



More Communication Tips for Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Adapted from the Hanen guidebook More Than Words[®].

This tip is for parents of children who haven't started talking yet, but who are learning to communicate with eye contact, actions, sounds, or words.

TIP: Play People Games

People games like 'Peekaboo' are simple, repetitive routines that make paying with your child fun and easy. People games are a great way to have your child stay with you, pay attention to you and learn to communicate.

Play your game all the way through many times, and use the same main words and actions as you play. Once your child knows the game well, you can begin to pause at key moments in the game and WAIT for a response: when you wait, your child has a chance to join in by looking at you, touching you, smiling, doing an action, or even saying something. Remember to play the game all the way through many times before you start waiting!

Here are some more ideas for people games:

1. Pillow Jump: Place five or six pillows on the floor like stepping stones and help your child 'jump' from pillow to pillow. Say 'jump' right before you help him jump. After your child knows the game, get face to face with him and begin to wait right before you help them jump. When you wait, your child might look at you, smile, make a sound, or even say 'jump' to ask for your help in jumping. Remember to help him jump immediately after he lets you know that he wants to jump.

2. Laundry Boat: Pretend a laundry basket is a boat and 'rock' it back and forth. Say something like "down" or "rock" right before you move the basket. After your child knows the game, get face to face with him and begin to wait right before you rock or tip the boat. This will give your child a chance to look at you and ask for the game by touching you, starting the action, or even saying one of the words that he has heard you say over and over.

3. Head Bumps: Use your head to 'bump' your child's tummy, feet or back. Keep your 'bump' gentle and playful and give your child a chance to see your head slowly coming closer. Talk about what you're doing while you're doing it. You could say, "Let's bump Abby's tummy." After your child knows the game, get face to face with your child and begin to wait right before you give the 'bump'. You could say the first part of what you had been saying each time you gave a bump (e.g., "Let's bump Abby's.....") and then wait. Give your child a chance to laugh, push your head, or show and/or tell you where he wants the 'bump'.



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Hiding Game: Place several boxes upside down around the room and hide your child's favourite toy (or snack) under one of them. Help your child go to 'find' it. After your child has had a chance to play with the toy (or eat the snack) hide something else. When your child knows the game, hide an item, get face to face with your child and begin to wait, holding the box down, right before your child lifts it. Give your child a chance to show or tell you to lift the box!

4.

5. **Wheres mommy/daddy?:** This game will help your child learn that he can get the attention of others by calling out their names or touching them on their arm. Have your child sit with one parent on the sofa while the other one hides his head in his arms. The parent on the sofa will call out "Mommy!" (or the hiding parent's or sibling's name). Immediately, the 'hiding' person will jump up, run over and tickle or hug your child. Then, have the same adult go back and hide his head again. After your child knows the game, wait a moment instead of immediately calling the person's name. Watch and listen for how your child might try to get your attention or the attention of the person hiding!