

Play Games While Waiting with Young Children

Waiting can be hard for children and adults. What can you and your child do to have fun and learn while waiting for your food to arrive in a restaurant, for the bus to come, or in a long line at the store? Try playing one of these word games. It can make the time pass more pleasantly and help your preschooler build valuable skills. Your child can learn how to focus on and describe objects, make decisions, solve word problems, persist at a task, and recognize colors, shapes, numbers, and letters. They will also learn that different people can see things in different ways.



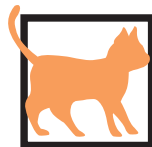
I Spy. The first player looks around and chooses an object that all players can see and then provides one clue: “I spy with my little eye something that is green [or round or striped . . .].” The other players take turns guessing the object. The player who guesses correctly starts the next round.



The Rainbow Game. One person chooses a color, and the others look for something of that color. When everyone spots something of the first color, another player chooses a new one. Keep playing until you run out of colors. Try playing with shapes, numbers, or letters as well.



Would You Rather? One player starts by asking a simple “Would you rather . . .” question, such as “Would you rather play Uno or Go Fish?” “. . . eat an apple or a pear?” “. . . take a bath or a shower?” or “. . . have a picnic with an anteater or a raccoon?” Add explanations for the choices, if you wish.



I'm Thinking of an Animal. One person thinks of an animal and gives clues so others can guess what it is. The best clues narrow the search but still allow for multiple possibilities. “I'm thinking of an animal that is black and white” works better than “an animal with legs” (although the second option is typical of young children's first clues). If no one guesses correctly, give additional clues until someone does.

You can change any of these games to fit your child's age and interests. For younger children, make clues simpler or choose more obvious items. Adjust your play times to match your child's attention span or the length of wait. Playing games makes waiting fun!

A message from your child's teacher