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# Let's Play and Focus! Helping Your Child Build Attention Through Fun

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復健科



新竹市立馬偕兒童醫院

委託台灣基督長老教會馬偕醫療財團法人興建經營

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## 🧠 What Is Attention?

**Attention** refers to the mental ability to focus, maintain, and shift concentration according to activity demands.

It consists of two main aspects:

- **Attention span:** The amount of time one can stay focused.
- **Types of attention:**
  1. **Sustained attention**
  2. **Selective attention**
  3. **Divided attention**
  4. **Alternating attention**

## Types of Attention

Type	Definition	Example
<b>Sustained Attention</b>	Maintaining focus on one task or object for a period of time.	Watching a bird build its nest continuously.
<b>Selective Attention</b>	Focusing on one target while ignoring distractions.	Paying attention to the TV despite a noisy environment.
<b>Divided Attention</b>	Paying attention to more than one task at the same time.	Cooking while talking on the phone.
<b>Alternating Attention</b>	Switching focus back and forth between different tasks.	Reading a book word by word, shifting focus from one part to another.

Different daily activities require different types of attention.

Because each task challenges attention in unique ways, a child's performance may vary across situations.

## Activities to Enhance Attention

The following **home activities** can help strengthen your child's ability to focus and shift attention in fun and interactive ways.

Adjust the difficulty according to your child's developmental level.

### ● Red Flag, White Flag Game

Goal: Improve sustained and selective attention.



Materials: Two objects (one in each hand), such as socks, spoons, or toothbrushes.

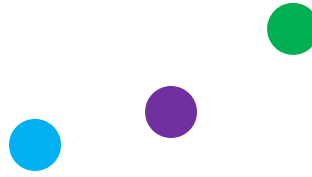
Instructions:

- Give commands like "Raise the sock," "Raise the toothbrush, lower the sock," or "Raise both."
- Once the child performs correctly, let them take turns giving instructions.

## **Rolling Ball Challenge**

Goal: Improve selective and divided attention.

Materials: Several colored balls.



Instructions:

- Roll balls toward your child and tell them which colors to catch or ignore.
- Increase difficulty by asking the child to roll specific colors back to you.

## **Send the Balloon Home**

Goal: Strengthen divided and alternating attention.

Materials: One balloon, a foam mat or paddle, and a room with obstacles.

Instructions:

- Ask the child to hit the balloon with the mat, keeping it in the air and guiding it to the finish line.
- If the child cannot focus on both the balloon and the obstacles, start with no obstacles and add them gradually.

## **Color Naming Game**

Goal: Train alternating and selective attention.

Materials: Colored stickers or paper circles arranged in a row.

Instructions:

- Ask the child to name each color in sequence.
- To increase challenge, name the colors yourself but intentionally make a few mistakes—your child raises their hand whenever they hear a wrong color.

## **Role of Occupational Therapy**

Occupational therapists use **play-based activities** to help children practice and develop various types of attention in real-life situations.

Activities are designed and adjusted based on each child's abilities to ensure both success and motivation.

If you notice your child frequently loses focus, is easily distracted, or struggles with daily tasks, please consult your **occupational therapist** for individualized evaluation and training recommendations.

### **Contact Information**

**Department of Occupational Therapy**

**Hsinchu MacKay Children's Hospital**

*We care about your child's growth, learning, and development.*

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