

# Spontaneity: games to develop creative thinking skills



## Play

"Hi everyone, I'm Sunny, the Clear Sky mascot. I'm here to share a bit about this next resource with you... Us children love to play and what's great is that play has lots of benefits to our social & emotional development AND it can support our learning. I won't go on too much, but there are a few bullet points below about why play is so important..."

- develops problem solving skills
- releases feel good chemicals that help to improve behaviour
- Helps us to develop language and reasoning skills
- Teaches us about consequences and risk which helps with decision making
- Helps us to regulate difficult feelings
- supports the development of empathy, giving children an opportunity to see things from others perspectives
- Builds our self-esteem... and that's just the start of the list!

The following playful activities can be used to encourage the use of imagination and creative thinking skills. Use them before a creative writing exercise, or, if sitting down to do school work feels difficult today, have a go at these games instead.

Sometimes, when children play we like to come up with silly stories about potty humour that adults don't always like. If you don't like it, you can gently let us know "you find potty humour very funny don't you. In the next round, I have a challenge, we are going to make a story without mentioning it!"

One last thing, when we are playing together, it's important to let us lead and come up with our own ideas, as this encourages our creativity. Let's go and have some fun!"

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## The expert

This is a variation of 'anything can be anything,' shared in the first resource. Pick an object, it can be anything, a wooden spoon, hair clip, rubber band, a bowl... The players all become experts on the object and all have a different opinion on what it is. Each player holds the object and states "this is not a... this is actually a... and then continues to give their expert opinion on it, whilst sharing a story about it. The others experts act extremely interested whilst they listen to the story.

Here's an example. "This is not a wooden spoon, this is a catapult that comes from the land of miniature fairies. I can tell because of the marking down the side, that is the symbol of the land of miniature fairies. It's really small, can you see it? Well, they used the catapult to....." The next person continues "Ah, I am so sorry to disagree with you my friend but this is not a catapult from the land of miniature fairies, this is actually a..."

If there are only two of you, you can have more than one go with the same object. Tip: Encourage your child/children to share the first idea that comes into their head, and not to worry about whether or not their idea is funny or creative enough.

## "Yes, Lets!"

This is a mime game that encourages imagination. The first player will say "let's.." followed by an activity for example, "water the flowers," or "perform in a band," or "go to the beach." Everyone else says "yes, lets," and joins in with miming the activity. Allow the mime to continue for a minute or so and then the next person says "let's...." continue until you have all had a few goes each.

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## Story circle

Together with your child/ children, you are going to create a story, saying one line each. The story starts with "Once upon a time there was..." Each player shares one line each until the story has come to an end.

Variation one: create three sets of cards with characters, locations and objects written on them. Put them into three separate piles or bags. Take a card from each pile. The aim is to include the character, object and location into the story.

Variation two: As the adult, we want the child to be bringing the majority of the content to the story. When it is our turn, we can say a few words that lead the child onto their next sentence such as 'and then..' 'who..' 'next, the princess...'

Variation three: create a story using only one word each at a time

## Squiggle game

To play this game, you don't need to be good at art, it's all about imagination. You'll need a piece of paper and two pens, ideally of different colours so you can see who did which bit. Draw a squiggle onto a piece of paper. Your child then look sat the squiggle and turns it into something. For example, they might see a boat or an animal. Swap over.

Variation one: a slightly harder variation is to build a picture together. Invite your child to draw the first squiggle, you then draw another squiggle (of there are more than 2 players playing, keep passing it around the circle). Keep passing the paper around until the image is finished.



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## Freeze justify

Invite your child/ children to walk around a space, exploring different shapes and postures with their bodies. Consider using music to help their imagination. Encourage them to crawl, to reach high and low and to experiment with their movement. At any point, you can shout "freeze" at which point your child/children have to stop in their current pose. You then ask them to justify their pose and your child/children have to try to imagine a situation that makes their pose make sense. For example, if they are crawling on the floor they might say "i'm looking for something I dropped." If they have an arm raised in the air they might say "i'm playing basketball," or "i'm dusting a cobweb away." Once they have shared their justification, keep moving and have another go!

## Set up shop

Ask your children to imagine they are going to open up a restaurant (or a shop if they would prefer). it could be an ice cream parlour, pizza shop, smoothie bar, whatever their minds conjure up. What might their restaurant be called? Encourage them to design the shop sign. What would be on the menu, let them write it out, with pictures too if they would like.

You could even open the restaurant! You become a customer, or an employee, alongside any other children or adults at home. You could even use play-dough to make pretend food!