

Nectar's Brain Boosts for Building Cognitive Skills

Complete these activities daily to build the seven core cognitive skills.

Short-Term / Working Memory The ability to hold and use information in the mind.

1. Repeat & Reverse

Say:

- numbers
- words
- directions

Have your child repeat them:

- forward
- then backward

Examples:

- “7-2-9”
- “dog, apple, shoe”
- “Touch your nose, clap twice, then spin.”

Increase difficulty slowly.

2. Tray Memory Game

Place several objects on a tray.

Let the child study them for 20 seconds.

Cover the tray and ask:

- “What do you remember?”

For older children:

- ask for order
 - details
 - or categories
-

3. Grocery List Challenge

Give 2–5 grocery items verbally and have the child remember them while walking through the house/store.

Older children:

- alphabetize mentally
- repeat backward
- group by category

Processing Speed
The ability to quickly take in and respond to information.

1. Rapid Naming Challenge

Quickly name:

- colors
- animals
- foods
- letters
- numbers

Example:

“How many animals can you name in 30 seconds?”

Goal:

Fast and accurate retrieval.

2. Timed Sorting

Sort:

- coins
- cards
- LEGO colors
- buttons
- socks

as quickly as possible.

Try to beat previous times.

3. Fast Find

Use books, magazines, or word searches.

Challenge:

- “Find all the letter A’s”
- “Find 10 circles”
- “Find every number 5”

Builds visual speed and scanning efficiency.

Long-Term Memory
The ability to store and retrieve information over time.

1. Teach Back

After learning something new, ask the child to teach it back to you later in the day.

Teaching strengthens storage and retrieval.

2. Story Recall

Read a short story or watch a short video.

Later ask:

- What happened first?
- What was the problem?
- How did it end?

Older children:

Add details and sequencing.

3. Memory Connections

Help children connect new information to something they already know.

Examples:

- “A rectangle is like a stretched square.”
- “Mitochondria are like power plants.”

Connections improve retention.

Attention

The ability to focus, sustain, and shift attention.

1. Freeze Game

Dance or move while music plays.

Freeze instantly when the music stops.

Builds:

- sustained attention
- impulse control
- self-regulation

2. Spot the Change

Have the child study a room or tray of items.

Change 1–3 things.

Ask:

“What changed?”

Improves selective attention.

3. Attention Walk

Go outside and challenge your child to notice:

- 5 red things
- 3 bird sounds
- 2 circles, etc.

Strengthens focused awareness.

Visual Processing

The ability to understand and organize visual information.

1. Copy the Design

Build a block or LEGO design and have your child copy it.

Increase complexity over time.

2. Puzzle Challenges

Use:

- jigsaw puzzles
- tangrams
- pattern blocks
- hidden picture books

Strengthens spatial reasoning and visual organization.

3. Visual Tracking Games

Use:

- mazes
- connect-the-dots
- tracking lines
- or ball toss activities

Improves eye tracking and visual coordination.

Logic & Reasoning

The ability to problem solve, infer, and think flexibly.

1. “What Would Happen If...?”

Ask fun reasoning questions:

- “What would happen if gravity disappeared?”
- “What if people never slept?”

Encourages flexible thinking and reasoning.

2. Strategy Games

Play:

- checkers
- chess
- Connect Four
- Rush Hour
- Sudoku
- logic puzzles

Builds planning and problem-solving.

3. Mystery Solving

Create simple mysteries using clues.

Examples:

- “Who ate the cookie?”
- “Which animal made these tracks?”

Encourages inference and deductive reasoning.

Auditory Processing

The ability to process and understand spoken information and sounds in words.

1. Sound Sequence Repeat

Clap or tap rhythms and have the child copy them.

Increase complexity gradually.

2. Following Directions Game

Give multi-step directions:

- “Touch the chair, spin around, then grab the blue book.”

Increase number of steps over time.

3. Audiobook & Discussion

Listen to short audiobooks or podcasts together.

Pause and ask:

- “What did you hear?”
- “What happened?”
- “Why did the character do that?”

Strengthens auditory comprehension and recall.