

# ***Facilitating Language and Socialization Using Toys and Games***

**October 22nd, 2009**

**6:00pm – 7:30pm**

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## **AGENDA**

Introductions

“Freeze” Game

Video modeling example – dinnertime

Michelle Richey

Resource List Overview

Play Stations

- 3 Stations – 1. Emergent Language  
2. Developing Language  
3. Social Skills

“Red Light/Green Light”

Make-N-Take

Wrap-Up/Questions

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## Why Use Homemade Toys?

Homemade toys are a cost-effective way to provide a variety of play experiences to a child. They allow you to personally adapt the toy according to the child's developmental strengths, areas of need, or interests.

With homemade toys, the creation process can be educational, as well. It allows for interaction between the child and caregiver or therapist, communication opportunities, fine motor practice, sensory exploration, and a deeper sense of ownership once the toy is completed.

The toy can be more meaningful to the child because it has a history. The child not only may remember creating the toy (or watching it be created), but by making it from materials from the child's environment, the child attaches more meaning to the object. (how many times have we seen a 16-month old neglect a box full of toys to play with the pots and pans?)

## SAFETY ALWAYS

Each child is an individual; therefore, it is always important for parents, caregivers, and therapists to make wise decisions in what a child is allowed to play with at any given age and/or developmental level. There are many safety issues to consider in choosing and/or making appropriate toys for any child, so please be aware of and use the following guidelines:

**Choking Hazards.** If a child is still mouthing objects, be sure that there are no loose items small enough to fit into his/her mouth, ears or nose (i.e. dried beans) or like-sized objects that could fall off or out of a toy. (A good rule of thumb is "if it easily fits through a toilet paper tube, it should be considered a choking hazard." When in doubt, err on the side of safety.)

**Strings or Cords.** Things that can get wrapped around a child's neck, throat or other body part, need to be used with close adult supervision! If possible, keep this risk minimal by cutting the length of the rope or cord so that it cannot get wrapped around any part of the child, or remove it all together.

**Suffocation.** Always be sure that a child's airway is not blocked. Keep plastic bags and containers that could fit snugly over mouth and nose away from small children. Don't cover a child's face with anything that he/she cannot easily breathe through. Don't lay them face down on thick or fluffy objects (i.e. bean bag, waterbed, pillows, stuffed animals, etc.)

**Toxic Materials.** Many materials contain unknown chemicals or toxins and are NOT intended for children to mouth. Be sure an object or material is certified as "nontoxic" before allowing a child to mouth it. Containers that have had cleaners (including soap) need to be washed and rinsed thoroughly to avoid a child's exposure to soap residue or toxic fumes, and should be avoided when making toys for children who are still mouthing objects. It is also important to use nontoxic paints and glue when decorating a toy.

**Sharp Things.** Avoid toys with sharp or pointy edges that could cut or poke a child. In making toys, it is important for an adult to help with, or do, any cutting with scissors or knives that might be involved.

**Allergies.** Be aware of any allergies that a child may have. A child could be allergic to latex (no latex gloves), certain adhesives (watch glue, stickers and bandaids), dust (possibly avoid chalk), or certain foods (no peanut butter pine cone bird feeders). Information is very important here.

Homemade, as well as store-bought toys, should be checked often to insure that they still meet safety standards and haven't become a hazard to a child. Have fun, but choose and make toys wisely!

## For More Ideas, Check Out These Resources:

[www.familyfun.com](http://www.familyfun.com) has a section that is searchable by age, time allotted, and cost. It's the best ideas from their magazine over the years.

[www.fisher-price.com](http://www.fisher-price.com) has a section of play ideas that is categorized by age. It is the entire contents of a book about play activities for children birth to three.

[School Projects for Pennies](#) published by Publications International, Ltd., copyright 2001. There are ideas for projects in science, math, communication, holidays, and experiences from different cultures. Games, crafts, and experiments are just some of the things in this book, and each one has a label of "easy," "medium," or "difficult."

[Thrifty Nifty Stuff for Little Kids: Developmental Play Using Home Resources](#) by Dee A. Blose and Laura L. Smith, 1995. Published by Communication Skill Builders. This book was written by fellow-Oklahomans, one of whom has a child who is autistic and the other of whom is an occupational therapist. The book is divided into sections by developmental age (up to 60 months), and also includes information on adapting toys, prerequisite skills, positioning, and a wealth of other information.

[The MAILBOX: The Idea Magazine for Teachers](#) published by The Education Center, Inc., copyright each Issue. Learn more about this publication at [www.themailbox.com](http://www.themailbox.com).

### **Bottle People**

- plastic bottle, any size
- markers
- glue or tape

Glue or tape lid to base. Decorate as desired with markers. Older children may wish to glue or tape on ribbon, lace, cloth, etc. for clothes, and pom poms for nose and/or eyes. (If more decoration is desired for younger children, cover completed bottle entirely with contact paper.) Try varying bottle sizes and types for different 'people.'

### **Safe 'Lava' or 'Wave' Bottle**

- plastic bottle, any size
- karo syrup
- plastic confetti or objects
- food coloring
- duct tape or glue

Put toys and/or confetti into bottle. Pour in karo syrup and add food coloring if desired. Seal lid onto bottle with glue or tape. Shake vigorously and watch the things inside become suspended in the bottle and slowly form bubbles as they float to the top.

### **Whale or Fish Scoops**

- gallon milk or water jug for whale
- half gallon milk jug for fish
- permanent markers
- scissors

Turn the jug on its side so that the handle is at the top. Draw a mouth extending partway up the sides on the base of the jug with the marker. Cut along the lines, creating a wide-mouthed scoop. Use marker to outline mouth edge and add eyes and a blowhole.

### **Boo Boo Bunny**

- baby washcloth
- yarn or ribbon

Place washcloth on a flat surface and evenly roll two diagonally opposite corners toward the middle until they meet. Fold the rolled washcloth in half. Fold the cloth in half a second time and wrap the string around the second fold to form the bunny's head. Gently pull apart the rolled ends that extend above the string so that they resemble rabbit ears. (If the child is older you can glue on googly eyes and a pom pom for the nose and tail.) Designed with a hole in its center, the bunny slips onto a fingertip for an instant puppet, or a piece of ice can be placed inside to help soothe a bump or scratch.

### **Sock Puppet**

- sock
- markers for cloth
- two pieces of cardboard (jello box)
- glue, rubberbands, fabric (optional)

Cut the pieces of cardboard identically to match the curve of the sock. Turn the sock inside out, and glue the cardboard pieces at the toe of the sock; one on each side. (This forms the 'mouth' of the puppet.) Turn the sock right side out and decorate as desired with markers. (Optional: wrap rubberbands close to toe to make 'eyes', and glue on fabric to make 'clothes' or 'fur'.)

### **Lid Bug**

- plastic lids, any size (big enough to avoid choking hazard)
- markers

Decorate the plastic lid with markers to make the back side of a flying bug. (i.e. color lid red and color on black spots for a ladybug, and draw wing outlines and eyes.) For older children, it can be decorated with construction paper and/or felt. Once decorated, use as a mini frisbee or target toss. (U.F.O.s could also be made.)

### **Litter Bag**

- paper grocery bag
- markers
- scissors
- tape

Open bag then close and fold over top and seal with tape. Draw an animal, bug or clown face on the front of the bag, making the mouth wide open. (Construction paper can also be used to make ears, eyes and a tail that can be glued, stapled or otherwise attached to bag for older children.) Cut through the outline of the mouth to form a hole bigger than the child's hand. This makes a fun way for the child to help pick up trash, or it can be a storage bag for some special, smaller toy items.

### **Push/Pull Toy**

- sturdy cardboard box, any size
- stickers, magazine pics, photos, etc.
- clear contact paper
- ribbon or cording
- scissors

Decorate the box with pics, photos or stickers. Cover entire box with clear contact paper. Poke a hole through one side of the box and thread the ribbon or cord through the hole with a knot on both sides to keep from coming out. (Watch length of ribbon and use adult supervision.)

### **Fun Hat**

- paper grocery bag or slightly smaller
- tape, double-sided and clear
- markers
- hole punch
- scissors
- any other optional decorative supplies

Roll down the top of a bag until it reaches the hat size the child wants to wear. (Try it on for size and pinch the brim to adjust the fit.) Tape in place. Decorate hats with markers. For older children, attach construction paper, pom poms, googly eyes or any other optional supplies using the double-sided tape. Pipe cleaners can be used as antennae. Coil around a pencil to make it curly, remove pencil, tape a pom pom on top, poke the bottom of the pipe cleaner through the bag and secure inside with tape. Construction paper can be cut into a flower shape, two holes punched into its center and ribbon threaded through, then curled with scissors. Then stick to the hat with double-sided tape.

### **Kool Kazoo**

-paper towel or toilet paper tube

-markers

-waxed paper

-rubber band

-scissors or xacto knife

Decorate the paper towel tube with markers. Wrap a piece of waxed paper over one end of the tube. Secure the waxed paper with a rubber band. Carefully cut two holes in the tube. To play, hum your favorite song into the open end of the tube.

### **Space Helmet**

-paper grocery bag

-crayons or markers

-scissors

-2 oatmeal boxes

-2 paper towel tubes

-tape or stapler

Put a paper grocery bag over your head. Have a friend trace a circle on the bag where your face is. Take the bag off and cut out the circle. You may also want to cut the bag around your shoulders so it is more comfortable. In the middle of each oatmeal box lid, trace the end of a paper towel tube. Cut out the hole. Staple or tape the oatmeal boxes side by side to the back of the helmet, lid side up. Stick an end of each paper towel tube through the top of each oatmeal box. Tape the top of each tube to the helmet so the tubes look like oxygen hoses. Decorate as desired.

## Arts and Crafts/Cooking Ideas

Paper plate turkeys  
Oreo cookie turkeys  
Lunch bag scarecrows  
Fingerprint turkeys  
Handprint turkeys  
Popcorn corn on the cob art  
Fall Foliage wreath  
Popsicle stick turkeys  
Fall leaf prints  
Torn up tissue paper Jack-O'-Lanterns  
Paper plate spiders with construction paper legs  
Glittered Glue spider webs  
Cookie/licorice spiders  
Spaghetti and glue spider webs  
Carve a pumpkin  
Pumpkin pudding  
Turkey hats  
Applesauce Cinnamon cutouts  
Marshmallow snowmen  
Cotton ball snowmen  
Paper plate Christmas wreath  
Foot print/hand print reindeer  
Peanut Butter sandwich reindeer  
Popsicle stick picture frames  
Wax paper placemats  
Pinecone ornament  
Candle Cookies  
Heart Pinwheels  
St. Patrick's Rainbow hats  
Paper plate lions  
Shimmering Shamrocks with glitter  
Paper plate Rainbow Wands  
Dyed Eggs  
Kool-Aid Play dough

### Resources:

<http://makingfriends.com/>

<http://www.creativekidsathome.com/activities.shtml>

<http://www.creativekidsathome.com/activities.shtml>

<http://www.enchantedlearning.com/crafts/>



## ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR SPEECH-RELATED GAMES

In addition to the speech stimulation activities described in *Parent-Infant Communication*, IHR specialists have compiled the following list of motivating games for stimulating speech sound production and for reinforcing vocal/speech behaviors:

- Play with puppets who "talk"
- Move cars, boats, airplanes to vocalizations
- Use wind-up toys that jump or move as you vocalize
- Use fingerplays, songs, and nursery rhymes
- Turn lights on to reinforce vocalizations and speech
- Move toy animals up and down child's arms/legs while changing the pitch and intensity of your vocalizations

- Play games to wake up people or dolls, changing intensity of voice to put them to sleep and wake them up
- Play hide and seek or calling games, varying the intensity of your voice

- Match painting and drawing movements to different durations and pitches of vocalizations

- Paint the outside of the house with water while vocalizing

- Move cars on a play road while vocalizing

- "Sing" while swinging and sliding

- Play motor imitation games such as Thumbs Go Up, Hokie-Pokie, and Pat-A-Cake

- Tell stories, changing pitch, intensity, and rate of voice as different characters "talk"

- Blow feathers/ping pong balls/candle/paper/cotton balls

- Four water/corn meal while vocalizing

- Press play-doh through Fun Factory toy while vocalizing

- Clap to vocalizations

- Walk or march dolls and stuffed animals as you "sing"

- Tie a toy to a string which goes through a loop screwed into the ceiling and raise or lower the toy while changing pitch of your voice

- Move pieces to game (e.g., blocks, stack toys) after child vocalizes

- Hold hands and move bodies rhythmically while vocalizing

- Ride on rocking horse while "singing"

- Move vehicles fast/slow as you change the rate of your vocalization

- String beads and let them slide down, changing the pitch of your voice

- Use microphone and tape recorder to encourage vocal "performance"

- Vocalize into mirror

- "Make" person walk or jump to vocalization

- Pop bubbles as you say "pop!"

- Finger paint with pudding while you hum

- Push and pull toys, strollers, wagons, as you chant or sing

- Roll balls or tear paper to match vocalizations

Bernstein and Svarc (1983) describe a number of games and activities which can be used to promote speech skill acquisition in young children.

From:

PARENT-INFANT

HABILITATION

Schuyler & Rushmer

IHR Publications

1987

## GAME 61 Emotional Potato Head

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### Indoor/Outdoor

- Indoor

### Equipment

- Mr. Potato Head Silly Suitcase
- Any other Mr. Potato Head accessories you can get your hands on, especially different mouths and eyes
- Deck of cards with pictures of facial emotions (You can also make these cards yourself; if your child is at reading level, write different emotions on notecards.)

### How

- The way to approach this is to build Mr. Potato Head purposefully.
- Have the child choose a card with an emotion that can be made with the Mr. Potato Head parts on hand.
- Have the child try to duplicate the emotion on Mr. Potato Head.
- Talk about how Mr. Potato Head is feeling and why he may be feeling this way.

### Purpose

- **Empathetic registration:** This activity allows children to learn to read emotions in others "outside themselves."
- **Empathetic duplications:** It also allows children to learn to duplicate the emotions of others; it reinforces the registration of emotions.



- **Theory of mind:** For higher-functioning children on the spectrum, you can use Mr. Potato Head to elicit a conversation about what he (Mr. Potato Head) is thinking.
- **Fine motor skills:** Manipulating the components to construct Mr. Potato Head promotes fine motor skills.
- **Language expansion:** By having the child tell you what Mr. Potato Head is feeling, you are eliciting descriptive language.

**WHY** When children do not register and understand the facial expressions of others, it is impossible for them to ascribe meaning to these expressions. This activity is a nonthreatening way to learn that a downward smile means someone is sad or raised eyebrows mean that someone is surprised.

## GAME (62) **Don't Drop the Ball**

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### **Indoor/Outdoor**

- Either

### **Equipment**

- Tactile ball, Koosh ball, or oversized Hacky Sack (A Koosh ball is available at most toy stores and is easy to purchase on the Internet.)

### **How**

- Have the child place the ball on her head.
- You (the adult) make faces at the child, who then attempts to mimic the faces.

