

People Games: Encouraging Expressive Language

Games that involve you and your child are great for developing expressive language. These games typically follow a routine (have specific steps, same order, repeated).

5 Steps to Use People Games

1. **Begin the game the same way each time** – This helps your child understand when the game is starting and how to start it if they want to play
2. **Identify the high point** - Typically at the end (e.g. “boo” in Peekaboo)
3. **Adjust** – Slow the game down, add in some pausing (to give your child the opportunity to imitate a gesture or word)
4. **Use the same words and gestures throughout** – The more familiar your child is with the words and gestures, the more likely it is that they will imitate
5. **End the game the same way each time** – This lets your child know that it is over and gives them an opportunity to request to play again

Tips:

- Keep language simple, use 1-2 words that label the object or action
- Make sure to wait up to 5 seconds to give your child a chance to make a noise or imitate
- Use gestures that match what you are doing
- Repeat the game many times
- If your child begins using a word, choose another target word or expand on what they say (e.g. child says “play” you model “play peekaboo”)

Peekaboo Example:

1. Say “Let’s play peekaboo”
2. Cover your face with hands/blanket, say “Peeka....?”
3. Wait for your child to grab the blanket/make a sound or word
4. Remove the blanket and say “boo!”
5. Hold your hands/blanket down to see if your child signals that they want the game repeated by reaching/making a sound

Common People Games:

- Peekaboo	-This little piggie	-Ring around the rosie
- Chase	- Tickle	- Horsie Ride
-Blast off (pick them up in the air)	- Hide and Seek	-Swinging in a blanket
	-Air plane ride and crash on couch/bed	