



★ Early Years Home Learning ★

Executive Function Kim's Game



This is best:



Indoors or Outdoors

Materials:

You may need:



- A collection of your child's favourite or familiar toys. You can also use objects from around the house that your child is familiar with
- A Tea Towel or cloth.



The basic idea: Gather a selection of (up to 8) objects that you can hide under a tea towel or other cloth. Begin by using objects that your child can recognise and name. Look at and name the objects together. Once your child is familiar with them, cover with the cloth and explain to your child you are going to take one object away. They need to close their eyes as you do this. When you are ready your child can take the tea towel away and they have to try and use their memory to work out which item has been taken away.

Tips to support your child: Allow your child plenty of time to gather objects and explore them all one by one. This is an important first step to the game. Explore the names, colours & textures of each of the objects with your child. Start off by covering 4 objects and see if your child can remember the one that is taken away. Work up to 8 objects or more if your child is comfortable with this. If your child can't remember the one that has been taken away you could give clues to help but try not to ask too many questions and allow your child time to think after each change. There is a balance between giving time to remember the missing item and moving on if your child cannot remember. You know your child best and will be able to judge this. Your child will enjoy being in control of the game and testing your memory so be sure to take turns!

How this benefits your child:

This game provides lots of opportunities to develop your child's 'working memory' and language skills. Your child needs to remember which objects were there and use problem solving skills to identify which object was taken away. He or she will also develop their 'inhibitory control' as they have to follow the rules of the game and wait with their eyes closed until you are ready for them to remove the tea towel. Working memory and inhibitory control are both elements of 'executive function' which is a term given to skills we all need to learn and manage everyday life. These do not develop automatically, children need to be given opportunities and support to develop them.

Make this simpler...

- Use 4 or less objects.
- Use very familiar objects with as much contrast between these as possible, for example a big cuddly toy and a little spoon.

Make this more challenging...

- Take two objects away
- Use the same type of object, for example 'teddy bears' and encourage your child to use descriptive language to describe the one that was taken away (e.g the small blue bear).

"The fun is in the journey,
not the end result!"



Top Tip from our Speech and Language Therapy partners:

Being face to face with your child helps them develop their interaction and communication skills. Vocabulary is key, help children use all their senses to learn new words. Then builds in lots of repetition and practice.

