



ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP ATTENTION & LISTENING SKILLS

One of the most common characteristics of children with difficulties in understanding and using spoken language is limited attention and listening skills. Here are some ideas that you can work on at home when your child is between **two and three years**.

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.

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 Wincey spider.

Musical instruments



E.g., drum, tambourine, home-made shaker.

Let your child "play" the instrument. Make a toy "dance" while s/he makes the noise. As soon as s/he stops, make the toy "go to sleep" or "fall down". Then swap; you play the instrument while your child makes the toy dance and fall down.

Copying a simple rhythm



Ask your child to copy a simple rhythm on a drum or tambourine or clapping.

Guess the toy



Choose some toys that make noises. Make a noise with one behind your child's back and ask him/her to guess which one you played.

Musical bumps/statues



Play some music while your child dances or walks around the room. Your child has to sit down or stand as still as possible when s/he hears the music stop.

Jigsaw Puzzles



The puzzle should be hard enough so it is challenging for the child, but not so difficult so that the child cannot do it by him/herself. Any puzzle or board game that has a definite end to it can be used in the same way.

Posting games



Lay out four, five or six cards with simple pictures. Ask your child to, 'Find the...' and post the picture in a posting box. When s/he can do this, increase the number of cards you ask for in one go to two, then three. You can make your own posting box by covering an old cereal packet or shoe box with wrapping paper. You'll need to cut a slit in the shoe box, though!

Picture lotto



You can either buy a game of picture lotto or make your own. Keep it simple; no more than four pictures each. Have a board each. Hold up a picture and see if your child can tell you whether it's one s/he has or whether it's one you have. Once s/he can do this, you can make it harder by calling out the name of what's in the picture rather than holding it up.

Birthday party story



Make up a story about a birthday party, where you talk about the presents guests brought. Have the pile of 'presents' on the floor. When you name a present (e.g., 'Rachel brought a *car*'), your child has to pick up the correct present.

Animal story



Tell a story with animals in. Every time an animal is named, your child has to make the noise of the animal.