

Activities to support focus and concentration

Memory games	Card games such as matching pairs and snap.
Kim's game	Have a tray with objects on it. Begin with about 5 objects and build up to more over time. The child must look carefully at all the objects. They close their eyes and you remove one object, keep the position of all the other objects the same. When they open their eyes they must say which object is missing. Repeat by placing it back and removing another. To add extra challenge move the position of the objects after removing one. Alternatively move 2 objects.
Pattern reproducing.	Create a repeating pattern with objects such as sweets (colourful smarties are perfect!), lego, beads, pasta shapes, buttons etc. Ask the child to continue the pattern. This can also be done with drawn shapes in different colours or with stickers. For additional challenge add a timer to set a time limit.
Spot the difference Spotting books	These can be found in children's magazines, annuals, online and in puzzle books. They are perfect for concentration. Where's Wally and other books that require the child to find something are also great for focus and concentration. Usborne have a series of books '1001 Things to spot'
Oral memory games	Games such as 'I went to the supermarket and I bought....' or 'I went on holiday and took....' Each person adds a new objects and the next person has to remember the ones that come before and then add another. The sillier the items the more fun it becomes and can be easier to remember! Great for a long car journey too.
Instruction following games	Simon says. Add more than one instruction to add more challenge.
Scavenger hunts.	Ask your child to go and collect objects from around the house (eg a toothbrush, a pair of socks, an apple, a book). Choose objects from different rooms. Give them maybe 4 objects to start with and gradually increase to more as they get more competent.
Following instructions	Give a set of two instructions to begin with. Make the

	<p>instructions very precise. For example; 'Go to the kitchen and collect a banana.' Gradually add more instructions so that it is a sequence of instructions to follow such as; 'Go and get your book bag from on top of the kitchen table and get out just your reading diary, then bring it back to me in the living room' This may seem like a simple task but being able to follow a detailed set of instructions can be quite challenging for some children. You can also do it with background noise such as a radio or TV as this adds an extra level of distraction. Ask your child to repeat the instructions back to you before they complete the tasks.</p>
Instructions activity picture games	<p>Give instructions to create a picture. Your child needs to listen carefully to the instructions you are giving in order to complete a picture. Your instructions need to be precise and detailed. For example;</p> <p>First draw a snowman with a small head and a big body. Next give your snowman a blue and pink stripy scarf. Now add two black eyes and an orange triangle nose. On top of the snowman's head put a big red hat. Next to the snowman draw a small snowball. In the sky put five snowflakes.</p>
Press the buttons	<p>The task is for the child to remember a set of single digit numbers to press into a calculator.</p> <p>Write the numbers on a card and then say each number aloud with the child watching. Start with 4 numbers. They must not be in a logical sequence. Repeat this and then ask the child to repeat the numbers several times. Then they have to put the card down and try and put the numbers in the correct order into a calculator (or alternative write them down- but a calculator is more fun!). As they get better at this activity add more numbers to the sequence.</p>
Get the loot	<p>Have a set of matching pairs cards. Lay one set out in one room and another matching set in another. Ask the child to turn over two cards and look at them. Then they need to retrieve the same cards from the other room. Begin with 2 cards and then gradually build up to more.</p>
Now you say it!	<p>Have a set of objects on a table. Say out loud a list of the objects such as 'I say book, brush, cup, button' Then say 'Now you say it' They repeat the list. If it is correct they can collect the objects and score a point. Repeat this</p>

	several times. Add more objects to the list to add greater challenge.
Follow the leader	Clap a pattern of beats and ask the child to clap back the pattern. Add long and slow beats, loud and soft. Begin with three beats and gradually build up. You could do this with a wooden spoon on a pan for a bit more fun!
Let's go!	The child must listen to a set of instructions and follow them in the order that you give them. They can only start when you say 'go' Start with two instructions; lift your hands in the air and jump Gradually add more instructions; Lift both hands in the air, clap and then jump.
Looking for goodies	Set up a simple obstacle course either outside or inside. Give a set of instructions of the route the child must take to retrieve a 'goody' This might be a toy, a piece of fruit or a treat. Suggested instructions; Under the table Behind the chairs Over the chair Over the cushions Around the table Through the tunnel