Playtime Tools to Help With Focus, Confidence and Sociability

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Activities for Children With ADHD

Playtime should be fun and entertaining, but it's also an opportunity to help your child with ADHD overcome some of their stumbling blocks. From better social skills and good focus to the patience and respect they will need as they grow up, the right games can tap into their imagination and intellect more than you might imagine.

Finding the Right Type of Activity

Entertaining a child with ADHD can seem challenging, especially when you're limited to what you have in your house. But playing within the boundaries of the home can actually be a blessing in disguise, since group activity can be too stimulating for ADHD children. Keep in mind some promising methods to draw and keep their focus:

- **Limit distraction.** Small groups, fewer points of focus, and an engaging atmosphere will keep distraction at bay. Television may seem like a good attention-keeper, but TV and video games are passive, plus they stifle creativity. Also, research has shown that video games lead to more attention problems in all children.
- **Build self-esteem.** The key here is to focus on your child's abilities, rather than remind them of their limits. Find activities that are relatively easy to learn, games or challenges that provide frequent rewards.
- **Keep a routine.** Routine is important for children with ADHD, so choose activities that are easy to do before, after and between their main household tasks and responsibilities.

Of course, not every kid will be interested in every activity; success rests on experimentation and an open mind. Whatever they happen to be drawn to, the key is to engage them, and often the easiest way to do that is by participating in the game or activity yourself.

Good Games for ADHD Children

Too many rules or complicated strategies will probably either frustrate or alienate a child with ADHD. Better choices are easily understood games that are fun to play again and again, so your child can learn and improve in some important areas. As a guide, try to:

- **Stick to old favorites**. Classic board games, card games and simple strategy games are perfect for short attention spans, plus a string of wins can do wonders for self-confidence. Start with things like Chinese checkers, Go Fish, and Bingo, and work up to more strategic games like chess as your child builds confidence.
- **Encourage fantasy play.** Inventive exercises like playing with action figures, stuffed animals or costumes helps ADHD children to express themselves in ways that regular social interaction cannot. Set aside small periods of time to lead them in pretend play, and work on rehearsing social behaviors while you create a story together.
- **Use memory games to improve attention span.** Matching cards, repeating simple sequences and word games can help improve focus and encourage thoughtfulness over impulsive behaviour. Different children

have a different tolerance for frustration, so don’t push too hard too soon.

Remember that a child with ADHD will learn and react differently, so be prepared to alter the activity in whichever way you need to. Bend the rules to make it easier to get to the end, or take over the storytelling if they hit an imagination roadblock. Games are an ideal way to learn how to accept success and failure, so kids should experience winning and losing, but the first step is to get them excited and committed to a new activity.