

Social Interaction Games

Learning Social Skills

Interactive games, such as peek-a-boo and pat-a-cake, allow you to help encourage and improve your child's social communication skills without then even knowing! By playing these simple and fun games, your child will learn that there is a reason or purpose for communication. They will also learn crucial communication skills such as attention, enjoyment of others, joint attention, turn-taking, imitation, vocalization, comprehension, gestures and purposeful communication during fun and repetitive shared activities!

Tips for playing interactive games



- **Before you have your child take a turn/respond in the game, play the game many times and model to show or teach them how to play.** This way your child will know how to play and will be comfortable participating.
- **Once your child knows what to do in the game, give your child time to join in and respond.**
- **Let your child respond at their level.** This might not be a word but could be gesturing/doing an action, smiling or making eye contact.
- **Put emphasis on parts of the game or song that your child likes.** These are considered key moments and are a great opportunity for your child to join in. For example: in *Ring Around the Rosy*, the "we all fall down" line is a key moment. Your child may respond by jumping and falling down.

Ideas for playing interactive games



- **Big box**
 - Have your child sit in a box and pretend it is a spaceship. Move the box back and forth as it "flies through space." Be sure to say words and make sounds as you play with your child.
 - After your child catches on to the game, pause before you are going to move the spaceship back and forth and wait for a response from your child (a gesture, smile, sound, words, etc.) before you rock it again.

- **Bubbles**
 - Before you blow a bubble, pause and wait to see if your child responds to show that they know what is about to happen. Watch for a smile, eye contact, a word, etc. before you blow a bubble.
 - After you have blown a bubble wait for your child to show enjoyment, displeasure or that he/she wants more before you let them have a turn.
 - Comment on what happens to the bubbles ("the bubble popped!").



- **Treasure hunt**
 - Hide containers with your child's favourite toys or treats in them around the house.
 - Go on a treasure hunt together to try to find them.

- Once your child understands the game, when you find the next item, wait for your child to ask you to open the container at whatever level they communicate (e.g. pointing to it, passing it, gesturing, making a sound or saying a word).

- **Hide and seek**



- Have your child sit down with you while someone else leaves the room and hides somewhere. Call out for the person in the other room and have them jump out and run over and tickle your child. This will show your child that by calling someone's name you can get his/her attention.
- Once your child understands the game, help them make sounds or gestures to call out for the person.

Nursery rhymes/songs

Nursery rhymes are a fun way to interact with children. The music and movement can help them learn the words and actions to participate. Below are some nursery rhymes that you might remember:

Humpty Dumpty

Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall. *(Sit your child on your knees)*
 Humpty Dumpty had a great... *(Pause and wait for your child to respond)* fall.
 All the king's horses and all the king's men
 Couldn't put Humpty together again.



Itsy, Bitsy Spider/Eensy, Weensy Spider

The eensy, weensy spider climbed up the waterspout. *(Put your fingers together to pretend the spider is crawling up.)*
 Down came the rain and washed the spider out. *(Put your hands up and then bring them down quickly as you say "down" to pretend rain is falling.)*
 Out came the sun and dried up all the rain. *(Put up your arms in a circle above your head to show the sun.)*
 And the eensy, weensy spider *(Pause here and wait for a response)* climbed up the spout again. *(Put your fingers together to pretend the spider is crawling up again.)*

The Wheels on the Bus

The wheels on the bus go round and round, *(Move your arms in a circular motion.)*
 round and round,
 round and round,
 The wheels on the bus go *(Pause here and wait for a response)* round and round,
 All through the town.



Verses:

The people on the bus go up and down... *(Bounce your child up and down on your knees.)*
 The doors on the bus go open and shut... *(Start with the palms of your hands together and then open your hands on "open" and clap your hands together on "shut.")*

The wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish... *(Make your hands go side to side like windshield wipers.)*

The horn on the bus goes beep, beep, beep... *(Pretend you're honking a horn.)*

The babies on the bus go wah, wah, wah... *(Pretend you're crying.)*

The mommies on the bus go shh, shh, shh... *(Put your fingers up to your lips.)*

This Little Piggy

(As you say each verse, touch one of your child's finger's or toes.)

This little piggy went to market.

This little piggy stayed at home.

This little piggy had roast beef.

This little piggy had none.

And this little piggy went *(Pause here, wait for a response from your child before you continue)* "wee, wee, wee!" all the way home. *(Tickle your child as you say this.)*



Pat-a-Cake

Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man,

Bake me a cake as fast as you can.

Pat it and prick it and mark it with a _____, *(insert your child's first initial here.)*

Put it in the oven for *(before you say your child's name, wait for your child to give some kind of response)* _____ *(insert your child's name and point to them as you say it)* and me!

