TURNING PAGES, BUILDING FUTURES

LEARNING WHERE LIFE HAPPENS

Let's Play Together

Simple sensory games that build connection, anticipation, and communication

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Short on time? Jump to page 3 for the People Games planner.

Start Here

Some of the most powerful teaching doesn't look like teaching. Peek-a-boo, tickle games, piggyback rides, a song with hand motions - these are sensory social routines: games where the fun comes from you, not from a toy your child can play alone. Because the fun lives in the interaction, every game is a repeatable chance for your child to communicate.

The big idea: The game starts, the game pauses - and the pause is where your child's turn happens.

Run the game the same way each time so your child can predict it, then stop at the exciting moment and wait. What your child does to get the game going again - a look, a sound, a word - is communication, and it counts.

Try This: Turn a game into a conversation

Pick a game your child enjoys or seems interested in

Try: Chase, tickles, spinning, peek-a-boo, a song with actions. The best game is one your child laughs at or leans into - fun that depends on you. If your child can play it alone, they don't need you for it, and the pause has no power.

Run it the same way every time

Try: Same words, same actions, same order. Predictability is what lets your child anticipate what's coming - and anticipation is what makes the pause work.

Pause at the good part

Try: Stop right before the exciting moment: hands over your eyes before the peek, fingers still before the tickle, "ready, set..." - and wait. Look at your child expectantly.

Give your child time to respond

Try: Give your child time to fill the pause. A glance, a sound, a movement, a word - any signal that says "keep going!" counts. Respond to whatever they give you, then start the game again.

Keep the fun going

Try: For games with objects - bubbles, a spinning top - keep hold of the good part so your child has a reason to come back to you: a look, a reach, a word, or handing it back for round two.

Be silly and have fun

Try: Make funny faces, use a silly voice, exaggerate a familiar action, or invent a ridiculous sound. You don't have to worry about looking silly. Your shared enjoyment matters more than doing the game "right." Follow your child's lead and notice what makes them laugh or want more.

Add a song to the routine

Try: Sing during a familiar routine - getting dressed, washing hands, or buckling into the car. Use the same song or leave a familiar word or action unfinished so your child has a chance to join in. A look, movement, sound, or word can all be a contribution.

Notice what feels good

Try: Pay attention to the sensory part of the game—movement, rhythm, gentle touch, bouncing, or sound. Notice what your child enjoys and wants repeated. Adjust the intensity or stop if they seem uncomfortable. The sensory experience is part of the fun, not just a way to get their attention.

Pick one game. Play it the same way, pause once, and see what your child does.

What to look for

You don't need formal data to notice whether the game is working. Over several rounds, watch for:

- ☐ Anticipating the game - smiling before the peek, leaning in before the tickle
- ☐ Signaling during the pause: a look, a sound, a movement, or a word
- ☐ Coming back to you to start the game again
- ☐ Staying in the game for more rounds
- ☐ Trying a new way to ask for more

One small change is information - and a place to build from.

If it doesn't work...

If the game isn't landing, that isn't a verdict on your child. It is information. Try:

- Check the game. If your child can get the fun without you, the pause has nothing to offer.
- Make the pause longer. Some children need several seconds to notice the game has stopped.
- Lower the ask. Accept a glance or a sound before you expect a word.
- Add repetition. Many rounds of the same game are how the pattern becomes predictable.
- Check the volume. Some children find tickles or spinning too exciting to learn from; a game can be too big as well as too boring.
- Follow the fun. If a game flops, let it go and try another - the game isn't the point, the asking is.

Remember: *The pause isn't withholding. It's a question - and your child can answer it with a word, a sound, or a look.*

Want more practical ideas?

Get practical, doable strategies for teaching your own child at home - what to try next, how to break it down, and how to make it fit your family's routines. **Join the PAGE list and browse the full library at pageaba.com.**

Need help figuring out what to try?

Every child is different. If you're trying strategies at home and aren't sure what to change, PAGE can help you identify practical, individualized ways to support learning, communication, participation, and independence in everyday life. **Learn more or schedule a consultation at pageaba.com.**

LEARNING WHERE LIFE HAPPENS

Our Play Plan

Choose a game, find your pause, and make room for your child's turn.

Need an idea? Try one of these!

Choose something your child enjoys, or use these ideas to invent your own.

Game	Ideas to try
Peek-a-boo	Hide your face, hide a toy, or peek around a corner.
Songs with actions	Clap, stomp, sway, or pause before a favorite part.
Bubbles	Blow bubbles, pop them together, or watch them float.
Movement games	March, spin, rock, or take turns jumping.
Hand games	Pat-a-cake, fingerplays, or gentle hand motions.
Silly routines	Funny sounds, pretend sneezes, or playful faces.
Fun fill-ins	“5-4-3-2-1…blast off” or “ready, set…go” paired with an action

The best game is one you both enjoy. Adapt it to your child's preferences and comfort.

The game we’ll play:

The words I’ll say every time:

Where I’ll pause and wait:

What my child did at the pause:

Choose a game your child already loves and run it the same way each time. Pause at the exciting moment and wait - any look, sound, movement, or word counts as asking for more. Respond quickly, then start again.

Pick one game. Play it the same way, pause at the good part, and wait.