

# Concentration and Attention

## PLAYFUL LEARNING

- **Lack of concentration checklist**
- **Activities and games to improve concentration**
- **Strategies to improve concentration in children**



# Lack of Concentration and Attention

Attention and concentration difficulties are very common in children. Children are super energetic and curious. That why making them sit down and do a task without distraction, can be quite a task. Their focus is so short-lived that sometimes even the new toys attract their attention for just a few hours or less. Things may get worse when you make them do activities like homework that require active mental presence and concentration.

Concentration becomes an important way in which children can exploit their intellectual capacity when they start school, if not before. This means that they have to focus their attention on the tasks and block out distractions. Lack of attention and concentration difficulties can cause problems at school as well as in later life.

But, like any skill, concentration can be improved and made automatic. It is possible to help a child focus on a task and increase concentration skills for a longer period of time. Simple activities and constant motivation can help children improve their attention. The trick is to be consistent.

But first, check if your child lacks attention.

## Lack of concentration checklist

	Yes	No
Does your child find it difficult to concentrate on one activity at a time? Does your child quickly lose interest in a game or activity and look for something else immediately?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does your child find it difficult to concentrate on tasks in an age-appropriate manner? Does he or she lost interest before finishing?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does your child abandon jigsaw puzzles, memory game or drawings regularly?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does your child get easily distracted by trivial things instead of continuing with the task at hand?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has your child difficulties in learning and remembering?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does your child have trouble concentrating on homework and is progressing slowly?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is your child often oblivious to his or her environment? Is he or she often lost in daydreams?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does your child tire easily when doing compulsory tasks and quickly lose interest?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does your child often make careless mistakes when completing tasks? Does he or she easily overlook details or copy information down incorrectly?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does your child often sit in front of the television as if hypnotised? Does he or she occupy him- or herself with PlayStation or computer games for hours?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Can your child only listen for short periods and superficially? Has your child difficulties precisely repeat what's been said?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Do you feel that what you say to your child often goes in one ear and out the other?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has your child difficulties in following spoken directions without needing to hear directions several times?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has your child poor handwriting compared to kids of the same age?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Does your child display poor gross motor skills like running or jumping?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is your child sometimes aggressive or moody?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

# Activities to Improve Concentration in Children

Learning to concentrate can be a difficult task for primary-school children. Experts believe that typically, a child can concentrate hard for 3-5 minutes for every year of their life: so a five-year-old may be able to focus for around 15 minutes, while a 10-year-old can stay on task for the best part of an hour.

However, many children find it hard to concentrate for even short spaces of time, particularly if the activity they're working on doesn't engage them, or if there are lots of distractions. But it is possible to improve their attention and focus without it feeling like a chore for you or your child. Concentration is like a muscle that requires regular exercise to strengthen. Here are some games that can help your child develop stronger concentration and achieve more.

## 1. Focus / thinking games & exercises

**Jigsaw Puzzles** - a jigsaw puzzles are a fantastic tool for improving attention and concentration, hand-eye coordination and thinking in a logical way to solve a problem.

*(you can find online puzzle for kids on: [www.myhomeschoolmath.com/onlinepuzzle.html](http://www.myhomeschoolmath.com/onlinepuzzle.html))*

**Card games** - Memory or Uno can improve attention for numbers and pictures and concentration and attention span.

*(you can find online memory games on: [www.myhomeschoolmath.com/onlinegames.html](http://www.myhomeschoolmath.com/onlinegames.html))*

**Crossword puzzles** - can improve attention for words.

**Dot to dot game** - help in improving the observation skills, concentration, attention and fine motor skills.

**Mazes** - help in improving the observation skills, concentration, attention and fine motor skills.

**Spot the differences** - help in improving the observation skills, concentration and attention.

**Matching Letters** - matching the numbers to their corresponding letters - help in improving concentration and attention.



The crossword puzzle grid is as follows:

							E
	M						
	I						
						T	
	E						
	A						
							y

Illustrations and arrows:

- Stork: points to the top-left cell.
- Rabbit: points to the top-right cell (E).
- Mole: points to the cell containing M.
- Donkey: points to the cell containing T.
- Lion: points to the cell containing I.
- Bee: points to the cell containing E.
- Blue Bird: points to the cell containing T.
- Ant: points to the cell containing A.

Where do the words belong?

ANT  
BEE

BIRD  
DONKEY

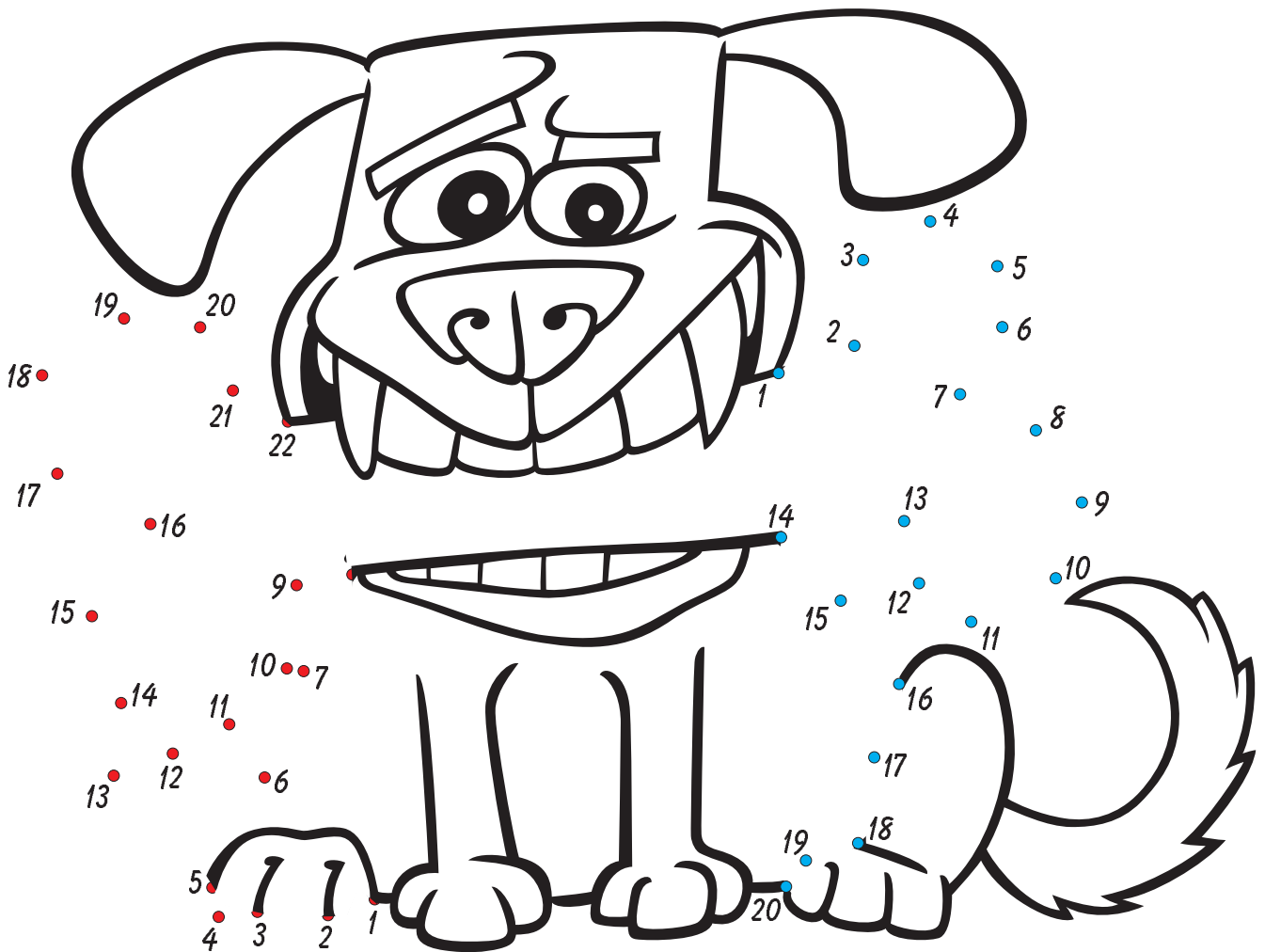
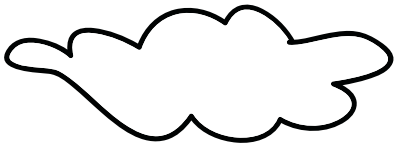
LION  
MOLE

RABBIT  
VULTURE

you can find more crosswords on: [www.myhomeschoolmath.com/prereading.html](http://www.myhomeschoolmath.com/prereading.html)

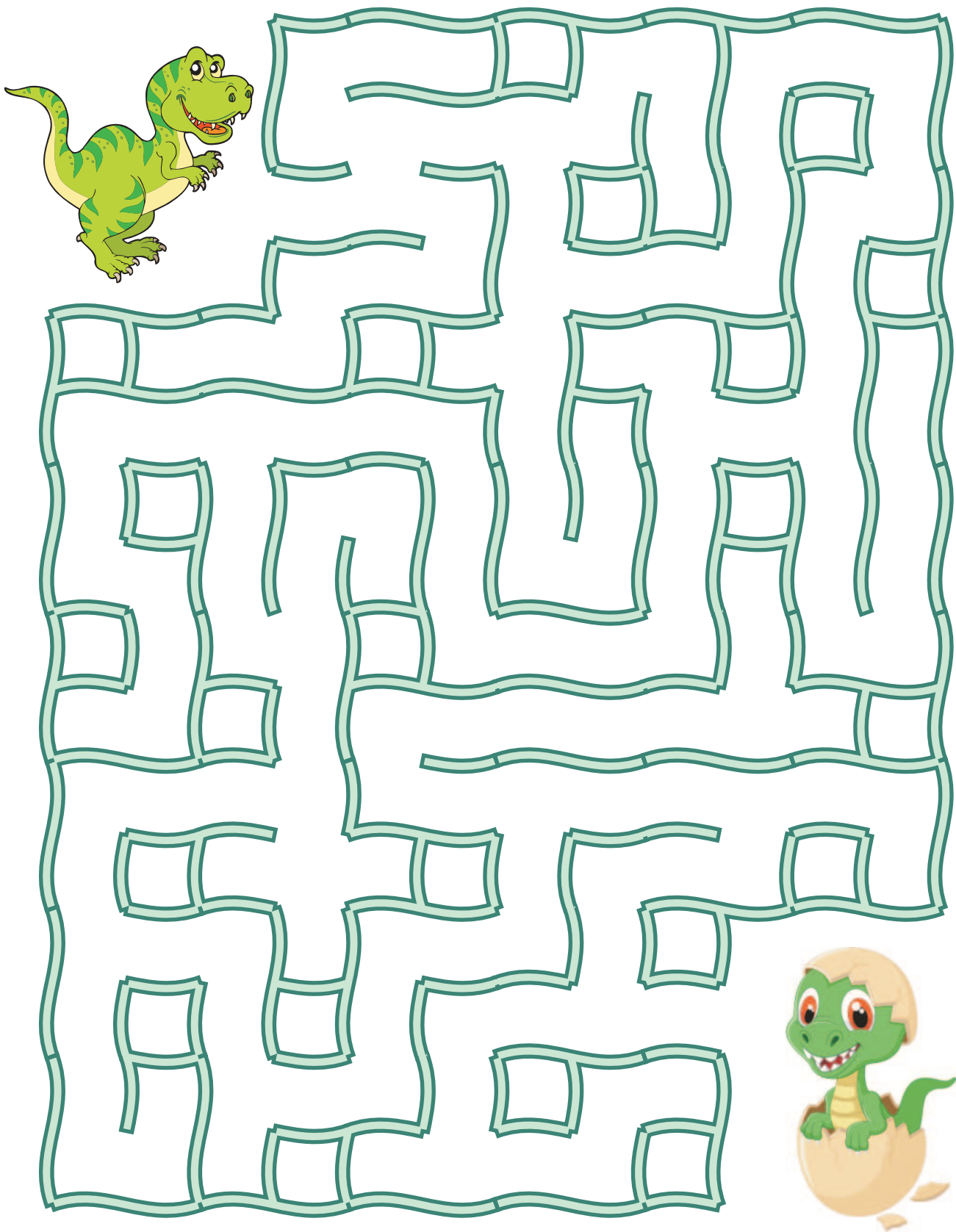
What is on the picture?

Connect the dots from 1 to 22 and from 1 to 20 and find out.



*you can find more dot to dot games on: [www.myhomeschoolmath.com/dottodot.html](http://www.myhomeschoolmath.com/dottodot.html)*

Help the dinosaur find its little one. Which way must Dino take?



*you can find more mazes on: [www.myhomeschoolmath.com/maze.html](http://www.myhomeschoolmath.com/maze.html)*

Find 10 differences.



you can find more differences on: [www.myhomeschoolmath.com/differences.html](http://www.myhomeschoolmath.com/differences.html)





Match the numbers to their corresponding letters.  
Enter the letters below the picture in the correct order.

1 W  
2 N  
3 N  
4 O  
5 A  
6 M  
7 S

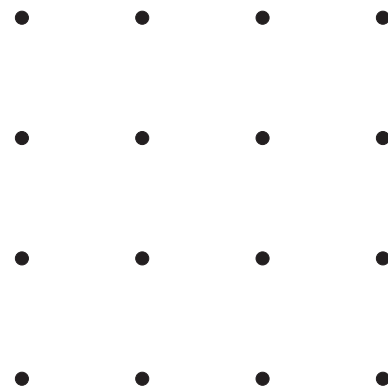
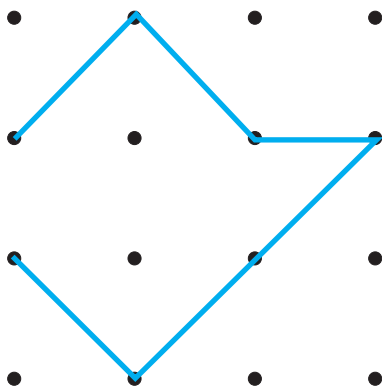
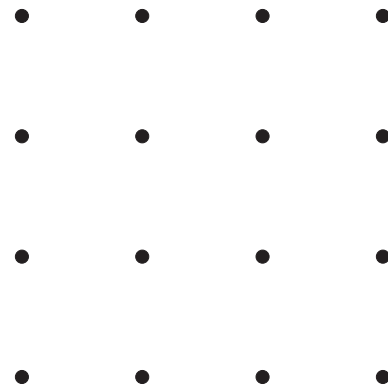
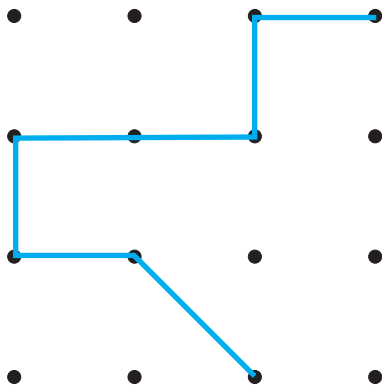
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*you can find more differences on: [www.myhomeschoolmath.com/visualperception.html](http://www.myhomeschoolmath.com/visualperception.html)*

## 2. Pattern and routine instructions

The link between sequencing and concentration is a strong one. Routines can also be fun when played with a pattern.

**Patterns Worksheets** - help in improving the observation skills, concentration, attention and fine motor skills.



*you can find more differences on: [www.myhomeschoolmath.com/visualperception.html](http://www.myhomeschoolmath.com/visualperception.html)*

### Routine Instructions

How to play: Make a pattern with instructions, for example: "Put your books into the bag, then keep your shoes away and then wash your hands."

If you have more than one kid at home, you can make them compete on who does it right at the shortest possible time.

### 3. What was not on the table?

It's a great visual, memory and concentration boosting game for kids.

How to play: Put 5 to 10 things on the table - pencil, spoon, gum, dice, match and so on. Let your child take a look for minute or two, and then ask him or her to close eyes. Change one thing with another, which was not previously presented. Your child will then open the eyes and find out what you have changed.

If your child easily masters the task, you can make the task more difficult and increase the number of things and/or reduce the observation time.

### 4. Where is the coin game

This game makes the child focus on the cups as you manipulate them.

How to play: Place the three cups upside-down. Place a coin under one cup while your child watches. Rapidly switch the cups and ask your child to tell under which cup the coin is.

### 5. Storyteller-Pictures

Storyteller-Pictures can be used in a variety of ways and here are a few ideas how you can use them:

**Creative Storytelling:** Have the child select multiple pictures and tell a story that contains all the selected pictures. In this way, younger children who do not yet know how to write but enjoy telling stories will develop their creativity and imagination, as well as strengthen their vocabulary.

**Storytelling in a circle:** Everyone chooses one picture. The first in the round starts a story that is in his picture, then the next continues the story with the theme of his picture, and so on. Pictures can be taken out in the circle, as long as all are off, and then the story is finished.

# Storyteller-Pictures



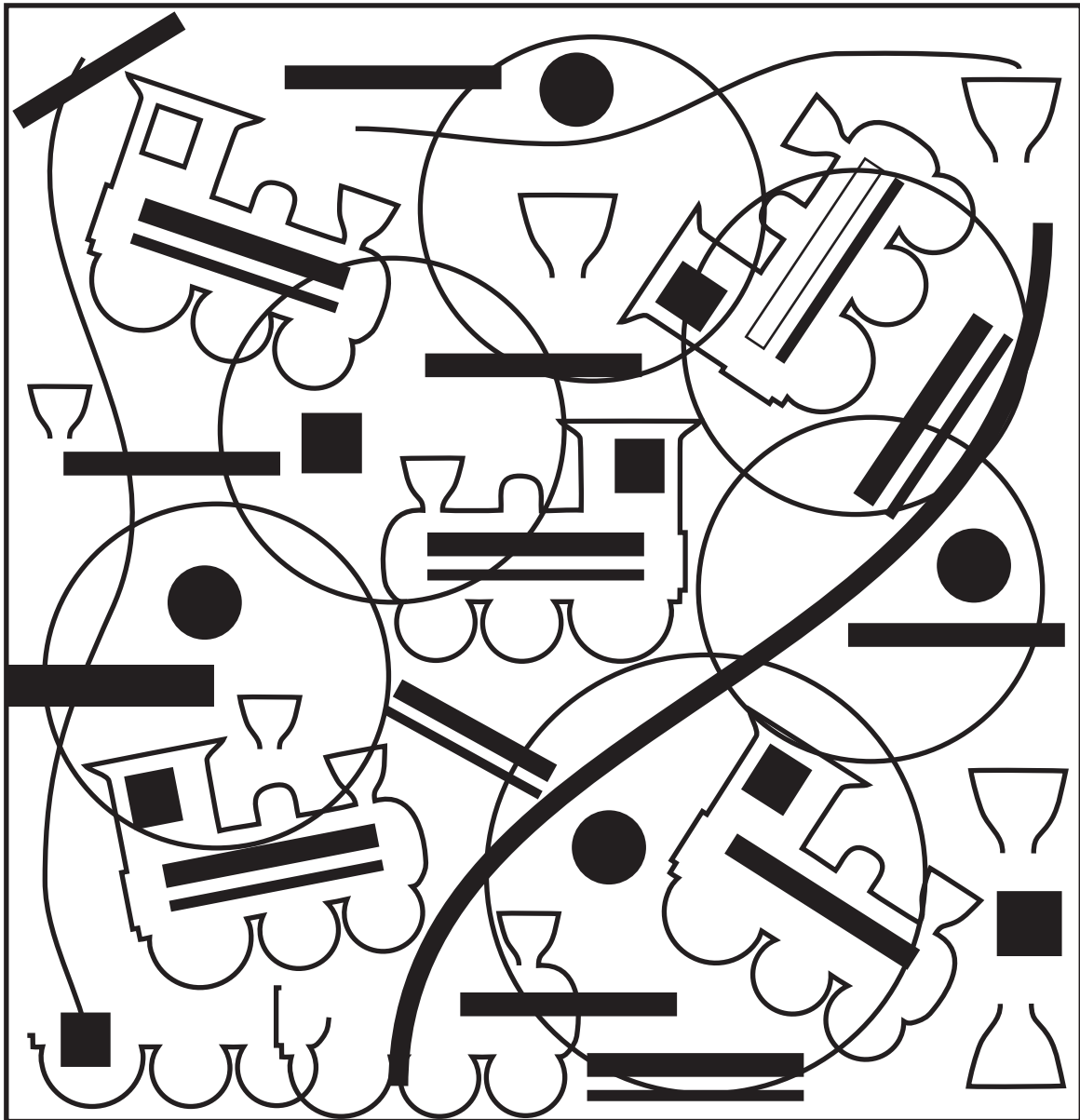
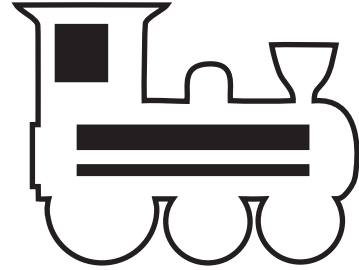
you can find more Storyteller-Pictures on: [www.myhomeschoolmath.com/kindergarten.html](http://www.myhomeschoolmath.com/kindergarten.html)

## 6. Hidden object games

**Find the objects** - Child must discover objects that appear in the different images.

**Find the detail** - Child has to discover the details on the picture.

Find the same and colour it.

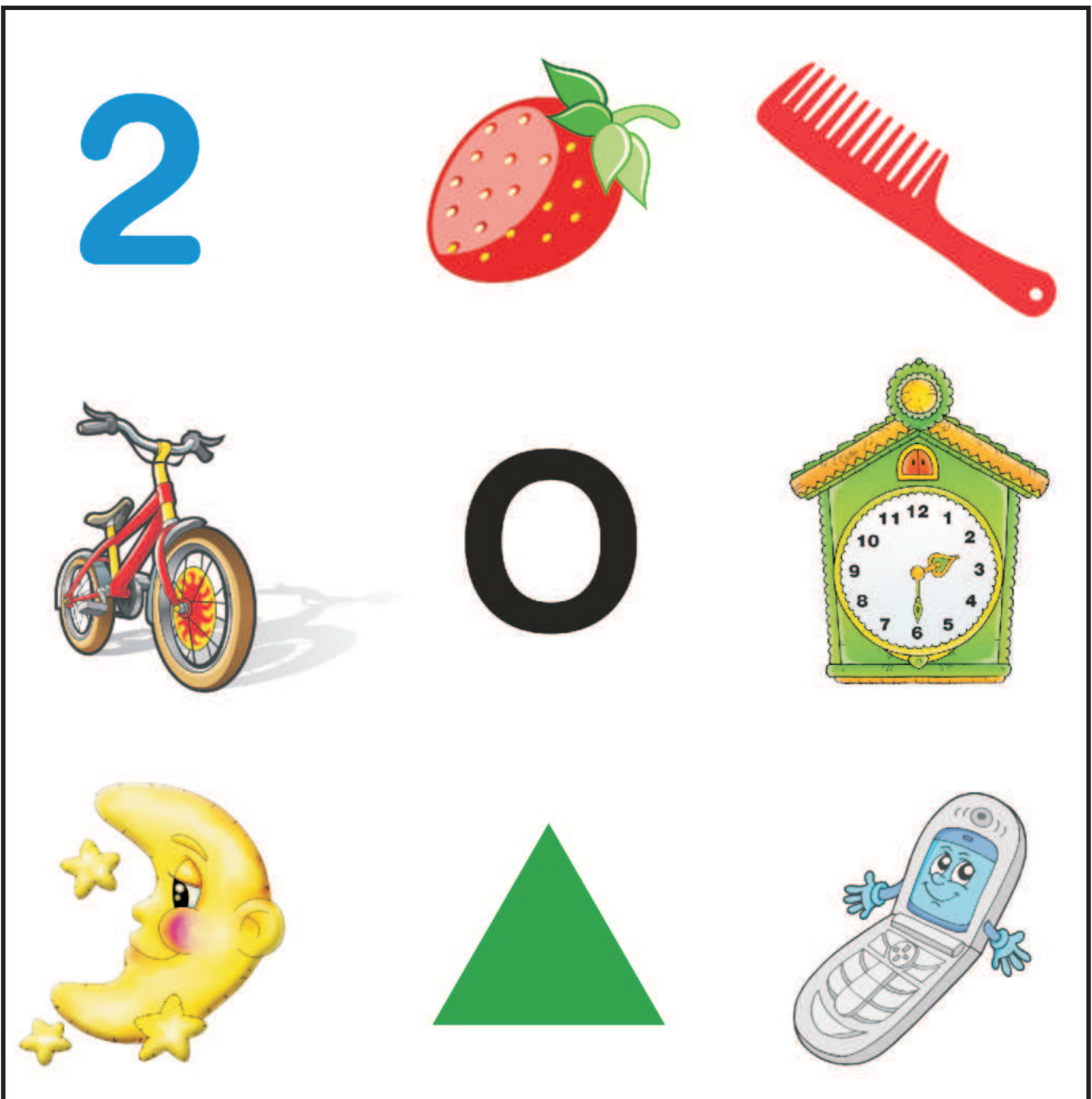


you can find more hidden objects worksheets on: [www.myhomeschoolmath.com/visualperception.html](http://www.myhomeschoolmath.com/visualperception.html)

## 7. Memory Cards

Print some **Memory Cards**, or make them on your own with pictures from newspapers or magazines. Place the card on the table in front of the child, face up, and leave it there for a few minutes until the child recognizes and memorizes all the pictures. Then turn the card face down and ask the child which items were shown on the card. Change the cards and reduce the observation time.

### Remember all!



*you can find more Memory-Cards on: [www.myhomeschoolmath.com/kindergarten.html](http://www.myhomeschoolmath.com/kindergarten.html)*

## 8. Tangram

The **Tangram** puzzle consists of 7 geometric pieces, known as tans, which are normally boxed in the shape of a square. The objective of the puzzle is to form a specific shape using all seven pieces, which may not overlap. You can either buy this game, or make one using paper template.

Then see whether your child can put together figures suggested by you or invented by him or her.

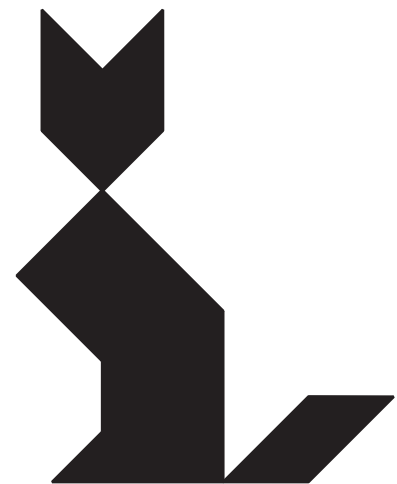
# Animals



Camel



Swan



Cat



Bird



Fish



Horse

*you can find Tangram templates on: [www.myhomeschoolmath.com/kindergarten.html](http://www.myhomeschoolmath.com/kindergarten.html)*

## 9. Play Simon says

Play Simon says. This game helps kids concentrate and follow directions and is thus a perfect game to develop self-regulation.

## 10. Just a minute

Never undervalue the importance of small activities or games. Lots can be done in a minute, and that's what you want to teach your child.

How to play:

Scatter around 20 balls in the room. Let your child pick up as many balls as he or she can in a minute. Start the timer and stop it after a minute. Let your child count how many she or he has collected.

"How many words can you write in a minute?" "How many animals can you name in a minute?" are different ways of playing the game. You can come up with new ideas for playing one-minute game.

## 11. Tongue twisters

The popular game helps children improve concentration as well as pronunciation skills. It stimulates their hearing memory while entertaining them.

How to play:

Write some tongue twisters on the piece of paper. Give it to your child and ask them to read it aloud. Then let them read it faster and faster several times in row. Go ahead and say it together, this will make you both laugh.

Here are a few tongue twisters:

„She sees cheese.“

„She sells sea shells on the sea shore.“

„A proper copper coffee pot.“

„Red lorry, yellow lorry, red lorry, yellow lorry.“

„My mommy makes me muffins on Mondays.“

„Which witch is which?“

„Round brown bread.“

„Shine my city shoes!“

„She said she should sit.“

„Six thick thistle sticks.“



# Strategies to Improve Concentration in Children

Parents can have a big impact at home on education and they can do much to ensure better concentration. You can help your child increase his or her concentration in various ways. These ways will teach the child certain habits and rules that would make it easier to focus and be less restless, while doing homework or carrying out tasks.

Here are some suggestions how you can help your child develop stronger concentration and achieve more.

## 1. Set up the right ambience to study

Set up the environment that suits your child. Understanding what kind of environment your child prefers to study is the first step to increase concentration level in him/her.

Reachable material - Keep everything that is required at hand so that your child does not need to get up to get anything. All homework books, crayons, textbooks, pencils and even water can be kept on the table or nearby. All these help kids improve focus and increase attention!

Other external factors that should be avoided: Light too dim/bright, Temperature too high/low, Time pressure, Discouraging words from others.

## 2. Minimize distractions (TV, people talking, music, telephone)

Children are not great at filtering out the noise. Therefore, give your child the right ambience to concentrate.

If your child is doing some activity, do not sit near them and talk to somebody or watch the television while they are studying. A child's curious mind is always looking for distractions like a TV, a gadget or even a small toy lying in the corner of the room. Especially when he/she is engaged with work demanding concentration like homework. So it is important to make sure that before you sit your child down for a task, the place is made free of all distractions, and that includes your mobile phone.

Ideally, all gadgets including televisions, iPads, cell phones etc. need to be switched off or kept in a different room to avoid distractions. If you need to use a computer to study, make sure that it is used only for studying and nothing else.

### 3. Reduce screen time and gadgets time

Instead of giving your child electronic games to play with, give them traditional, physical games. Buy them things that propel creativity and thinking while having fun.

Allot a certain hour for your kid's daily screen time when they can watch TV or the internet. Be an exemple and watch less television and use mobile for a lesser time.

Studies have shown that gadgets actually reduce attention span and memory power of children so they should be used sparingly or not at all.

### 4. Set goals

The goals need to be achievable. Divide their study time into various categories. Prepare a timetable for all their activities such as play time, study time, hobby time, etc.

Reward them with token gifts when they finish all the tasks in a week or a month.

### 5. Fix a routine to follow

Routines help children get accustomed to a study schedule. This not only helps with time management but also helps program your child's brain to know when he has to study. And this in turn helps to increase the child's concentration in studies!

### 6. Give daily responsibilities

Simple daily tasks that require order can help to improve.

Depending on your child's age, hand out responsibilities like setting the table, making a sandwich with you, sorting the cupboard and the like. Change the tasks on a regular basis so that your child does not lose interest.

### 7. Prepare your child for the next task

Prepare in advance for the next task. When your child is busy, tell him what he has to do next, but allow a few minutes, till he stops and starts the new activity.

## 8. Take Breaks

Take short breaks; concentration time is approx 20-40 min. Giving them time to vent out their energy once their time limit for a task is up may actually help them focus better on the next task! It would help if your child did something completely different during this time.

## 9. Break bigger tasks into smaller ones

Sometimes doing a task at one go is overwhelming for kids.

It becomes easier for them when time-consuming tasks or difficult ones are divided into small achievable tasks so that the child feels a sense of accomplishment for finishing a small task and this will motivate him to continue on.

## 10. Set up a reward system

Children must feel motivated while doing a task.

They need to feel accomplished when they complete a task. This helps children remain motivated and focussed to perform more and better. When you see your child improving and doing things better, give them a pat or some thoughtful gift.

## 11. Practice simple breathing exercises

An adequate amount of oxygen helps the brain function properly. Therefore, make your kid do some simple breathing exercises. Practice the exercises together. They can do the breathing exercise in a room, near a window, on the terrace or in the garden.

Ask your kid to lie on their back and place a toy on the tummy. Now, ask them to breathe in deeply and raise the toy as high as they can without touching it. If the toy moves high, it means their lungs are filled with air.

## 12. Use fun activities to make them focus

Your kid will pay attention when the subject spells fun. Spend the spare time and weekends playing fun-filled concentration games for kids.

### 13. Naps and breaks boost concentration!

Adequate naps and breaks refreshes the mind and boosts concentration. A power nap for 20 minutes after school or in the afternoon helps increase concentration.

### 14. Eat healthy, get enough sleep and exercise frequently

Eating healthy food has a direct link to how well a child concentrates and there are different foods that help increase a child's concentration. Experts say that eating greens and fruits inject the body with antioxidants which in turn boost the brain power.

**Lack of enough sleep:** Sleeping is an important part of every child's routine. A good night's sleep can do wonders even in adults and so has its own importance in children. Kids need 8 - 10 hours of sleep every day depending on their age. If your child has a habit of sleeping late, change the cycle, and set a routine. Help him or her sleep early so that they can sleep longer. Lack of sleep affects his/her concentration. Maintaining a routine sleep time is also very important. So make sure your child gets enough sleep every day and that too at the correct time.

Research shows that physical activities, such as running, cycling, playing football, etc., are not only good for children's body but also for their mind. It helps children focus better on what they are doing.

### 15. Additional tips

- Be patient, sensible and understand your child instead of scolding them. Remain calm and don't expect too much of your child. Stress disables the brain. Only focused and relaxed can the child concentrate effectively.
- Give your child time to rest, as concentrating is tiring. Relaxing between exercises is crucial. Please note: the younger your child, the more often he or she will need a break.
- Children sometimes find it easier to do their homework sitting, or even lying on the ground. Try this out, and stick to the most successful version.
- The best concentration activities for children are those that encourage the child to think while doing the activity.

# Workbooks to Improve Attention & Concentration

