

# PHONICS GAMES

Children at this age absorb so much and are eager to learn so learning through play is a great way to develop their language and have real fun! Play games inside and outside and even on the move. Here are some easy things you can enjoy doing together:

**Top ten games and activities: 3 - 4 year olds**

## 1. Songs, rhymes and funny names

Listen to, say and sing nursery rhymes and rhymes with actions.

- Listen to, say and read repetitive rhymes and stories with language patterns, e.g. *Each Peach Pear Plum* (Ahlberg), *Dear Zoo* (Campbell), *Dr Seuss*.
- Make up nicknames for family members 'daddy duck', 'mushy mummy'...

## 2. Letter fun

- Play alphabet games and sing alphabet songs, e.g. *a* for apple, *b* for banana, etc.
- Play with magnetic letters on the fridge. Focus on the letter sound not name (so *sssss* not *suh*).
- Play with [flashcard games](#).

## 3. Memory games

- Play picture snap games and play picture lotto games.
- Play list games 'I went to the market and bought an ant.... I went to market and bought an ant and a balloon....' (make it as silly as possible to make it fun).
- Use alphabet cards with pictures and lay them out in the correct sequence then take a couple out and ask your child to say which ones are missing.

## 4. Listening games

- Listen to stories, CDs, music, nursery rhymes and songs.
- Go on a sound walk; try recording some of the sounds on your phone and then, when you are home, ask your child to listen and remember what made the sounds.
- Play sound lotto games such as *Cock a Doodle Moo* (Orchard Toys).

## 5. Action games

- Retell or act out favourite stories and make new ones too, with toys, puppets, teddies, train sets and cars.
- Help your child to set up role play games using teddies and other toys; a café, a shop, a library...and visit as a customer.
- Encourage your child to play independently, using bricks or other construction toys, train sets, pegs and sheets!

## 6. Tactile games

- Thread beads or painted pasta to make sequenced patterns with colours and shapes. This later helps them spot patterns in words/language etc.
- Squeeze paint onto a hard surface and help your child to finger-write letters and patterns, encouraging a left-to-right direction to reflect reading and writing.
- Read pop-up books, books with holes, textures, fabrics and sounds.

## 7. Screen games

- Watch television programmes together such as *Olivia*, *Little Princess*, *Harry and his Bucketful of Dinosaurs* and then read the original picture books afterwards.
- Play games on the computer together, for example [Cbeebies](#). Discuss the instructions and ask your child if they like the game.
- Find some [phone apps](#) that make stories fun.

## 8. Car journey games

- Take it in turns to ask questions, e.g. Who can see the first bridge/horse/red truck?
- Play games such as 'I spy' but instead of something beginning with a letter say something that is a colour 'I spy something that is blue...'.  
• Listen to story and nursery rhyme CDs, e.g. *Winnie the Witch* (Thomas/Paul), *Doing the Animal Bop* (Ormerod/Gardiner).

## 9. Out and about activities

- Spend some time choosing books from the library.
- Join in with free library rhymetime or storytime sessions.
- Make choices together at the shops - ask your child about what to buy and why.

## 10. Reading books of all kinds together

- Read books of all kinds to and with your child; picture, word and picture, pop up, lift the flap, eBooks, print books... even 'make your own' books.