

Games and Activities to support attention and listening skills with Early Language

Ready, Steady, Go! games

Encourage your child to wait until you've said "go" before each turn. Increase the length of time (s)he has to wait for the word "go", pausing builds the excitement!

- rolling a ball
- stacking bricks and saying "go" to knock them down
- holding an inflated balloon and saying "go" to let it escape
- use a car track and wait for "go" before sending the car down.
- Use shakers or drums. Your child waits for you to say "go" before they can play the instrument. It's fun to do this together with a matching instrument.

Turn-taking games

Play simple games together and aim to add on one extra turn each time:

- add a brick to a tower.
- put a piece in a jigsaw.
- post pictures in a post-box.
- roll a ball to each other.

Simple instruction games

- Toy shops, ask your child for one or two things to get from the shop
- Toy post box, ask for one thing for your child to find and post
- Inset jigsaw puzzles (each piece is a shape), ask your child for one piece at a time
- Talk together in play and include some simple instructions, like "can you put dolly in bed?"

Listening games

- Hide things that make a noise (for example, a wind-up toy, musical box). See if your child can find the toy by listening to the sound.
- Hide behind a chair and make a sound such as a giggle. See if your child can find you.
- Fill yoghurt pots with different things, for example, rice, bells, shake them and listen to the different sounds. If you have two the same, play a game at finding the ones that have the same sound.
- Use a wooden spoon to bang different surfaces, for example, the bottom of a plastic mixing bowl, bottom of a pan, the floor, a metal table leg. Listen to the different sounds. Bang along to the rhythm of the song.

- Play “Simon says....” Encourage your child to listen to the instruction before carrying out the action, for example, clap your hands, touch your nose, stamp your feet.
- Play musical statues, your child listens for when the music stops and then stops dancing.

Action songs and rhymes

- Sing songs together such as “Wind the Bobbin Up” or “The Wheels on the Bus” and encourage the child to join in and copy the actions.
- Leave pauses in the song so that child has a chance to fill in the gaps.

Stories

- Looking at books together can be fantastic. Read them often to make them familiar, and then encourage listening and joining in with the favourite bits. If they are not ready to listen to a story, choose books with simple rhymes or big pictures to talk about.