

Parents - If you haven't already read the pages on "Developing Character in Your Children," you might want to go there first before reading these pages.



Attentiveness Games

Several common childhood games can help develop attentiveness:

1. Simon Says
2. Twenty Questions (children can ask 20 questions, with only "yes or no" answers, to determine what object is the right answer)
3. "Gossip" (beginner makes a statement and it is repeated secretly around a circle)
4. ABC game. (Going through the alphabet, each child takes turn saying what food he likes that begins with the current letter, but also repeating all choices that have been stated before.)

Attentiveness

vs. *unconscious*

"Showing the worth of a person or task by giving my undivided concentration."

Tips for Parents to Encourage Attentiveness

As with any character quality, attentiveness will be conveyed to your children by your own display of that character trait. There are countless opportunities to show attentiveness to the little ones in your household (and to the big ones) and just as many distractions and competing tasks to keep you from being attentive to them.

When your child wants to tell you something, why not stop what you are doing, get down to their level and make eye contact, and show them that you are really listening--repeat in your words what they said, show some enthusiasm and affirm them and be sure not to allow interruptions. If time is short, why not have him draw a picture related to your conversation?

Help your child to become a good listener by discouraging the habit of interrupting others who are talking (if necessary, make a fake microphone and allow only the one holding it to talk). Let them practice active listening by telling what they heard the other one saying. Establishing a time for catching up about the day (perhaps the dinner hour?) will provide a good practice time for talking and listening.

Developing a climate in your home for attentiveness to projects will pay off for your children for their entire lives, fostering their ability to concentrate at school and later, at work. Work on cutting the noise level of distractions (you know them--tv, music, electronic games) in your home and encourage your child to play or work on only one project at a time. If you praise him for his attentiveness, he will be able to stay with a task for longer periods of time and will develop the habit of concentration.



Dump the Distractions!

Find a small garbage can or small trash bag and let the children decorate it with cartoon "enemies."

Then, throughout the week, as you identify distractions that keep them from being productive, write or draw each one on a slip of paper and put it in the can or bag.

Discuss with them which ones are good if kept in a reserved time for recreation, and which ones are just time wasters and need to be discarded. Why not agree on that reserved time when the fun "distractions" can be enjoyed without interfering with projects (such as homework) that need to be done?

