

Games And Activities (3-4 Years)

1. Read books together

- Read books of all kinds to your child: picture, words and pictures, pop up, information and poetry.
- What child doesn't love hearing a good story? Contact your library for details of storyteller sessions.

2. Go to the library

Visiting the library is a great way to explore books together. The library gives your child the chance to discover, flick through and choose from a wide range of different types of books, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Many libraries have singing or rhyming sessions for pre-school children. Best of all, it's somewhere fun to escape to on a rainy day!

3. Sing songs and nursery rhymes

Singing helps children to develop their speaking and listening skills and to have fun with words.

4. Dressing up

Dressing up and role play are great opportunities for talking and listening and for imaginative play. On a practical level, a fun dressing up session can help your child to practise getting themselves dressed. You can fit in a sneaky bit of training with those tricky zips, armholes and buttons.

Games And Activities (4-5 Years)

1. Rhyming games

- Listen to and join in with rhyming stories, e.g. *The Gruffalo* (Donaldson).
- Play rhyming games. How many words can we think of that rhyme with cheese?
- Make silly rhyming jokes, e.g. What do you call a smelly elephant? A smellyphant! What do you call an elephant watching TV? A tellyphant!

2. Phonic games

- Play snap or bingo with letters and sounds. Write letters on pieces of papers or cards, to create homemade flashcards. Make two for each letter. Use them to play snap. You could also create a bingo card with eight boxes – each one containing a letter. Put the flashcards into a pile, facing down and take it in turns to be the bingo caller.
- Play phonics fishing! Use homemade letter flashcards, add a paperclip to each, tie a magnet to some string and a stick and ask your child to ‘fish’ for a particular sound.
- Play ‘I spy’ games, e.g. ‘I spy something beginning with a...’ using the letter sound when you are out and about.

3. Memory games

- Play ‘Kim’s game’. Put a few items on a tray (e.g. a crayon, an apple, a building brick, a toy car). Then look, cover, remember and check!
- Talk about, photograph or write out some ‘events’ from something you have done together – can your child remember the correct order?
- Go shopping – try to remember the list together!

4. Listening games

- Play games such as ‘Simon says’ – party games are often good ways to practice speaking, listening and memory skills, without them even noticing!
- Listen to music and talk about the instruments being played – find pictures on the internet together.

5. Action games

- Make a puppet theatre with cardboard boxes or a towel over a chair and encourage your child to make up or retell a story to you or any willing family members!
- Have lots of fun dressing up with clothes and props at home (charity shops are a great source!) so that your child can dress up as a character and act out favourite stories.
- Play games such as ‘What’s the time Mr Wolf?’, but instead of saying the time write the times down for them to read.

6. Tactile games

- Use magnetic letters to spell names and simple words on the fridge or radiator.
- Use modelling clay to make your child’s name or simple words like mum.
- Enjoy jigsaws together and chat about finding the right pieces!

7. Screen games

- Watch TV programmes linked to books and then read the books afterwards e.g. *Little Princess* (Channel 5), Katie Morag (CBeebies), *Charlie and Lola* (CBeebies). Talk about what they like or don't like about the characters.
- Find story-telling sites like Little Kingdom , story-telling TV programmes or find story apps for your phone.
- Look at DVDs from picture books together, e.g. *Penguin* (Dunbar)

8. Car journey games

- Play 'The cook's cat is an amazing cat/beautiful cat/clever cat/daft cat... etc. and then make up your own versions (The doctor's dog...).
- Play this noisy version of the car game, 'Who can spot...?'. It's great fun – but check out with the driver first before you start this one! Decide on a noise, or a word to call, when you spot the things you're looking out for - e.g. 'Bang!' for a yellow car; 'Buzzz!' for a bus; 'Wow!' for a bird.
- Listen to an audiobook.

9. Out and about activities

- Ask your child to find the things you need to buy when out shopping by reading the labels on products together.
- Check out your local library or community centre to find out what special activities or clubs are running in term time or holidays.
- Try to do a few visits or find some information together to link with the topic or project work at school.

10. Reading books of all kinds together

- Carry on reading books of all kinds to and with your child: picture, words and pictures, pop up, information, poetry, eBooks, print books... and the levelled books brought home from school. Video or record your child reading it for fun

Games And Activities (5-6 Years)

1. Tongue twisters and language games

- Make up and play with tongue twisters like *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers* or *Betty Botter bought some butter ...*
- Find poems and rhymes that play with language, like Michael Rosen's '*There's mustard in the custard*'.
- Make up guessing games during meal times, e.g. I'm thinking of an animal. It can gallop. You can ride it. What is it? Take it in turns.

2. Phonic games

- Use the levelled reading books your child brings home from school to see how many words your child can find with a particular sound e.g. the sound ai even if it's spelled in different ways: ay, a-e – in two minutes!
- Play full circle! Use magnetic letters to make a word. Change one letter each time to make a new word until you get back to the original e.g. park-part-tart-dart-dark-park.
- There are masses of [online phonic games](#) to discover too.

3. Memory games

- Find songs and [mnemonics](#) to help your child remember the days of the week/months of the year/colours of the rainbow (e.g. Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain).
- Use flashcards to learn words which your child finds difficult and play a matching game to find words beginning with the same letter.
- Play 'Kim's game'. Put some objects on a tray, talk about them with your child, then cover them up and see how many he or she can remember.

4. Listening games

- Write and read out a list of rhyming words that have the same sounds e.g. rain, brain, main and another word that is different, such as 'the'. Ask which the odd one out is.
- Play 'Simon says' with slightly more complicated instructions than 'Stand up/Sit down'. Try and jiggle on one leg, flap your arms and hop, rub your tummy and smile!
- Play yes/no games. Your child chooses an object, person or animal and answers yes/no to your questions until you guess what/who they are thinking of.

5. Action games

- Set up treasure hunts or challenges and encourage your child to read the clues to find the treasure.
- Play games such as charades or *What a Performance* (Orchard Toys) and make sure you encourage your child to read the instructions.
- Play timed word games like *Boggle*. Set an egg timer to one or two minutes and tell your child a sound, e.g. short vowel o and ask them to think up as many words with that sound (e.g. top, job, coffee) before the timer goes off.

6. Tactile games

- Use puppets, dolls and construction toy characters to build a story setting.

- Put a dollop of paint onto a piece of paper and help your child to blow tricky words or letter patterns that have to be learned, using a straw!
- Play dice games by changing the dice faces to letters and asking your child to roll dice to see if he or she can make a word from the letters. [Say the sounds](#) when making the word.

7. Screen games

- Play computer games together and ask your child to read the instructions and explain the rules to you.
- Watch educational programmes together such as *Alphablocks* or *Numberjacks* (CBeebies). Talk about it and join any linked online clubs.
- Read a book, see the film, play the game! Make links between books and films – which is best?

8. Car journey games

- "Where do you think that truck is going?" Make up a story together about the journey of the truck, each telling a sentence at a time.
- Encourage your child to read the signs and to ask questions.
- Play audio tapes of favourite stories and songs.

9. Practical games

- Read letters/invites/cards, recipes when cooking and instructions for new games.
- At breakfast, read the back of a cereal packet or the funny jokes on products like Innocent yoghurt drinks.
- Use books/websites to find information about the school topic or hobbies and sign up to clubs.

10. Reading books of all kinds together

- Make books together for younger siblings or grandparents.
- Sometimes try reading books to your child that are above their reading age so they can listen and enjoy your reading and expression.
- What child doesn't love hearing a good story?

Games And Activities (6-7 Years)

1. Language games

- Read and remember poems, (e.g. Michael Rosen's poems) and join online author fan clubs as they usually feature fun activities, jokes and competitions.
- Play with language. Spot words within words or try to make up new words for things like *stepevator* for *elevator*, or *smoketube* for *chimney*...
- Play games such as *Articulate*.

2. Phonic and spelling games

- Do word searches together and then make up your own.
- Play word/spelling games like *Junior Scrabble*, *Bananagrams* and *Boggle* to focus on blending letter sounds to make words.
- Write a word out – it could be a word from the weekly spellings list – cut it up and ask your child to put it back in the correct order.

3. Memory games

- Have fun trying to memorise menus in restaurants and cafés!
- Memorise directions to the swimming pool or to a friend's house using the right terms; turn right, go over the roundabout, pass the sweet shop and it's second on the left.
- Play spelling pairs with their weekly spelling words. Draw a word grid and write each spelling word in a new box. You will need to write each word twice (each in a separate box). Cut them out, making sure you have two of each spelling word. Then turn them over and mix them up. Challenge your child to turn over two pieces of paper and then read each word. Are they a pair? If not, turn them back over and repeat this until they find matching pairs. Once they have found a pair, look at the spelling together and then ask your child to spell the word without looking.

4. Listening games

- Draw a picture and then while you describe what you have drawn your child has to draw what you are describing. Compare your drawings.
- Make up riddles about an object or person you know and see if your child can guess what or who it is, e.g. they wear skirts, they have grey hair, they live in a flat etc. Who are they?
- Play 'Repeat the sound'. Create a movement or sound e.g. click your fingers, tap your foot twice, cough. Ask your child to copy you and add another movement or sound on at the end. You then have to repeat their movement/sound and yours back and forth, without forgetting any. This game works with two or more players and is a great way to encourage listening, memory and concentration skills. It is also good fun!

5. Action games

- Play *Twister* – ask your child to read the instruction about which colour dot their left/right, hand/foot should be placed on the floor mat! Lots of skills to coordinate at the same time!
- Play charades with friends and family.
- Write words like run, walk, jump, sit, etc. on separate pieces of paper. Get your child to read the word and do the action. Time them!

6. Tactile games

- Use puppets, creatures, models to create and tell stories as a show.
- Create posters, book covers and presents using sand paper, magazine cut outs, fabric, paint, glitter glue, buttons and straws. Go 3D!
- Use fridge magnet games to build messages, stories and poetry, e.g. 'Gone to Matt's for tea!'

7. Screen games

- Buy 'educational' tablet, computer or DS games and encourage your child to read the instructions by themselves. Talk to your child about the games and ask them to explain how to play.
- Watch adaptations of stories, e.g. *The Gruffalo* (Donaldson), *Horton Hears a Who* (Dr Seuss), and talk about the differences between the book and the film.
- Show your child useful online sites like YouTube and iTunes, explaining how you read to make choices.

8. Car journey games

- Use Michelin I-Spy books (*I-Spy Car Journeys*, *I-Spy Cars*, etc.).
- Joke books can be a useful thing to pack for a long car journey. Take it in turns to tell a joke or a riddle.
- Encourage your child to read road signs, to give you directions or to set the satnav!

9. Practical activities

- Look at newspaper articles, notices from school, leaflets/guides in museums together.
- Get your child to think about and plan for the week's activities: clubs, school events, parties.
- Get them to think about holiday packing lists (it'll save you the worry!) and 'to do' lists.

10. Reading books of all kinds together

- There are some great picture books for older children so don't give up on pictures. Don't forget comics too!
- Read simple chapter books with fewer pictures and read a couple of chapters at night.
- Listening to stories being read is not only enjoyable, but it can build your child's vocabulary and help develop their speaking and listening skills.