



Blowing bubbles

This activity is designed to help babies and children learn about taking turns.

You will need

A group of parents, babies and children of any age!

A pot of bubble liquid and a wand. Make sure it's child-friendly and non-toxic.

Start with a wow fact

"The number of words your baby knows is linked to the number of words you've spoken to them since they were born."

Remember

When babies and children are having fun it is a great time for learning.

So remember, you only have to play this for as long as the children are enjoying it.

How to play

- Sit in a circle with babies and children facing their parents.
- Get the children's attention by saying 'Ready...steady...'
- Wait for children and babies to look up.
- Parents blow the bubbles using the wand.
- Encourage them to describe what is happening to the children.
For example 'blow', 'up' and 'pop!'
- When all the bubbles have popped, wait for the children to respond.
- Repeat!
- Encourage older children to have a go at blowing bubbles themselves, and talking about the bubbles.

How does this help?

Using bubbles can help teach babies and children too:

- Respond to their parent's voice
- Start relating words to actions (eg 'pop!')
- Give eye contact

For parents to try themselves

Encourage parents to carry bubbles with them when they're out and about.

They can try blowing bubbles when they're:

- On the bus
- Waiting to pick up a sibling from school
- Waiting at the dentist or doctor

Remind parents to describe what's happening. Older children can practice joining in.

Bubbles must be child-friendly and non-toxic.

**Parents and carers can find more activities
and resources to try at home by visiting
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Making noises

This activity is designed to help babies and children learn about taking turns.

You will need

A group of parents, babies and children of any age!

A selection of everyday objects that you can turn into musical instruments, eg:

Drums: Containers (e.g. ice cream tub, Tupperware boxes) pots, pans and spoons.

Shakers: Water, dried pasta or rice in plastic bottles or containers with lids.

NB Ensure that lids and tops are tightly closed before shaking and that children are supervised by an adult at all times

Start with a wow fact

“Having the chance to take a turn is one of the most important ways your child can start to learn to talk.”

Remember

When babies and children are having fun it is a great time for learning.

So remember, you only have to play this for as long as the children are enjoying it.

How to play

- Put the different instruments out on the floor.
- Help parents to make noises with the different ‘instruments’.
- Parents can describe the different noises they are making, eg ‘bang’ and ‘noisy’ for the drums, and ‘shake’ and ‘stop’ for the shakers.
- Stop, watch and wait for the babies and children to react.
- If they show they want more noise (e.g. by smiling and kicking their legs) repeat!
- Older children can help to take turns holding, banging and shaking things themselves.

How does this help?

By playing with instruments, babies and children learn:

- To pay attention to their parents
- Understand what different words mean
- Develop their independence

For parents to try themselves

Encourage parents to try making noises at home. The more they play, the more babies and children will be able to hold and pick up things with their own hands.

Making noises doesn't just have to be with instruments, parents can try:

- Ripping wrapping paper or newspaper
- Singing songs with clapping, like ‘If you’re happy and you know it’
- Splashing at bath time

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Moving to music

This activity is designed for babies and children to learn new words and actions.

You will need

A group of parents, babies and children of any age!

Space to move around.

Start with a wow fact

“The number of words your baby knows is linked to the number of words you’ve spoken to them since they were born.”

How to play

Sing or speak these nursery rhymes while doing the actions.

The movements will help babies and children to learn what different words mean, so it’s important that they can see their parents.

Grand Old Duke of York

- Parents hold babies, and children who can walk, stand up.
- March around the room to the song.
- Raise and lower your baby along to the words of the rhyme.

Humpty Dumpty

- Sit babies and children on their parent’s knee.
- When Humpty Dumpty has a great fall, lower babies and children carefully to the floor.
- Older children can stand and gently drop to the floor.

Row your boat

- Sit in a circle, with babies and children facing their parents.
- Sway back and forwards and ‘row’ along with the rhyme.
- You can play this in groups, just line children up with babies on parent’s knees.

How does this help?

Music and movement helps babies and children to:

- Learn words by using their senses
- Link words and actions together

For parents to try themselves

Encourage parents to try singing songs at home. They can be well known nursery rhymes, or ones they make up with their children together.

Remember the way you sing and move with your baby can relax or excite them.

- ‘Row Your Boat’ is quick and involves lots of movement, so it’s good for play time.
- Slow and quiet songs are best for bedtime. Use soothing movements like rocking.

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Nursery rhymes

This activity is designed to help develop communication skills.

You will need

A group of parents, babies and children of any age!

Start with a wow fact

**“Babies begin to hear voices when they’re in the womb.
When a baby is born, their parents’ voices
are already their favourite sounds.”**

How to play

- Sit in a circle, parents should be facing their children.
- Make eye contact, smile and begin singing these songs -
You can find the lyrics on our website
 - *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*
 - *One Potato, Two Potato*
 - *Five Little Ducks*
- After a short while, stop singing and wait for the babies and children to respond.
- The babies might kick their legs or smile. This is their way of asking for more.
- The older children should be encouraged to join in with the singing, but don't worry if they decide not to.

How does this help?

Singing helps babies and children to improve their

- Listening skills
- Understanding of different words
- Brain connections through repetition

For parents to try themselves

Encourage parents to try singing songs at home.

They can be well known nursery rhymes, or ones they make up with their children together.

Babies and children love hearing songs at any time of day, so try singing songs

- At bath time
- In the car together
- When you're hanging out the washing
- When you're changing a nappy

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Peek-a-boo

This activity is designed to help with babies' and children's responsiveness – this is their ability to react.

You will need

A group of parents and children of any age, but this activity is best for younger babies.
A scarf, jumper or blanket – but your hands will do.

Start with a wow fact

**“Peek-a-boo teaches babies about a concept called ‘object permanence’,
This is the understanding that when an object or a person
disappears from sight, that they’re not gone forever.”**

Remember

When babies and children are having fun it is a great time for learning.
So remember, you only have to play this for as long as the children are enjoying it.

How to play

- Sit in a circle, parents should be facing their children.
- Encourage parents to make eye contact with their children.
- Parents should start to gently hide their face with the scarf, jumper, blanket or their hands.
- Wait for the babies and children to respond.
- Parents now reveal their faces, saying ‘Peek-a-boo!’
- Help the older children to join in – remember it’s important the babies can see them.

How does this help?

Peek-a-boo helps your baby to:

- Link their parent’s face with their voice
- Interact with and feel their parents’ love
- Grow their brain through repetition

For parents to try themselves

This game can be played easily at home.

A fun way to adapt it is by playing in front of a mirror

- Parents can sit with their babies on their knee, both facing the mirror.
- Parents now slowly move their face so they are out of sight.
- Wait for the babies to respond.
- Reveal your face by showing your reflection in the mirror and say ‘Peek-a-boo!’

A similar game to play with older children is Hide and Seek.

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Rolling a ball

This activity helps babies and children learn about taking turns.

You will need

A group of parents, babies and children of any age!
A ball

Start with a wow fact

“Having the chance to take a turn is one of the most important ways your child can start to learn to talk.”

Remember

When babies and children are having fun it is a great time for learning.
So remember, you only have to play this for as long as the children are enjoying it.

How to play

- Sit in a circle with babies on their parent's knee.
- Supporting the babies, help them to face the middle of the circle.
- Older children can sit next to their parents with their legs crossed.
- One grown-up starts the game by saying one of the children's names.
- The same grown-up should wait for the baby or child to notice them and look in their direction.
- Once they have seen them, roll the ball carefully over to the baby or child.
- Parents can help babies to reach and touch the ball that's rolling towards them.
- Older children can practice getting it themselves, this will help their coordination skills.
- They then take turns saying another child's name and rolling the ball to them.
- Help the older children to have a chance choosing a name, this can be really fun for siblings.
- Repeat until each child has had a turn to respond.

How does this help?

Turn taking games help babies and children to learn:

- To listen and respond when someone speaks
- The foundations of conversations

For parents to try themselves

Encourage parents to try turn-taking games at home.

Turn-taking games can become part of everyday activities, parents can try

- Taking turns to splash at bath time
- Singing their favourite songs and leaving pauses between the lines
- Building towers together and taking turns to knock them down

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Sharing stories

This activity is designed to help babies and children to learn about taking turns.

You will need

A group of parents, babies and children of any age!

A selection of books

Start with a wow fact

“Babies and children who have shared books with their parents will know more words by the age of two than those who haven’t.”

How to play

- Put a selection of books out on the floor.
- Ask everyone to sit in a circle with babies on their parent’s knees.
- With the help of the older children, pick a book.
- Now slowly go through the chosen book.
- The important thing isn’t to read the words but to pick out things that are interesting, (e.g. a character or a picture)
- Describe it using lots of simple words (eg ‘red hat’).
- You can also try using funny voices and faces to keep the babies and children interested.

How does this help?

Sharing books help babies and children learn:

- New words through repetition
- To copy sounds and words
- Listen and concentrate

For parents to try themselves

Encourage parents to share books at home.

Remind them, they don’t need to read all of the words – just talk about the pictures.

Babies and children are listening and learning all the time – right from their very first day.

0 to 2 months: Babies’ vision isn’t fully developed yet, hearing their parent’s voices is what’s most important to them

2 to 4 months: Babies’ vision is getting better. They’ll most like bright colours and patterns.

4 to 8 months: Babies will be starting to explore using touch. Books with different textures and things they can feel are best. Noisy books with buttons are also great choices!

8 to 12 months: Babies will be getting ready to speak now, so sharing books with names will help them to speak their first words.

Older children: Follow their lead. It’s okay to share the same book over and over again. When they’re ready, encourage them to help turn the pages.

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