



Games to play to help concentration and listening skills.

Coin game



Collect some assorted coins, 2 of each one, then choose five and arrange them into a sequence: for example, 2p, 10p, £1, 50p, £2.

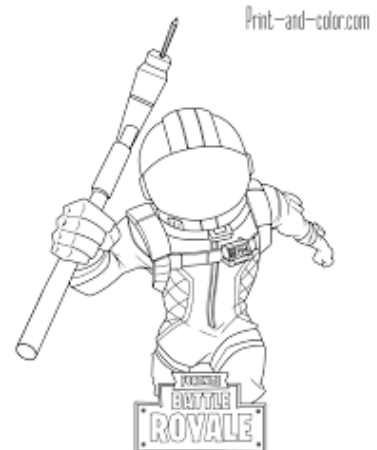
Get your child to look at them closely for 10 seconds or so, then cover them.

Ask your child to make the same pattern using the coins in front of them, timing them with a phone timer. When completed, note down the time they took and whether they got the pattern right; if they didn't, get them to try again until they're correct. Parents have a turn as well. Older children will find it hilarious if you struggle.

Mindful colouring -staying within the lines.

Colour a picture and stay within the lines.

Or get them to copy a picture from a colouring book. They can give their arms a good shake to get rid of energy and tension, then do more copying, and so on. As they get better at focusing, you can increase the time they spend copying, and reduce the number of breaks they get.



Memory game.

This is a classic game-great for concentration skills. Collect small household objects, such as a key, a potato mashed, a paperclip, an orange, an apple – collect about 20 in total – and arrange them on a tray. Look at them for about 30 seconds and study the objects, then cover them up with a tea towel. Recall as many objects as possible within a set time or remove one item then uncover the tray and ask them to identify what's missing.



Play listening games.

Like Simon says or make up your own simple listening games. For example, you can say, "I'm going to give you a mission. I want you to bring me the following items: A hairbrush from your bedroom and a slipper from our room." Each round, you can add one more item, always give lots of praise.

Cook together.

Find a recipe, read the directions out loud, and let your child do the measuring, mixing, stirring, and pouring.

Tidy up

Or make cleaning up a game by recording your instructions, he will love it if dad can do this: "Pick up your cars and put them on the shelf. Then put your clothes in the basket." Child could even record a message back.

Listen to music.

"Read" a song together. Buy a music recording and a corresponding book of lyrics, so you can follow the words along with the music.

Counting.

Try counting backwards – especially in numbers other than one – requires them to really apply themselves to the task and helps boost concentration skills. Such as count back in twos. They will have to stay on focus and engage their brain.

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Count words in a paragraph.

Take a book and choose a paragraph of text for your child to look at. The aim is not for them to read it, but to count every word in the paragraph.

Once they've counted each word, get them to go back and count again.

Did they get the same answer? If not, get them to count again; if they did, next time, you can give them a different or longer paragraph to work through. It's impossible to let your mind wander when you're paying such close attention to detail.

Spot the difference and odd one out games

Puzzles such as "Where's Wally", where they must spot Wally. Or you can get puzzles made with themselves hidden in them or stories. Or looking for things in books.

Comment on what they are doing rather than asking lots of questions. This keeps them focused and interested.

Have fun spending time together