



Word Games are Winners: Promoting Language Development for Your Child

Megan Wallace

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Current Projects:

This summer we are working hard to finish our analyses of the data from prior studies and we are not currently scheduling family visits to the lab. We thank parents for your continuing interest in our research. We will resume family lab visits in the fall semester.

An infant's language increases dramatically once they begin nearing the age of fourteen months. In order to boost language development around that time, the Institute for Brain Learning and Brain Sciences at the University of Washington promotes the use of games with young toddlers. Parents can begin with little games such as pointing to their eyes, nose, ears, etc. These turn-taking games not only reinforce identification, but they allow the child to practice using words and gestures. Games such as "show me your nose" emphasize the back-and-forth nature of conversation, as well as the importance of sharing attention with another person. During these games, the child must make eye contact and gesture, a skill necessary for language later in life. Other examples of identification games include making a game

out of naming and pointing during everyday activities. For example, parents may say "show me the grapes" at lunch or while shopping parents can say, "Where are the bananas?"

Younger infants benefit from games as well, but in

more subtle ways. Around the age of five to eight months, parents may take advantage of making their child laugh by turning silly or funny games into a social lesson.

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Current News:

CCF Second Annual Forum

The Center for Children and Families will be hosting their annual forum on September 22, 2011. Guest lecturer Dr. Suniya Luthar from Columbia University will give an evening lecture titled "Fostering Resilience: Who Tends the Caregivers? Who Mothers Mommy?" at 7:30 pm. Other talks will take place throughout the day.

All events are open to the public, but registration for the daytime events must be completed online at <http://ccf.utdallas.edu/forum/index.html>

Hurry, registration is limited!

Infant Learning Project

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bbs.utdallas.edu/ilp**

Thank You

We thank our families for your participation. Without your support, our research would not be possible!

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Keep On Moving: The Importance of Motor Development

Lisa Keylon

There are many key factors involved in infant growth and development, but one that might not be as obvious is movement. Children use movement constantly in their everyday lives, while playing, eating, and interacting socially. Increasing ability to move around helps infants develop cognitively as they explore and interact with their world. The skills necessary for movement can be improved by constant practice.

Here are some great ideas from the website Zero-to-Three that allow you to interact with your child while also helping them practice their motor skills:



Activity ideas for 12 months and under

- ◆ Let your baby play on his/her stomach and join in the fun! This is the perfect time to try "peek-a-boo".
- ◆ Try dancing to the beat of different music with your baby in your arms. You can even do this with friends and their children.
- ◆ Imitate your baby's actions and see if they catch on to your game.

Activity ideas for 12-24 months

- ◆ Put on some music and dance with your child!
- ◆ An obstacle course constructed with pillows, boxes, and blocks provides a great setting for your child to put those motor skills to work.
- ◆ To increase fine motor skills you can teach your child to sing songs that involve hand movements, such as *Itsy Bitsy Spider*.

Activity ideas for 24 months and older

- ◆ Playground time can be a valuable developmental experience, whether your child prefers the swings, the sandbox, or the slide!
- ◆ Act out stories at story time and encourage your child to join in.
- ◆ To help with balance, play a game with your child where a room in your house is the ocean and you have to jump on cushions laid on the floor to get from one side of the room to the other.

For more information: <http://www.zerotothree.org/child-development/social-emotional-development/onthemoveenglish.pdf>

