



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 **four and five years**. (Activities from the 'three to four years' sheet can also be used.)

Dressing up game



Place some clothes at one end of the room. Ask your child to, 'Go and put on a/the _____', etc.

Shopping game



Have a 'counter' at one end of the room with a 'shop assistant'. Ask your child to go to the counter and ask for items. Start with 1 item and gradually increase the number of items your child has to remember.

Shopping game 2



This game requires at least four to five players. The first person begins by saying, "I went shopping and I bought a" The next person must then repeat the phrase, remembering what the previous person 'bought', and adding another item.

Going to different places



These are all variations on shopping game 2, above:

I went to the market and bought...

I went to the zoo and saw...

I went on holiday and took...

Guess the object



Hide an object, or a picture of one, behind your back. Give clues about the object so that your child can guess what the object is.

Stories



Read your child a story. Stop at times and check that s/he has listened and understood by asking him/her what has happened and what will happen.

Follow instructions



Ask your child to follow a series of instructions; e.g., “Put on the hat, sit on the chair, then walk to the door.” You can reverse the roles by asking the child to become the “teacher”.

Describe a picture/Make a model



Draw a simple picture or make a model (e.g. a house/tower) without your child seeing what you have drawn/made. Describe the picture to him/her for him/her to draw it. (E.g., “Draw a house in the middle of the page. It has got a pointed roof and a chimney.”)

The aim is for your child to draw a picture/make a model identical to your own but without him/her seeing it. The game can be made more difficult by a) drawing more complex pictures, b) including colours, c) giving longer instructions.

Musical chairs/dance/bumps



When the child hears music, either played on a tape recorder or a real instrument, they have to dance. When the music stops they must stop or quickly sit on the floor. This game can be competitive if the last person to stop moving/sit on the floor is ‘out’ of the game.

This game can be made harder if the child has to move in a certain way for different types of music (e.g. move slowly for soft music and do big jumps for loud music).

Bean there!



This works best with a group of children and some room! The caller can call various types of bean and the children have to respond as follows:

Long bean – stand up with arms in the air

Broad bean – stand up with arms stretched out to the side

Baked bean – crouch down, making themselves as small as possible

Jelly bean – shake everything

You can make this easier by having fewer types of beans or harder by adding different types of beans.