

## Speech and Language Therapy

### Top Tips for Using People Games

#### What are People Games?

- 'People Games' are games that are played without toys – just with people.
- Some People Games involve movement and music (e.g. "Ring a ring of Roses"), and some involve just movement or actions (e.g. tickles, peek-a-boo, chase).

#### Why Use People Games?

People Games offer a special advantage for children with social communication difficulties, who learn best through structure and repetition. As People Games are played the same way each time and often have a 'script' to say while playing, children with social communication difficulties can learn many things during these predictable games e.g.

- Taking turns with you
- Paying attention to you
- Imitating your actions, sounds, or words.

#### Incorporating your child's sensory preference

Because People Games involve some sort of movement or actions, a child's sensory preferences can be incorporated into the game which will make the game motivating for the child.

If a child's sensory preferences are stimulated, it often encourages them to communicate and ask for the game to keep going.

#### Ideas for People Games

The most important thing about People Games is that they are fun! Most families engage in People Games with their children, whether they realise it or not. Here are some examples of People Games:

- Hide and Seek
- Peek-a-boo
- Rough-and-tumble
- Tickling games
- "This Little Piggy"
- "Ring a ring of roses"
- Chase
- Piggy back/horsie rides
- Finger games like "Where is Thumbkin?" or "Round and Round the Garden"

### Turn Sensory Preferences into People Games

Once you determine the sensations that your child likes and dislikes, you can think of a People Game that might incorporate this for your child.

Here are some examples of sensory preferences and a People Game that would satisfy that preference:

Child's Sensory Preference	Try This People Game
Running	Chase or races. Or try "Red Light, Green Light", where you run or walk on the green light and stop suddenly when "red light" is announced.
Rocking back and forth	Try singing "Row, Row, Row your Boat" while sitting across from your child on the floor, holding hands as you rock back and forth.
Looking at his fingers	Finger games such as "This Little Piggy" (played on fingers instead of toes), or "Where is Thumbkin?". Many other examples can be found on the internet by searching for "fingerplays".
Spinning	"Ring a ring of roses", or try spinning your child in a revolving office chair.

Deep pressure or strong hugs	Try rolling your child up in a blanket, then unrolling him (you can pretend they are a caterpillar going into his cocoon!). Or play chase and when you catch them, give them a strong hug. They may also enjoy an adaptation of Peek-a-boo, where you cover their body with a pillow and then uncover him.
Jumping	Turn this into a People Game by holding his hands while he jumps on a trampoline or on the bed. You could also sing "Five Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed" while your child jumps.
Swinging back and forth	Have your child lie in a blanket, while two adults hold the ends of the blanket, swinging it back and forth.
Feeling certain fabric/textures	If your child enjoys soft fabrics, play Peek-a-boo with a soft blanket or cloth, or swing him in a soft blanket.
Avoids certain movements and prefers slower, quieter activities	Try finger games (like "Thumbkin" or "Round and round the Garden") or "Pat-a-cake", which can be done slowly and quietly while sitting.

### Encouraging communication

You can develop your People Game once your child knows the routine by incorporating waiting into the routine. Repeat the game a few times and then pause at the end to see if your child lets you know they want you to do it again. You can then repeat 'again?' before starting from the beginning. You can also pause before a word or action to encourage them to join in and take a turn.

Some of the best People Games are the ones families create themselves. You can think about your child's sensory preferences and make up your own game that you think your child might like.