10 Games to Help Develop Memory, Concentration and Thinking Skills.

1. MEMORY/CONCENTRATION

**A deck of children’s matching picture cards easily becomes the classic favourite game of Memory.**

**To play**

* Ensure your set of cards contains all matching pairs.
* Shuffle and spread all cards out on a flat surface, face down.
* Players take it in turns to choose any two cards. Make a successful match and you get to take another turn. No match, the cards are returned to their original position.
* Success in Memory relies upon children remembering where they have seen each picture in previous turns – both those and those of the other players.

The winner is the person who has matched the most pairs.

2. PICTURE BINGO

**Similar to Memory but instead of matching pairs, players take turns to select a picture card to match to a baseboard.**

**To play**

* Each player selects a base board. The matching cards are shuffled and spread out on a flat surface, face down.
* Players take it in turns to select a card. If the card matches an image on the players board they have made a match and get to take another turn. No match, the card is placed back down.

The winner is the first person to match all of the images on their base board.

3. WHAT’S MISSING? KIM’S GAME

**To play**

* Place a number of household items onto a tray (the more items, the more challenging the game so for younger children start with just 3-4 items and increase from there).
* Tell your child to have a close look at the items on the tray. Name them together (the more you discuss the items the more likely your child is to remember them so you could ask them what colour or shape each item is or what it is used for).
* Cover the items with a tea towel. Ask your child to close their eyes and as they do so remove one item from under the cloth.
* Ask them to open their eyes, remove the cloth and tell you what’s missing!

**Variations**

For older children, use more items and allow them to look at them for a full minute. Then cover them up and ask them to write a list or draw as many of the items that they can remember.

4. I WENT SHOPPING…

**The aim of the game is to remember as many items purchased at the shops as possible!**

**To play**

* The first player starts the game by saying, “I went shopping and bought a \_\_\_\_,” identifying an item they would buy.
* The second player continues, “I went shopping and bought a (names the first player’s item) and a \_\_\_ (adding a new item to the list).”
* Players continue taking turns to remember the items purchased in order as the list gets longer and longer.

The winner is the last person who can correctly name all of the items in sequence.

**Variations**

This game can be adapted to many different scenarios, for example, “I went on holidays and packed…” or “I went to school and took …”

5. THE MAGIC CUP GAME

**This classic game makes a fun memory exercise with just two household items.**

**To play**

* Place three identical, plastic cups in a line on the table, rim down.
* Place a pom pom or small rubber ball under one cup, allowing your child to see which cup the pom pom/ball is under.
* Shuffle the cups around by sliding them across the table, switching their positions quickly back and forth and all around.
* Once you have stopped moving the cups ask your child to identify which cup the ball is now under.



6. BRAIN BOXES

At school we love these [brain box games](https://amzn.to/2NFS7x2). They are available in a wide range of themes – everything from animals to fairytales to math problems.

7. DRAW A WORD ON MY BACK

**Success in this game requires the child to transfer a physical sensation to a mental picture and retain a short series of mental pictures in their head to correctly identify the word.**

**To play**

* One player uses their finger to ‘write’ a word on the back of the second player.
* The second player tries to identify the word.
* Players switch positions and take turns being the ‘writer’ and guesser.

8. NUMBER STRING

**Similar to The Shopping Game, using numbers makes this game more abstract and therefore more challenging. Perfect for older kids!**

**To play**

* The first person says a one digit number.
* The next player repeats the first number and adds another one digit number.
* The third person says the first and the second numbers and then adds a third number.
* The game continues until someone forgets a number. That person is out.

Play continues and the winner is the last person standing – the person able to correctly identify the longest string of numbers.

[[1]](#footnote-1)

9. TOTAL RECALL

**To play**

* Display a series of pictures or words for a few seconds.
* Cover the images/words and have children write, draw or tell a partner the objects in correct order.

Make the game more difficult by increasing the number of items in the series.

10. CARD RECALL

Played in pairs, five cards are placed in a series on the table (these can be playing cards or other picture or word cards).

**To play**

* One player is given time to memorise the sequence.
* Then their partner takes the cards, shuffles them and places only four of the cards back on the table.

The first player must identify which card is missing.

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)