

PEOPLE GAMES

What are people games?

People games are those physical games you play with your child without any toys, for example tickling and chasing.

Why are people games so great for communication & interaction?

- There are lots of opportunities for your child to take a turn as they are **repetitive** and **predictable**.
- Your child is more likely to communicate because these games are **motivating** for your child.
- Your child can learn to copy what you do because you are repeating the same thing each time.

What is an example of a people game?

- Tickling
- Chasing
- Spinning/twirling
- Peekaboo
- Up & down games: jumping, lifting your child in the air, bouncing them on your knee
- Songs with actions, e.g.:

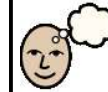


“Pat-a-cake” “Round and round the garden” “Incy wincy spider”

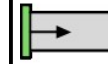
“This little piggy went to market” “Row row row the boat”

“Wheels on the bus” “If you’re happy and you know it”

How to set up a people game to target communication skills:



1. Give the game a name – use this same name each time you play the game. It’s important that everyone uses the same name to help your child to understand the word and predict what’s going to happen next.



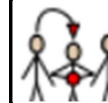
2. Start the game in the same way – think of a word and a gesture that you’ll use each time you start the game. This will become familiar to your child the more you play it. It will help them to anticipate what to do next. It will also give your child something to copy and a way of asking for the game.



3. Plan a turn for your child – before you play the game, work out what you want your child to do in the game. It might be for them to show you they want more of the game, or that they’re going to do an action in the game.



4. Help your child to take their turn – some children will know what to do next in the game, but other children might need a specific opportunity or cue. They might need hand-over-hand support to show them what to do. You might need to pause in the game in order to give your child a turn, so plan this in advance. Always offer the same turn at the same point in the game, to help your child to predict what to do. If they don’t respond to these opportunities, just keep the game going and offer them again.



5. Keep it going in the same way – the longer you play the game, the more chances you are giving your child to take turns and communicate. Keep it fun by using an animated voice and facial expressions. Carry out the people game in the same way each time, offering the same turns and using the same words.



6. End the game in the same way – decide what word and action you’re going to use to end the game. It might be “finished” with the Makaton sign, or “all done”. Think about the word, phrase or gesture your child understands to indicate something is ending. If they don’t have that understanding yet, then plan ahead and decide on the word and gesture you’re going to use.

How to develop the game and communication opportunities:

It's great for different family members to play the people game with your child. Just make sure everyone is playing the game the **same way**, using the **same language**, and offering the **same opportunities** for your child to take a turn. This will really help your child to participate in the game and develop their communication and interaction skills.

As your child becomes more familiar with the structure and turn-taking that you have put into the game, you might want to give them more opportunities for communication.

You could do this by:

- **Increasing the requests** your child needs to make in the game;
- **Change** the way your child makes a request, maybe from a gesture to a sound;
- Make something **unavailable** in the game (your hands or a prop) and wait to see how your child communicates that they want it.

Examples of some changes you could make to a jumping game:

- **Reduce the number of jumps** you help your child to make before pausing, enabling them to make more requests.
- **Wait** to see if your child tries to copy 'more' or makes a sound if you pause after they've indicated they want more of the game.
- Part-way through the game, **hide your hands** behind your back and see what your child does.

Videos and further information



These videos show some examples of how a parent is using a people game or song to develop their child's interaction and communication skills

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y9v xv4E8wGM>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gnd7joNP_gI

These ideas were adapted from Hanen's More Than Words. For more information from Hanen see the following handouts and videos

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJc0ZohTpMI>

https://www.hanen.org/SiteAssets/Helpful-Info/Articles/people-games-handout_1-0-1.aspx

<http://www.hanen.org/Helpful-Info/Articles/R-O-C-K--in-People-Games--For-Children-with-ASD-or.aspx>

'People games' is a recommended strategy for children with a range of communication needs including language delay, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Developmental Language Disorder (DLD).

Developed by the Early Years Complex & Additional Needs (CAN) team

Sensory Preferences

Children have different sensory preferences so will enjoy certain people games more than others. Think what your child likes doing best, and try to find a people game that matches this.

