



# second step Brain Builder Game: Dance Double

## 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.



## Get Ready

1. Have children stand, leaving enough room to move.
2. Tell children to listen to the rules:
  - **Rule 1 is, watch me do the dance.**
  - **Rule 2 is, do the exact same dance!**

## Play the Game

1. Stand and face children.
2. Perform a series of movements.
3. Have children repeat the same series of movements.
4. Play another round and increase the challenge!

## Movement Suggestions

Pat shoulders  
Squat down  
Make body small  
Make arm circles  
Wiggle like jelly  
Do knee bends

Stomp feet  
Touch toes  
Make body wide  
Make ankle circles  
Balance on a foot  
Wiggle fingers

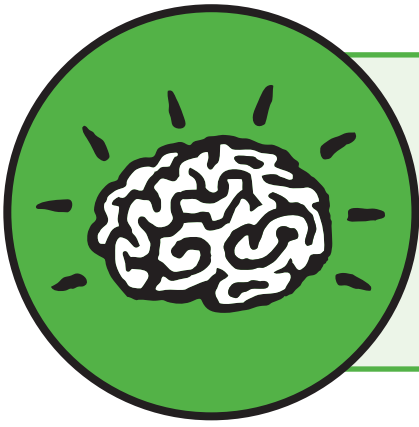
Turn around  
Reach up high  
Make body tall  
March on tiptoe  
Swing arms  
Clap hands

## Increase the Challenge

- Have children perform the same series in reverse order.
- Have children wait five seconds before performing the dance, then freeze in the final position until you say, “Melt!”
- Have children name the body parts as they use them to dance. For example, “I’m marching on tiptoe!”

## 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.



# secondSTEP Brain Builder Game: Sink or Swim

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## Get Ready

1. Have children stand in a line along one side of a large space (an open area outside would work well).
2. Say: **You are on the bank of a river. The goal of the game is for you to swim across the river to the other side where I am standing.** Demonstrate a swimming motion.
3. Tell children to listen to the rules:
  - **Rule 1 is, when I say “Swim!” you swim across the river.**
  - **Rule 2 is, when I say “Sink!” you sink down to the bottom of the river.**
  - **Rule 3 is, stay frozen on the bottom of the river until you hear me say “Swim!” again.**

## Play the Game

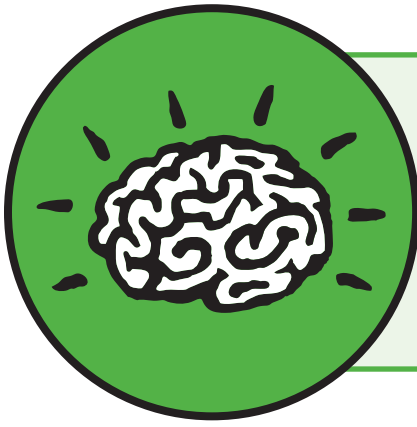
1. Stand facing children on the other side of the river.
2. Say: **Swim!** Children start to swim toward you.
3. After a few seconds, say: **Sink!** Children slowly sink down.
4. After a few seconds, say: **Swim!** again.
5. Repeat Steps 2–4 until all children have crossed the river.

## Increase the Challenge

- Combine swim and/or sink with other actions (for example, swim and clap, swim and hop, swim and skip, sink and spin, sink and wave, and so on).
- Have children remain sunken for longer and longer periods of time.
- Call out other actions instead of “Swim!”
- Children can move only when you say “Swim!”
- Introduce an opposites rule: Children swim when you say “Sink!” and sink when you say “Swim!”
- Change the setting and actions every few rounds. For example, say: **You are in a band marching down the street.** The actions are march and rest. Or say: **You are rabbits hopping across the garden.** The actions are hop and crouch.

## Tips

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# secondSTEP Brain Builder Game: Mixed-Up Rules

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## 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.

## 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.

## Mixed-Up Rules

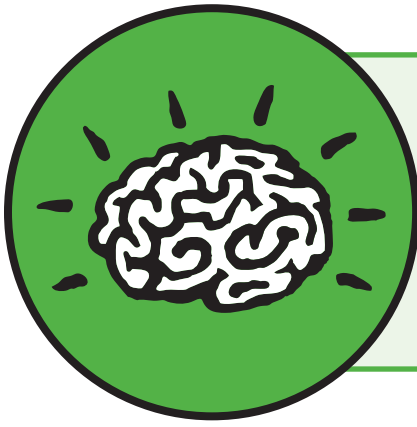
Direction	Action
Jump high	➤ Squat low
Turn around	➤ Sit down
Wiggle your toes	➤ Wiggle your fingers
Look down	➤ Look up
Hop back	➤ Hop forward
Clap your hands	➤ Stomp your feet

## 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.



# second step Brain Builder Game: My Turn, Your Turn

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## 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

Direction	Action
Touch your ears	➤ Touch your elbows
Touch your hips	➤ Touch your knees
Touch your toes	➤ Touch your shoulders
Touch your nose	➤ Touch your ankles

## 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.
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second

# Brain Builder Game: Listening Concentration

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**TOMATO!**

### 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.

**TRUCK!**

### 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!

**SUBWAY!**

### 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.
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**SHARK!**

**BANANA!**



# second step Brain Builder Game: Rhyme Race

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## 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.

