

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 **three and four years**.

Make up a story



Make up a story with your child's name in it. Every time you say his/her name, your child has to stand 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.

Kim's game



Display several objects in front of your child. When his/her eyes are closed remove one. Then ask him/her to guess which one has gone. You can play this with a "naughty" toy who keeps on hiding the objects. Ask your child to identify all the objects with his/her eyes shut.

Find the toys



Name three toys from a selection and ask your child to put them in a box. (Vary the number of toys depending on how much s/he can remember at once.)

Dressing-up



Put some dressing-up clothes in front of you and your child. Ask him/her to put on two or three items. (The number can be increased depending on how many items your child can remember.)

E.g., "Put on the hat, the coat and the gloves."

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.

Simon says



The aim is for your child to listen to & follow your instructions - but only when you begin the instruction with "Simon says". E.g., "Simon says, 'Clap your hands'". If you don't say "Simon says" & your child does the action, s/he is 'out'. This game can be made more simple by removing the "Simon says" part. Give your child unusual instructions (e.g. "Jump to the window"). Swap roles so your child gives the instructions.

Sound Lotto



Your child has to match sounds to objects or pictures. These games are commercially available or you can make your own by recording household sounds.

Spot the difference



Your child is given two almost identical pictures and has to spot the differences between the two.

Copying the clapping rhythm



Ask your child to repeat/copy a short rhythm that you have clapped. You can swap roles and your child can become the teacher.

Hide & seek



Hide somewhere in the room or house. Call out to your child so that s/he has to listen to where the sound is coming from in order to find you.

Matching actions to sounds



Teach different actions to two or three different soundmakers. For example:

drum	run to the wall
music	sit down
rice in container	jump up and down

Each time you make a noise, your child has to do the correct action. You can make this harder by using other soundmakers where you don't give your child an action; e.g., if s/he hears a bell, s/he does nothing.