

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service

Game Ideas

Games are a great way of making practice fun – you can change them to include characters or topics that children particularly enjoy. You can adapt many of these games to work on speech sounds and grammar skills as well as reading, spelling and number work. Use a child's developmental level to help you choose the right game.

Pairs and Games based on Pairs

Traditional Pairs: You need two of each card e.g. two cats, two cars, two cups, two kittens. Place all cards face down. Players take turns to turn over two cards. If they match, they keep them. If they do not match, they place them back, face down. The next person takes a turn. This continues until all the pairs are won. The winner is the person with the most pairs.

Face-up Pairs: Lots of children like this version of pairs but it is especially useful for children who find it hard to remember where cards are placed.

You need two of each card as for traditional pairs. Place all the cards face down. Players take turns to turn over two cards. If they match, the player keeps them. If the pairs do not match, put them back but leave them face up. The next person then takes a turn and turns over two new cards. If any of the cards that are face up match then this player can take those pairs. If none match, they put their cards back, again leaving them face up. Players continue in a similar way until all the pairs are won. The winner is the person with the most pairs.

Keep Going Pairs: This can be played as for classic pairs or face-up pairs. The only difference is that if a player gets a pair, they have another turn straight away. They can keep having another turn as long as they get a pair. As soon as they don't find a pair, play passes to the next player.

Points Pairs: This game can make pairs seem more exciting for slightly older children. This is played like classic pairs. However, put some points on the reverse of some of the pictures, for example a 1 on one card and a 3 on another cards and 0 on another card. The winner is the person with the most points.

Jigsaw Pairs: Play this like classic pairs but rather than having two of each picture, you have one of each picture and cut each in half to make a jigsaw. The aim is to find the two halves that will make the picture complete again.

Association Pairs: Play this like classic pairs or face-up pairs. The pairs are not identical but are associated with each other e.g. by rhyme, by function, by category.
Function: horse and rider, car and passenger, toast and butter

Rhyme: cat and rat, dog and frog, hen and pen

Category: cow and pig (farm animals), tractor and train (transport), banana and apple (fruit)

Bonus Pairs: This game is not truly pairs so you do not need pairs of cards to play it – you just need a set of cards. On the reverse of some of the cards, draw a piece of treasure. Spread the cards out, face up. Take turns to select a card and turn it over. If the card has treasure on it, you can keep it. If it is blank, you cannot keep it – just take it out of the pack. The winner is the person with the most cards. There are lots of variations on this game. Fun alternatives are finding cartoon heroes, jewels, sweets.

Hunt the Spider: This game is not truly pairs so you do not need pairs of cards to play it – you just need a set of cards. On the reverse of some of the cards, draw a spider. Spread the cards out, face up. Take turns to select a card and turn it over. If it is blank you can keep it. If there is a spider there, you cannot keep it – put it to one side. The winner is the person with the most cards. There are lots of variations on this game. Fun alternatives are smelly socks, sharks, monsters, smelly pants.

Snap and Games based on Snap

Traditional Snap: Make a pack of cards with a mixture of pictures. You will need about 6 copies of any one picture and overall about 6 to 10 different pictures. Shuffle the cards and place face down in a pack. Each player takes turns to turn over a card and place it next to the pack. If two identical cards are turned over, then the first person to put their hands on cards and shout snap wins the cards and keeps them. Continue until all the cards have been won or until now more snaps are possible. The winner is the person with the most cards.

Association Snap: This is played like classic snap but the snap happens when associated cards are turned over e.g. things that rhyme, things with the same number of syllables.

Scaredy Cat: This is not truly snap so the pictures in the pack can be different and the number of cards needed is smaller, between 15 and 20. Have a pack of cards. In amongst the pictures, shuffle some cat cards. Place the cards face down in a pack. Take turns to turn over a card. Keep placing cards on the pile. If you turn over a cat, it catches all the pictures underneath and you win them. Keep going until all the pictures are won or all the cats are used. There are many variations on this. You can use sharks, spiders, Spiderman, Green Goblin, Paw Patrol cards.

Board Games



















A to B Games

In an A to B game, all players start at point A and aim to be the winner by getting to point B first. There are endless possibilities. These can be played with a pack of cards or a dice or both. Here are some suggestions:

- Draw a ladder.
- Make paper and blu-tack markers. Who can get to the top of the ladder first?
- Race track
- Climbing a mountain
- Escape from a haunted house
- Trying to reach treasure

Endless Track

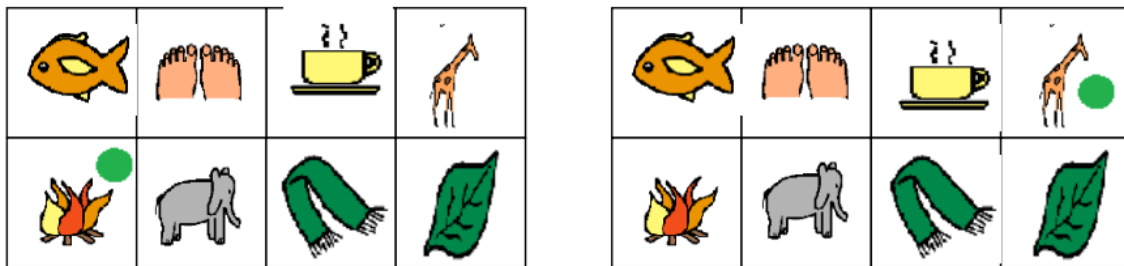
In an endless track game, you start at any point on the track and can go either forward or backwards using a dice. The centre of the track contains items that will gradually reduce in quantity and when they are all used up, the game will end. For example, when you land on a fish, you get to pick a fish from the middle. When all the fish are used, the game ends. The person with the most fish wins.

	Car		Koala	Castle	
Kettle					King
					Kitten
Cup					
Cork	Kiss		Kite	Cat	

Battleships Game

Each player has an identical board. Each player hides a marker on their board and takes a turn to see if they can find their opponent's marker by asking, for example, is your marker on the mouse? Keep taking turns until someone finds their opponent's marker.

Marker = ●



Linking a bought game with a Speech and Language Activity

Many bought games can be adapted to use for speech and language activities. Typically, a child could carry out a speech or language activity e.g. says a phrase containing "f" words and as a reward have a turn at the game. Games which adapt well to this include:

- Pop up pirates
- Connect Four
- Monkeying around
- Jigsaws
- Crocodile's teeth

Blu-tack Games

Bald Turkey: Draw two turkeys without any feathers. Make some paper turkey feathers. Stick these feathers on one turkey and leave the other bald. Ask the child to complete a task e.g. saying a word beginning with "t". If they do it correctly, they can take a feather from your turkey and put it on their turkey so that yours becomes bald and theirs becomes feathery. There are lots of variations including adding caterpillar legs, putting apples on a tree, putting animals in a field.