

Measuring your child's attention in real life

By now, your child has progressed through several Tali training levels and you're seeing improvements in your child's playing ability. The degree of improvement will differ between each child, but even small gains can be of significant value.

The purpose of Tali Train is to build essential attention skills that transfer to your child's everyday life. There are key ways you can measure how your child is applying improvements in the real world.

Tali Questionnaires

Throughout the program you'll have been asked a set of pre-training questions, which have been specially designed to help you evaluate your child's progression in the real world. The first nine questions relate to inattentive behaviour and the last nine relate to hyperactive behaviour. You'll receive a score according to your answers which you can use as an indication of your child's attention abilities. The training questionnaires include a positive and negative scoring system. A high (more positive) score indicates a greater weakness in your child's inattentive and hyperactive behaviours, while a low score indicates your child has less struggles with inattentive and hyperactive behaviour.

By the time your child completes Tali Train, you should see an improvement in score.

Everyday Skills

Every day, your child will be using attention skills to complete tasks, watch TV or even hold a conversation. When you know the types of things to look out for, you'll recognise the skills they apply in normal life and how to monitor improvements.

We've outlined some of the ways you can do this below, taking each of the four core attention skills:

Selection

Have a conversation with your child in a busy location such as a café.

How easily distracted are they?

How long are they able to remain focused on the conversation before something distracts them?

Focus

Set your child a task like completing a crossword, drawing a picture or watering the garden.

Were they able to complete the task?

How long did they remain focused?

Control

Ask your child a question when they're watching TV or playing a game.

How quickly do they respond?

How many times do you have to repeat yourself before getting an answer?

This will show whether they're learning the ability to divide their attention and do two things at once.

Inhibition

Pay attention to your child socially.

How often do they interrupt when someone else is talking?

How easily do they share toys?

Can they remain seated at the dinner table without getting too fidgety?

Are they able to control emotional outbursts?

Things you can do to enhance the program

Throughout your child's journey with Tali Train, there are activities you can do with your child at home to practice the skills of attention and to help your child get the most out of the program.

Everyday Activities

- ✔ Encourage your child to count every day; for example, pebbles or shells at the beach, fruit at the grocery store or trees on your street.
- ✔ When you're out and about, encourage your child to compare sizes of stones, bushes and trees, and describe shapes of leaves, colours of flowers or sizes of birds.
- ✔ Involve your child in cooking and get them to help measure, add and estimate ingredients.
- ✔ Go for a walk down your street and ask your child to count the steps between each house. Point out how each house or block has a number in a series.
- ✔ Measure your child's growth in height and record the results in a growth chart, which you can discuss with your child.

Playtime Activities

- ✔ Use shape sorters or cut out different shapes from paper. Talk with your child about each shape by counting the sides, describing colours and looking for other objects that are the same shape.
- ✔ Help your child arrange his or her favourite toys in order from shortest to longest.
- ✔ Gather a mix of small toys, pegs or pebbles together with your child. Sort them into groups based on size, colour, shape or what they do (make sure no pieces go into your child's mouth and put them away when you're finished).
- ✔ Sing the alphabet song while clapping its rhythm. Sing songs and read books that have numbers in them that repeat, rhyme and have rhythm. This will help your child understand patterns.
- ✔ Play board and games, or puzzles with shapes and numbers, like 'snap', or matching pairs or dominoes.
- ✔ Play outside games like 'I spy', hopscotch, skittles and 'What's the time Mr Wolf'.

Numeracy Activities

- ✔ Use mathematical concepts to describe what you and your child are seeing and doing together. For example, 'Look at the big red ball' or 'What a little kitten'
- ✔ Point out and name the numbers in your phone contact list.
- ✔ Read speed limits on road signs
- ✔ Read the numbers on the car dashboard
- ✔ When you're preparing food, talk about what you're doing. For example, 'I'm cutting this orange in half', or 'Let's share these sultanas – one for me and one for you'
- ✔ Talk about activities that happen at certain times of the day. For example, 'We eat breakfast at 7am', or '7pm – it's past your bedtime'

Things you can do to enhance the program (cont.)

In the classroom

There are supportive strategies teachers can implement in your child's classroom to encourage attentive behaviour:

- ✔ Setting clear rules and expectations
- ✔ Giving one instruction at a time
- ✔ Asking your child to repeat instructions to ensure understanding
- ✔ Using verbal and physical prompts to encourage focus
- ✔ Ensuring your child understands the most important points or outcomes
- ✔ Sitting your child at the front of class or with peers who are good influence
- ✔ Providing a written or pictorial checklist of the work and organisation skills required
- ✔ Providing rest breaks or opportunities for movement
- ✔ Praising good behaviour and attentive behaviours
- ✔ Praising achievements and new levels reached within the Tali program

If the whole class is involved in the program, we recommend allocating a small area for support or praise with a walled section divided into the four areas of attention – attention, selection, focus and inhibition. Each section can be allocated an icon (e.g. fish or planet, chest or rocket etc) where a star with the child's name is placed when they display the relevant skill. This can be an effective visual reinforcement of the program.

We recommend talking with your child's teacher about these strategies and about your child's behaviour and performance in class over the next 3 to 6 months (the Tali Train program has been thoroughly measured through clinical trials, which showed significant increases in attention and numeracy skills that were still present three months after completion of the program). Your child's teacher will be able to help determine any attention gains your child has at school.

Helpful tools and resources

The DAWBA

The [DAWBA](#) is a set of questionnaires you can complete in conjunction with your teacher to assess your child's emotional, behavioural and hyperactivity disorders.

Tali Resources

The [Resources Section](#) on our website is filled with essential information about the Tali Train program and how else you can become involved as parent/carer.