.

### Hiding games

These encourage your child to think about what they are seeking or what they are feeling.

#### *Hunt the sweet/toy*



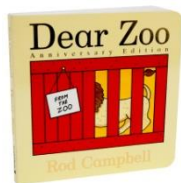
Hide a sweet or toy while your child is watching; e.g., under a cushion. Ask your child to go and get it. After s/he has found it, name its hiding-place; e.g., 'Well done, it was under the cushion.' Gradually increase the time between hiding and finding, to encourage your child to wait.

#### *Feely bag*



Put some objects with different textures into a bag or box. If you use a box, cover it with something such as a blanket or thick scarf. Encourage your child to put one or two hands in and feel for an object. See if s/he can tell you what it is.

#### *Lift the flap books*



Encourage your child to lift each flap and name what's underneath.

#### *Toy among the bubbles*



Fill a sink or bowl with water with a lot of washing-up liquid or bubble bath to make bubbles. Alternatively, you can do this while your child's in the bath, but make sure you have enough bubbles! Submerge a number of objects; e.g., comb, flannel, plastic container. See if your child can find what you ask for in the water.

### **Sensory games**

These encourage your child to think about what they can feel, not only through their hands, but other parts of their body.

#### ***Looking in the mirror***



Touch your nose and say, 'Where's your nose?', 'Show me your nose', etc. Dab the spot your child touches with hand cream, talc, etc. (anything that will leave a mark) so your child associates the name with that part of the body.

#### ***Playdough***



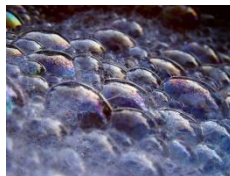
It is easy to make playdough in the microwave and it will keep for a long time in a sealed container – see the end of these ideas for the recipe. Let your child play with the playdough, squishing it in his/her fingers or pressing shapes into it.

### **Blowing games**

These encourage your child to concentrate on blowing something. The first three can be made more exciting by trying to blow the fish, feather or ball to a particular place.

Blow:

- \* paper fish across a hard surface, such as a table;
- \* feathers across a hard surface;
- \* a ball on water;
- \* candle out;
- \* talcum powder off a hand;
- \* bubbles on soapy water;
- \* mobiles or windchimes.



### **Noise games**

These encourage your child to listen to a particular noise and identify it or to make a noise themselves.

#### ***Animal noises***



Make animal noises and ask your child to point to the correct picture.

#### ***Hide the noise maker***



Hide something which makes a noise (e.g., a music box or mobile phone playing a tune) in the room. See if your child can find it.

### **Old MacDonald had a farm**



Encourage your child to make the sounds of various animals. This can also be used with other songs with animal noises.

### **Singing games**

Repetition of these helps your child to learn them. When they can anticipate a word or action, they are more likely to keep their attention focused.

### **Action songs**



Sing songs with simple words and actions;

- 'The wheels on the bus';
  - 'Here we go round the mulberry bush';
  - 'Miss Polly had a dolly';
  - 'Wind the bobbin up';
- I'm a little teapot;
  - Insey Winsey spider.

### **Nursery rhymes**



Recite nursery rhymes and leave pauses for your child to fill in the appropriate word.

### **Matching & sorting games**

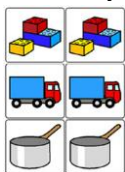
These will encourage your child to concentrate on looking.

### **Object-object matching**



Have two pairs of objects. Put one of each pair in front of your child. Hold up one of your objects and see if your child can hold up its pair. Once s/he can do this, you can use three or four pairs of objects. Let your child hold up an object for you to find the matching pair.

### **Picture-picture matching**



Have two pairs of pictures. Put one of each pair in front of your child. Hold up one of your pictures and see if your child can hold up its pair. Once s/he can do this, you can use three or four pairs of pictures. Let your child hold up a picture for you to find the matching pair.

### **Object-picture matching**



Have pairs of objects and pictures. Give your child either the objects or pictures. If your child has the pictures, hold up an object and see if your child can find the picture. Swap so that your child has the objects and hold up a picture. Once s/he can do this, you can use three or four pairs of pictures. Let your child hold up an object or picture for you to find the matching pair.

### **Sorting**



Have a number of three different objects; e.g., spoons (clean!), socks (definitely clean!!) and toy cars. Put them all into one big pile. Demonstrate sorting them into three piles of spoons, socks and cars, then see if your child can do it.

### **Play dough**

1 cup plain flour  
½ cup salt  
1 cup water with food colouring  
2 teaspoons cream of tartar  
1 tablespoon cooking oil

Mix all the ingredients together. Microwave on full power for 2-3 minutes, stirring halfway through.

#### **Tips:**

- ❖ For white play-doh, use cornflour instead of flour.
- ❖ Add glitter for special play-doh.
- ❖ Add food flavouring to make it smell good; e.g., mint, vanilla.
- ❖ It takes 2½ minutes to cook in an 800w oven.