

GAMES AND ACTIVITIES TO IMPROVE PROCESSING DEFICITS IN
CHILDREN IDENTIFIED AS HAVING A LEARNING DISABILITY



ENHANCING LEARNING ABILITIES

INCREASE YOUR CHILD'S POSSIBILITIES AT THE
KITCHEN TABLE



BY DR. CAROLYN SCOTT

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Increase Your Child's Possibilities at the Kitchen Table

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Editor: Nadya DePontbriand

ISBN: 978-1-5457-4478-9

ePUB ISBN: 978-1-5457-4479-6

Mobi ISBN: 978-1-5457-4480-2

Library of Congress Control Number: 7571755881

First Printing: 2019

Manufactured and printed in the United States of America

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Section 1: Processing Speed



Processing Speed

Understood.org describes processing speed as a cognitive ability that can be defined as the time it takes a person to do a mental task. It is related to the speed in which a person can understand and react to the information they receive, whether it be visual, auditory or kinesthetic (movement).

Note: Any game or activity listed in this section or game you enjoy playing with your child can be used for increasing processing speed by setting a time limit and decreasing the time allowed when it becomes easy to complete the game or activity.

School Example: A teacher asks a question to the class and three questions later a student raises their hand and answers the first question that was given. It took that amount of time for the student to process each word of the question and determine what the question was asking.

My Personal Example: A teacher I worked with had a daughter that was attending a very prestigious private school. Although her daughter was very smart, it was hard for her to keep up with the work assigned. The private school has said if she could not keep up, she might have to transfer to a traditional school so she could utilize special accommodations. The school had set up a time for the daughter to be tested and if she was found to have a learning disability, she would most likely benefit from a transfer.

Upon learning of the SET game, my friend decided to give it a try. She played SET with her daughter every day and her daughter played the game by herself to practice. She became more and more proficient in increasing her processing speed. When testing time came, she was able to pass the processing speed portion of the test and was found not to have a learning disability. Her mother attributes her success to her using the SET game. Her daughter was able to stay at her private school, went on to college and today is a pre-school teacher!

Processing Speed: Activities

Activity 1: Repeating Phrases

While driving in the car or doing any type of chore, say a three-word sentence or three unrelated words and ask your child to repeat it right back to you. If they are successful with three words, increase to 4, 5, 6 words etc. until they can remember 10 words or a long sentence. You can make the words related (car, truck, van) or unrelated (car, pizza, Hawaii). The sentences can make sense or be made to be funny.

Additional Benefits: This activity also helps with increasing memory capacity.

Activity 2: Crossword Puzzles

Crossword puzzles are a great way to learn and come in a variety of types. They allow the child to see how much general knowledge of a subject or idea they know up front. Continued use of crossword puzzles will increase language skills. To begin, use an easy crossword puzzle or subject related puzzle. The best way to complete a crossword puzzle is to go down the “across” clues and fill in all the answers that you are sure are correct. Then complete the “down” clues that you are sure to be correct. This will give you letters in most words that will help you determine the correct word that fits in each slot. To help with processing speed, use a timer to set specific times for completion and then decrease the amount of time allowed. A sample crossword puzzle and answer sheet is available on the next page for your use.

Additional Benefits: With using crossword puzzles, you are also improving language and vocabulary, understanding directions (across vs down), understanding synonyms and antonyms and recall of general information from letters in filled-out words

Activity 3: Handwriting

This is an important skill that used to be taught in schools; however, there are a lot of students who were not given this instruction. You can still buy lined writing paper that is designed to help students visualize the size and practice of writing small and capital letters. This activity will require time given to it each day until the child is able to write in cursive on their own. To begin the cursive writing process, write the letters separately in cursive (see sample on next page) and then teach them how to connect the letters when used with various letters so that the flow is the most natural to make the word. To help with processing speed specifically, use a timer to set specific times for completion and then decrease the amount of time allowed.

Additional Benefits: Handwriting helps improve Executive Functioning skills such as planning and memory.

Resource: Cursive handwriting books are available at WalMart.com.

Activity 4: Roving Colors

For this activity, you will need 2-inch strips of construction paper in the colors of red, green, orange and blue. Cut strips into 2-or-3 inch squares. First, place the pieces in a row across the table leaving a gap between each square. Place one is always on the left, then place 2, place 3, then place 4 is on the right. To begin, place the squares in the following order:

Place 1 - Green

Place 2 - Orange

Place 3 - Red

Place 4 - Blue

Example:



Give the child a color and a number and say, “I want you to move that one piece to the proper place”. For example if I said: “Red 2”, they would move the red piece to the second place; or if I say, “green four” the child would move the green square all the way to the fourth space.

For added auditory feedback have the participant repeat what the caller says. This is very beneficial with younger participants. To assist with processing speed, use a timer and see if they can improve the time it takes them to complete the game. Stress to the child that if they make an error, just keep going as it will come out fine in the end. Stress that it is about the skill building, not the outcome.

Script 1: Read starting with Column 1, Column 2, Column 3 and then Column 4.

Column 1

Column 2

Column 3

Column 4

Blue-2	Green-1	Orange-4	Orange-1
Blue-4	Blue-2	Green-4	Green-3
Orange-1	Red-1	Blue-4	Blue-1
Red-3	Green-4	Red-4	Orange-4
Green-3	Blue-1	Green-1	Red-2

This script should result in Place 1 - Blue; Place 2 - Red; Place 3 - Green; and Place 4 - Orange.

Script 2: If possible, go a bit faster

<u>Column 1</u>	<u>Column 2</u>	<u>Column 3</u>	<u>Column 4</u>
Orange-2	Orange-4	Red-3	Blue-1
Blue-4	Blue-4	Green-3	Orange-3
Green-4	Orange-4	Blue-4	Red-3
Red-1	Red-4	Red-2	Blue-4
Green-3	Blue-1	Orange-1	Orange-2

If directions are followed correctly, the outcome should be: Place 1 - Green; Place 2 - Orange; Place 3 - Red; and Place 4 - Blue.

You can also make up your own script if you would like.

Additional Benefits: Playing this activity will improve auditory processing (as they need to listen to the words in the directions), following directions and moving the construction squares to the right place.

Note: This activity was developed by Denise Morelli, Skills Lab Instructor at Pepin Academies - Riverview, FL.

Processing Speed: Games

Game 1: War Card Game

This game can be helpful in increasing processing time and being able to distinguish between lower and higher numbers. You can play with 2 to 4 players. If more than two players are playing, use two decks of cards.

Deal all cards out to each player face down (all should have equal cards). Each player will turn over the top card of their stack and the player with the highest value card wins. The winner takes the other players losing cards and adds them to the bottom of their stack. Play continues until players have cards of equal value facing up at which point “war” is declared. The cards from all players are placed in the center of the table, and each player makes a stack of three cards placed face down and a fourth card faced up. The player whose face-up card has the highest value wins all the cards in the center and his opponents’ war pack. If the cards faced up are once again of equal value there is another “war” until a winner is determined. Regular play is then resumed and continues until one player wins all his opponents’ cards.

Note: In the beginning, only play for 5 or 10 minutes at a time. The game can take up to 2 or 3 hours so start slow and make sure you note the time.

The overall objective is to see how long it takes him/her to identify the card with the largest value. It is better to start with only two players and add players as they become faster at selecting the highest card. When you are first playing, play near a clock with a secondhand and silently note the time it takes your child to determine the value. Each time you play, note the amount of time it takes. You should begin to see a difference in the time it takes them to select the highest card.

Additional Benefits: By playing this game you can also increase your math skills by:

Less, More Than: When players throw down their cards, have the child with math difficulties say which card is higher in worth (or lower in worth).

Adding, subtracting and multiplying: If your child is having difficulty with any of these three basic skills, have them add, subtract or multiple the value of the cards. This is easier if only two players are playing at one time.

Resource: Playing cards are available at WalMart.com and Amazon.com.

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