

People Games



What are people games?

People games are simple, structured, predictable games that adults and children can play together that involve no toys. The predictable structure helps your child know how to play and when to take their turn.

What are the benefits to people games?

Because there are no toys involved in people games, your child can more easily focus on you and the words you model. During people games children learn to take turns, pay attention to people, and start an interaction.

How do I make-up a people game?

People games have 4 steps

1. Parent starts the game by using some type of repetitive words/songs and actions
2. Parent waits and gives their child a chance to take a turn
 - a. Child's turn depends on the level of their communication skills. For some children their turn may be just to look at you. For others it may be an action or gesture. For children who are using or imitating words, their turn could be a single word or phrase
 - b. Plan what you would like your child's turn to be BEFORE you start the game
3. Parent ends the game with something their child finds fun
 - a. This also varies from child to child. Some ideas are: being picked up, tickles, a silly face, being spun around, falling to the floor
 - b. Pay attention to how your child reacts to your ending. If they do not seem to enjoy it, change it up.
4. Repeat

What if I can't get my child interested in a people game?

Take some time to observe your child. Find something they seem to like to do by themselves and turn that into a people game. For example if your child likes to spin in a desk chair, make it a people game using the words "stop" and "go" to spin them in the chair. If your child likes to run, try a game of chase.

My child is interested in my people game, but they don't stay for very long.

Try to change up your ending to something your child thinks is more fun. If that is not successful try making your people game shorter, so they don't have to wait as long before the fun ending. You might also try being more animated. You might feel uncomfortable doing this at first, but your child will love you being fun and silly with them. Try to add more of their sensory interests like spinning in a chair or bouncing on your lap/a ball.

What if my child is not taking their turn?

Your child may not have taken the turn you planned, but they still may be taking a turn. They may be taking a turn by looking at you or pulling your hands

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Ideas for people games

One, Two.....Three

- Say “one, two” while looking at your child
- WAIT for your child’s response before you say three
- After you child responds, provide the fun ending

Motor Boat

- Use these words: “Motor boat, motor boat go so slow; motor boat, motor boat go so fast; motor boat motor boat (PAUSE FOR YOUR CHILDS TURN) step on the gas”
- Move your child slow, fast, then faster with each verse – the fast movement with the last verse is the fun ending
- You can do this by bouncing you child on your lap, moving their feet or spinning them in a chair

Chase

- Use the same phrase over and over while you chase your child. Such as “I’m gonna get you”
- Before you “get” your child, have them take their turn
- When you “get” your child, provide the fun ending

Ring around the Rosie

- Give your child a chance to take their turn before “they all fall down”

Row, Row, Row Your Boat

- Sit your child on your lap facing your
- Gently push and pull them with their arms while you sing
- Pause during the song to give your child a chance to take their turn

Peak-a-Boo

- Use a pillow or blanket to “hide” your child
- Pick a phrase such as “Where’s ___?”, then lift up the blanket/pillow
- Wait for your child to take their turn, then provided fun ending

Humpty Dumpty

- Sit you child on you lap or on an exercise ball facing you; bounce them while you sing
- Wait for your child to take a turn before “had a great fall”
- Fun ending can be you helping them to “fall” off your lap or ball