**WHAT?**

**Brain Builders** are active, fun games with specific rules and steps. They include ways to increase the challenge. They give children the message that their brains can get stronger and smarter with practice and effort.

**WHY?**

**Brain Builders** look like simple games, but they do a whole lot more. They develop the parts of children's brains that help them pay attention, remember, and have self-control.

**WHO?**

**Brain Builders** can be played with children ages three to eight. In this age range, children's skills are rapidly developing, so it's the perfect time for extra practice.

**WHERE?**

**Brain Builders** can be played often and at any time, either inside where children have room to move, or outside.
Brain Builder Game: Mixed-Up Rules | Ages 4+

Get Ready

1. Have children stand, leaving enough room to move.
2. Tell children to listen to the rules:
   - Rule 1 is, when I say “Touch your nose,” touch your toes.
   - Rule 2 is, when I say “Pat your back,” pat your belly
   - Rule 3 is, when I say “Tap your knees,” tap your ears.

Mixed-Up Rules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jump high</td>
<td>Squat low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turn around</td>
<td>Sit down</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiggle your toes</td>
<td>Wiggle your fingers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Look down</td>
<td>Look up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hop back</td>
<td>Hop forward</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clap your hands</td>
<td>Stomp your feet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Play the Game

1. Face children.
2. Say: **Touch your nose**. Children touch their toes.
3. Say: **Pat your back**. Children pat their bellies.
4. Say: **Tap your knees**. Children tap their ears.
5. Repeat Steps 2–4 with other mixed-up rules.

Increase the Challenge

- Add words without matches to the list.
- Add more words to each category.
- Read the list twice and require three or four repetitions for a match.

Tips

- Play the game for only a few minutes at a time.
- Play the game at least twice a day.
- Have children take turns leading the game.
- Increase the challenge as children get better at the game.
Brain Builder Game: My Turn, Your Turn

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**WHO?**

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**WHERE?**

*Brain Builders* can be played often and at any time, either inside where children have room to move, or outside.
Get Ready

1. Have children stand, leaving enough room to move.
2. Tell children to listen to the rules:
   - Rule 1 is, watch me name and touch the body parts.
   - Rule 2 is, stand still and wait for me to say “Your turn” before you name and touch the same body parts.

Play the Game

1. Face the children.
2. Name and at the same time touch two body parts. Students stand still and wait.
3. Say: Your turn. Students name and touch the same two body parts.
4. Repeat Steps 2 and 3 with other body parts

Mixed-Up Rules

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Direction</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Touch your ears</td>
<td>Touch your elbows</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch your hips</td>
<td>Touch your knees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch your toes</td>
<td>Touch your shoulders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touch your nose</td>
<td>Touch your ankles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Increase the Challenge

- Increase the wait-time before you say “Your turn.”
- Say the directions in a quiet voice.
- Name and touch three or more body parts.
- Have the students touch the body parts in reverse order.
- Add a mixed-up rule, such as one from the list above.

Tips

- Remind children to use their self-talk to remember which body parts to touch: Saying the two body parts to yourself while you are waiting for me to say “Your turn” can help you remember them.
- Play the game for only a few minutes at a time.
- Play the game at least twice a day.
- Have children take turns leading the game.
- Increase the challenge as children get better at the game.
Brain Builder Game: Listening Concentration

WHAT?

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WHY?

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WHO?

**Brain Builders** can be played with children ages three to eight. In this age range, children's skills are rapidly developing, so it's the perfect time for extra practice.

WHERE?

**Brain Builders** can be played often and at any time, either inside where children have room to move, or outside.
Get Ready
1. Have children stand or sit facing you.
2. Tell children to listen to the rules:
   • Rule 1 is, hold up one finger after you’ve heard a word twice. That’s a match!
   • Rule 2 is, when you’ve heard three matches, stand up and hold your earlobe.
     Model for children.

Play the Game
1. Read one of the word lists.
2. When children have made three matches, the round is over.
3. Play again. This time, add distractions: click a pen, tap on furniture, raise/lower blinds, jump up and down, and so on.
4. Play another round and increase the challenge!

Word Lists
1. Truck, airplane, skateboard, train, bicycle, airplane, subway, bus, bus, truck, skateboard, subway, bicycle, train
2. Dolphin, shark, stingray, whale, octopus, whale, seahorse, dolphin, salmon, shark, salmon, octopus, seahorse, stingray
3. Banana, carrot, avocado, apple, carrot, spinach, orange, banana, tomato, avocado, apple, tomato, spinach, orange

Increase the Challenge
• Add words without matches to the list.
• Add more words to each category.
• Read the list twice and require three or four repetitions for a match.

Tips
• Play the game for only a few minutes at a time.
• Play the game at least twice a day.
• Have children take turns leading the game.
• Increase the challenge as children get better at the game.
Brain Builder Game: Rhyme Race

**WHAT?**

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**WHY?**

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**WHO?**

**Brain Builders** can be played with children ages three to eight. In this age range, children's skills are rapidly developing, so it's the perfect time for extra practice.

**WHERE?**

**Brain Builders** can be played often and at any time, either inside where children have room to move, or outside.
Get Ready

1. Have children stand, leaving enough room to move.
2. Tell children to listen to the rules:
   - Rule 1 is, listen to the list of rhyming words I say.
   - Rule 2 is, when I say, “Go!” say all the words from the list.

Play the Game

1. Face children.
2. Say a list of three rhyming words.
3. Wait, then say: Go!
4. Children repeat the list of rhyming words.
5. Repeat steps 2–4 with another list of rhyming words.

Word Lists

Sad, mad, glad
Cry, fry, try
Frown, crown, drown
Laugh, half, calf

Feel, meal, peel
Smile, file, pile
Worry, hurry, blurry
Feeling, ceiling, healing

Increase the Challenge

• Have children repeat the list of rhyming words in reverse order.
• Have children wait longer before repeating the list of rhyming words.
• Have children add one or more rhyming words to the list.
• Say the first word and have children add two or more rhyming words to the list.

Tips

• Play the game for only a few minutes at a time.
• Play the game at least twice a day.
• Have children take turns leading the game.
• Increase the challenge as children get better at the game.