

What's in the bag?

Why?

This activity can help introduce your little one to lots of new words, and building anticipation as you play also encourages them to listen and respond to you.

How to play:

- 1 Collect a few fun, safe objects for your little one to explore. These could be toys or household objects, like a wooden spoon or a hairbrush.
- 2 Build anticipation before pulling out the object by describing how it feels, is it soft or hard? Round or square?
- 3 Pull out the item. Encourage your little one to explore and feel the object. Talk about what it is used for.



Top tip:

Why not let your child try and guess what's in the bag before taking it out? Use open questions and encourage lots of descriptive vocabulary.

For more activities to try with your little one,
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Peekaboo

Why?

Peekaboo helps children develop 'object permanence' - this is the understanding that when something disappears from sight, it hasn't gone forever.

What do you need?

A cloth, tea towel, item of clothing or you could use your hands.

How to play:

- 1 Place the cloth in front of you, start by partially covering your face.
- 2 Whilst your face is covered say "Peek-a-", then reveal your face and say "boo!"
- 3 Then start to leave longer pauses each time before saying "boo!" Watch to see how your little one responds.
- 4 Why not play the activity using a teddy by hiding the toy behind the cloth.



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Sock puppets

Why?

Encouraging your child to use their imagination when playing is a fun way to support their language development.

Imaginary play using sock puppets will introduce your child to new words that you might not use every day and help develop their communication skills.

How to play:

- 1 Put one sock on your hand and the other sock on your little one's hand.
- 2 Use expressive voices, name your characters and describe what they're doing 'Sammy the Sock is tickling your toes!'
- 3 Let your child lead - pause and wait for them to respond to the character when you make it 'speak' to them. Try letting them decide what the character does next.

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Learning about body parts

You will need:

A teddy or a cuddly toy.

How to play:

Sit face to face with your little one.

- 1 Name all the parts your little one's face and body, touching or pointing to them as you go.
- 2 Repeat and take turns to name the same parts of your own face and body.
- 3 For older children - ask them to point to the parts of their face and body... and then ask them to point to their carer's and then teddy's face and body.



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Blowing bubbles

Why?

Describing bubbles provides a great opportunity for little ones to hear new words.

Popping the bubbles also helps develop hand-eye coordination.

How to play:

- 1 Blow bubbles and see how your little one reacts.
- 2 Wait for your child to signal they want more bubbles. This could be a look or they might say “again or more”.
- 3 Introduce your little one to lots of words “up, down, pop, more and again!”

Top tip:

Older children could try blowing bubbles - it's great practice for developing muscles in the jaw and mouth.

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Ball games

Why?

Ball games don't just help children with their physical development, they can also help develop language and social skills.

Passing a ball back and forth helps children understand whose turn it is next, which is a great way to learn 'turn-taking' skills.

How to play:

- 1 Over and Under: ask your little one to place the ball in different positions – here are a few examples to get you started - put the ball: under your foot, behind your ear, on top of your head, up your jumper.
- 2 Take it in turns to say a different word when you throw the ball. You could choose to call out different animals, colours, fruit or superheroes.
- 3 If you're in a group, you can ask everyone to say the name of the person they want to throw / roll the ball to, before they throw/roll it.

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Building blocks

Why?

Building towers against the clock is a great example of how to use building blocks to expand your child's vocabulary and teach patience and resilience.

How to play:

- 1 Encourage your little one to build the tallest tower they can in 10 seconds.
- 2 Add a level of difficulty by asking them to count the blocks as they're building.
- 3 The time pressure might make them knock over their tower as they build it. If this happens, encourage them to try again and praise them for their efforts.

Top tip:

It is a great chance to introduce words, like tall, short, tower, build, fall.

You can also add more complex words, which will help with their maths language when they get to school.

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