

Games & Activities for Children



CAREGIVERS

Active Games & Activities



Dancing

Play some music and have children dance really fast, then really slowly. Or play “freeze dance” by having children dance until an adult suddenly pauses the music, at which time the child needs to “freeze” in place and stand perfectly still until the music starts again. You can make freeze dance more difficult as children get older by asking children to freeze in a particular position, like staying still while standing on one foot.



Playground Fun

Provide many opportunities for children to be active and challenge themselves physically through access to equipment such as climbing structures, balance beams, seesaws, swing sets, etc. Encourage play by setting challenges for children such as by creating an obstacle course, racing them, or setting a time limit to complete a certain task. As children get older they might start to enjoy more structured activities, like playing on an organized sports team.

Scan the code with your phone camera to see the game in action!



Simon Says

Ask a child to copy your movements, but only when you use a certain clue like when you say “Simon Says” before the action, when your eyes are closed, or when your finger is on your nose. Try going fast and slow. This game asks children to pay close attention to your movements and to remember clues.



Quiet Games & Activities



I Spy

Using the rhyme, “I spy with my little eye...” give a clue about an object in the environment that everyone can see. For example, if you are out for a walk and see a school bus you could say, “I spy with my little eye something that is yellow.”

The child must look around and make their guesses that match the clue. They might guess their yellow raincoat or a yellow flower, but the game continues until they guess correctly. You can give more clues if needed, “Something that is yellow and big, noisy, moving, etc.” Next, the child can choose something to give clues about! For children who really love this game you can ask a librarian for help finding and borrowing “I Spy” books from the library that hide objects in busy pictures.



Cooking

Helping in the kitchen is a lot of fun for young children. An adult can direct children in simple and safe tasks like stirring, mixing, measuring, counting, mashing, and more! Placing toppings on a homemade pizza, scooping batter into a muffin tin, and pouring ingredients into a bowl are all ways a child can be involved in a recipe. Children will be so proud of the finished result, and it might even encourage them to try new foods!



Board & Card Games

Children at this age begin to enjoy games with rules. It is important to choose games that are demanding but not too hard for each child. As children become more familiar with games, try to encourage children to remember and enforce the rules themselves. Board games, card games like Go Fish, matching games, and pen-and-paper games like Tic-Tac-Toe are all great options.



Storytelling

Children love to tell stories. Encourage children to tell you stories and write them down to read with the child. Children can also make pictures and create their own books or act out the story. As children revisit the story, they might add more details. Bilingual families can tell stories in their home language to encourage fluency.