

LISTENING GAMES

These games and activities are designed to develop attention & listening skills. They become increasingly more challenging throughout the document. The games should be relevant for a wide range of ages.

Simple Listening Games

- Stop / Start Listening games – march around the room with someone banging a drum or an empty tin. Every now and again the marcher should stop marching and banging and freeze for the child or young person to copy.
- Listening to Music – play some music and let the child or young person listen to it. Let them feel the vibrations on the speakers and dance around, then freeze when the music stops.
- Pass the bean bag – pass a beanbag or toy around your family and stop when the music stops.
- Locating sound – choose a toy or item which makes a noise and invite the child or young person to explore it for a while, then hide the item and see if they can locate it.
- Symbolic Sounds with vehicles – choose a small vehicle and make the sound that goes along with it (e.g. choo choo for train or beep beep for vehicle). Push the toy around making the noise. Create a tunnel by having a box with a hole in it and stop making the noise when the vehicle goes into the tunnel and make it again when it comes out.
- Symbolic Sounds with animals – choose any animal and make it walk around, sleep etc and make the accompanying animal sounds.
- Listening for “go!” – give the child or young person any small, light object (e.g. a cotton reel or a beanbag). Model throwing the object into a box or hula-hoop, then every time the adult says “go!” the child or young person needs to throw the object. Experiment with waiting for longer before saying “go” and use a quieter voice to stretch listening skills.
- Listening for “go!” in games – listening for the “go” instruction can be adapted to any activity – banging musical instruments, knocking down a tower, rolling cars, running, splashing water etc.

- Loud v. quiet – child or young person can be encouraged to listen for loud or quiet sounds by repeating “loud, loud” in a loud voice, then “quiet, quiet” in a quiet voice.
- Matching pictures to sounds – have a set of 6 photos of everyday items / objects / animals and make the sounds. See if the child or young person can point out the matching picture.

More Challenging Listening Games

- Matching pictures to sounds – have a set of 6 photos of different categories for things which make sounds – e.g. animals, vehicles, musical instruments etc. See if the child or young person can match the sound they hear to the relevant picture.
- Pass the whisper – someone chooses a single word and whispers it to the child or young person. They then need to pass that whispered word down through a group and see at the end of the game if the word is the same one. To make it easier use a photo or symbol of the word, to make it harder use a short phrase.
- Outside sounds – take the child or young person outside and explain that they will need to listen very carefully to the sounds around them. See if they can identify 3 environmental sounds they heard – e.g. vehicles, birds, lawnmower etc
- Indoor listening game – similar to above but prepare a set of 6 different sounds and see if child or young person can identify what they are listening to. To make it easier have a selection of photos, some which match the sounds and some which don't.
- Pick out the word – give the child or young person 3 words to listen out for, then read out a paragraph or passage very quickly. When the child or young person hears the 3 key words they should stand up or put their hands up or shout out the word.
- Voices in the dark – the child or young person puts a box or cloth over their head and then staff and/or child or young persons should say “banana!” to them. The child or young person then needs to identify who said the word.
- Pass the whisper – someone chooses a sentence to say (a tongue twister is good to make it harder), then child or young person and the rest of the family are lined up and need to pass the whisper down the line. When they get to the end see if the whispered phrase from the start was correctly passed on.

- Imaginary object in the box – have an empty box and the child or young person (or adult to model) is shown in secret a photo or symbol of an object. That person has to mime the action of how to use the item and you get 3 chances to guess what the item was.

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