

# Concentrating and listening – ways to help your child

- **Go!:** Roll a ball between you and your child whilst using 'ready, steady... go'. Start off with a short pause between 'steady' and 'go', then gradually make the pause longer.
- **Run and touch:** Identify three different things outside (e.g. slide/ seat/tree). Say to your child 'run to the tree'. If your child finds this too easy, tell him/her to run to two things e.g. 'run to the tree and the slide'.
- **Go on a 'listening walk':** As you walk around town/in the garden/around the house, encourage your child to listen to all the different sounds. Ask them if they can guess what it is and point to it.

## When should I ask for help?

If you are concerned that your child is having difficulties with learning to concentrate, speak to your: Health Visitor, Doctor, local Children's Centre or your child's pre-school (if they go to one).

Developed by Peterborough  
Speech and Language Therapy  
Children's Centres Team

## A guide for parents





## Why is it important to be able to concentrate and listen?

Children need to be able to concentrate and listen so that they can learn to talk. Before children can learn new words and sounds they need to be able to focus on the person who is speaking and ignore other noises.

## Top tips to help your child listen and concentrate

It takes several years for a child to learn how to concentrate and listen. Babies and toddlers have very short attention spans and are easily distracted. They can only focus on one thing at a time and can become tired and distressed in a very noisy or busy environment. So try the following ideas:

- Say your child's name before giving them instructions.
- Reduce distractions – turn TV/radio and computer off.
- Try and find some time to play alone with your child.
- Don't have too many toys out at one time.



- Have toys that your child likes to play with. This way they'll spend more time with the toy and this will help them with their concentration and listening skills.
- Let your child choose the toy. You can then talk about what they are doing.
- Remember young children won't be able to play for long.

## Fun ways to help your child with their concentration and listening skills

- **Tick-tock:** Hide a clock or something else which makes a constant noise. Ask your child to find it.
- **Sound making:** Collect 2/3 things that make sounds (e.g. rattle/clock), or make your own by filling a plastic bottle or yoghurt pots with a lid with stones, rice or buttons.
- **Action songs:** For example, 'Incy wincy spider', 'Twinkle twinkle little star', 'Row row row your boat'.

