

Language **games**

Playing with rhymes

When parents play rhyming games with their child, they should do so at single rhyme word level, e.g. 'What rhymes with tree (mother points to her knee)?' 'What rhymes with cat (mother points to a hat)?', and it is also useful to sing clapping songs.

For inspiration, visit websites like www.rimogremser.dk and www.multidansk.dk

In front of/behind game

Some games are very popular when played with mum and dad, e.g. the in front of/behind game. Mum sits in an armchair playing queen, and dad stands on the floor. Mum gives commands from the chair: 'Now stand in front of dad' 'Now crawl over dad' 'Now stand behind dad' etc. Here, the focus is on prepositions which are important to learn, because children often use them in their role playing.



‘Bomb game’

If you want to play with hypernyms and hyponyms, you can, for example, play the ‘bomb game’. You set an egg-timer, put it in a bag and suggest a specific word, e.g. ‘forest’. All family members should now say a word relating to ‘forest’ and pass the bag to the next person until the egg-timer rings. The person holding the bag when the timer rings decides what the next word will be. Again, this is a very concrete way of playing with language. Children under five years may need visual props such as pictures, doll’s house furniture, plastic animals etc. Small children are allowed to repeat words already mentioned because it boosts their language awareness skills.

Building colour towers

Many children like setting themselves small challenges. A popular game is building colour towers. The game focuses on whether the child knows which colour is which and can follow mum’s or dad’s instructions. To play the game, you need an atlas and 2 x 5 stackable bricks of different colours. Explain briefly before starting the game: ‘Look, you get a yellow, a red, a green, a white and a blue brick (check that your child knows which colour is which). Now we will stand the atlas up, so that we can build in secret. I will also be building. We will now build what I say (I decide). Ready? First put down the blue brick, place the red brick on top, place the white brick under the blue brick’ etc. Once all bricks are used, move the atlas to see if the colour towers are identical. It is a fun game, and sometimes the colour towers are not identical.

Can you guess what I am thinking of?

‘Can you guess what I am thinking?’ is a game which can be played anywhere – in the car, on your bike and at home. All the child has to do is to guess what the adult is thinking. It is important to choose an object that is within the child’s field of vision if the child is not that old. Example: ‘I’m thinking of something you can see yourself in (mirror)’.

Follow my instructions

You can, for example, hide a small teddy bear in an unexpected place and take turns saying where Teddy is. For example, Teddy is sitting in the hall, in the bathroom or in the third drawer down in the kitchen. Afterwards, the child can hide Teddy and tell the adult where to look.

