

## Everyday Word Games to Practice Speech and Build Language

Making time to practice your child's speech and language goals is important. There are also many enjoyable ways to work on speech and language skills "on the go" using common word games. Here are a few:

**Clue:** Tell your child that you are thinking of a word. Give him clues about the word. Have him guess the word. Start with a large category clue such as I'm thinking of an animal, I'm thinking of a word that starts with "L", I'm thinking of something someone would do at school, etc. Then add details such as "it lives in the jungle", "it roars", etc. Praise all guesses and add more clues as needed. Children often enjoy turning it around and giving you clues about what they are thinking. This is great for building expressive language.

**I Spy:** Pick something that both you and your child can see. When it is your turn, give him clues about what you see. Keep going until your child guesses what you are describing. Then let him take a turn. This is a great game for building descriptive words such as sharp, small, shiny, yellow, round, etc.

**Make a Pair:** Name three or four things and ask your child to tell you two words from the list that go together. If you said "carrot, broccoli, road, dog" your child should say carrot and broccoli. Praise her for "good thinking" and comment, "You're right! They go together because they are both something to eat and they're both vegetables!" As your child gets better at the game, you can ask her to explain "why" the items make a pair. Remember, things can "go together" for a number of different reasons. They can have the same feature (e.g. the sun and a lemon are both yellow). They can have the same function (e.g. you cut with both scissors and a knife), or they can belong to the same category (e.g. a shirt and pants are both clothes).

**Who would say this?** This is a game we often play with very young children: naming animals by their sounds e.g. What says "oink"? As the child gets older you can build his language and thinking skills by having him think of jobs or of characters in books or movies by what they might say e.g. Who says "open wide!"? (Dentist); Who says, "I'll blow your house down?" (Big Bad Wolf).

**Throw One Back:** Name 2 or 3 things that belong to the same category and include one word that doesn't belong. Have your child "throw back" (tell you) the thing that doesn't belong. Help him tell you *why* it doesn't belong. (e.g. pen, apple, crayon, paintbrush... apple doesn't belong because you can't draw with it).

**Crazy Story:** This is a great game to play with several children. Each child takes a turn adding one sentence to a story you have started. They repeat the first sentences until someone finishes the story with "the end". For instance, you might start with "Once upon a time there was a big green dragon." The first child would say, "Once upon a time there was a big green dragon." He might add, "He flew over the city and scared all the people." The second child would say, "Once upon a time there was a big dragon and he scared everyone in the city." He would add, "Then one day a bigger dragon came along." Continue the story until no one else can think of any ideas or until someone says "The end." Each child should have a chance to start his own story.

For more ideas for "On The Go Games" go to [www.parentlinkalberta.ca](http://www.parentlinkalberta.ca) and click on Talk Box ideas.



