

Build Play Routines using People Games

When playing with your child, be sure to choose toys, people play and songs that are:

1. **Active-** Including actions and movement will allow your child to join in through imitation. Your child will be able to imitate gestures and movement even before he/she can say words. You are giving your child a way to take a turn in the “conversation.”
2. **Repetitive-** Repeating actions and words gives your child many opportunities to see/hear and practice the actions and words.
3. **Allow for Turn Taking-** Repeat enjoyable Play Routines so that your child may become familiar with them. When your child understands a Play Routine, he/she will be able to **anticipate** the next step. **Anticipation** is necessary in order for your child to take a turn in the “conversation.”
4. **Encourage Turn Taking-** Signal to your child that it is his/her turn in the “conversation.” Pause... (count to 10 and give your child an expectant look). This will give your child the time to process and express. If he/she does not take a turn this time, take it for him/her and continue.

Watch your child carefully for things such as eye gaze, body movements, vocalizations and gestures. Your child may be requesting or protesting the continuation of the interaction. Even these subtle things count as a turn in the “conversation.”

People Games

Games and activities that involve another person are a great way to develop social and communicative skills as they can strengthen the bond that motivates communication.

Peek a boo

Cover your head with a blanket or towel and wait for your child to remove it. If he/she does not take a turn, take it for him/her. As the blanket is removed, model “peek” or “boo.”

Horse Ride

Bounce your child on your knee. When you see that your child is enjoying the movement- stop. Watch for eye contact, body movement or a vocalization. Say what your child would say if he/she could; “more.”

Up and Down

Lift your child up in the air and model “up.” Model “down” before lowering them back to the ground or to your lap. After a few turns, pause before a movement and watch your child for a

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request to continue (e.g. eye contact, body movement, a vocalization). Interpret his/her request with what your child would say if he/she could- "up", "down" or "more."

Dance!

Turn on music, and dance with your child. Have fun and find the movement they like (e.g. spinning, dipping, bouncing, turning). Periodically pause and watch your child for a request to continue. Accept his/her communication and interpret it by saying what your child would say if he/she could; "more."

Row, Row Your Boat

Sit face to face with your child and hold arms out stretched. Gently bring your child with you as you rock back and forth and sing:

Row, row, row your boat gently down the stream.

Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily life is but a dream.

Occasionally pause and wait for your child to request that you continue. Watch for eye gaze, body movement, or vocalizations.

Round and Round the Garden

Walk your hands around your child's palm and sing:

Round and round the garden like a teddy bear

One Step, Two step, (walk your fingers up their arm)

Tickle under there! (tickle under their armpit)

Pause before the tickle and watch your child for a request that you continue. Say what your child would say if he/she could; "tickle."

London Bridge

Sit face to face with your child and hold his/her hands with your arms stretched above your heads and sing:

London Bridge is falling down, falling down, falling down.

(lower your arms to the ground with each falling down)

London Bridge is falling down, (lower arms to the ground) my fair lady.

Occasionally pause before lowering your arms to the ground. Wait and see if your child will take a turn. If your child does not take his/her turn simply take it for them and continue.

Ring Around the Rosy

Hold hands with your child and walk in a circle while you sing:

Ring around the rosy

A pocketful of posies

"Ashes, Ashes"

We all fall down!

Pause before you and your child fall down. Wait for your child to request that you continue (eye gaze, body movement or vocalization). Interpret your child's request with what your child would say if he/she could; "down."