



PRESCHOOL

Learning Games

Children Learn Through Play

As you know, children of all ages learn through play. Here are a variety of fun games to play with your preschooler. Enjoy!

Wondering What Caused It

Ask your child questions about the world around her that will lead her to think about why things happen. As your child begins to link cause and effect, she will think about explanations for changes that she sees.

What to do: Observe your child's curiosity about events in her day. Almost on a daily occurrence, these events can be used for this game. A few examples are water freezing, a broken toy, leaves falling from the tree, etc. Guide your child in wondering about cause and effect. Start by saying, "We are going to do some detective work to find out what caused that." Ask questions that help her recount what just happened. "Now let's see. You were painting with two jars of color. What were the colors? Yes, that is right. Red and yellow. Now you have orange paint in the middle. Where do you think that came from?"

If your child does not come up with the correct theory, do not correct her, but offer another view. Encourage any effort to figure out the cause of the mystery.

Color and Number Cards

Let your child and a friend follow directions that contain number words and colors and sometimes have more than one step. Your child will have similar experiences when he enters kindergarten.

What to do: Invite your child and a friend to play a game with you. Tell the children they will need to learn to listen carefully (tough for a preschooler) and remember their colors and numbers. Give each child a set of small cards and spread them out on the table. Each card should have a color or number printed on it. Start with just three colors and the numbers one through five. Ask questions that encourage them to recognize colors and numbers. Here are a few examples:

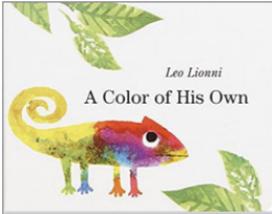
- Put your finger on the number two.
- Pick up the red card.
- Put one, two, and three in a row.

(continued)

Please see below for some additional activities that you could try with your child.



- Hand me two colors.
- Can you touch red? Three? Blue? One?



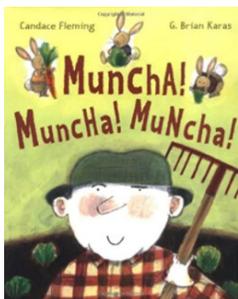
Suggested Book:
A Color of His Own
by Leo Lionni

To and From

Suggest that your child move to and from a variety of locations. Your child will get some good exercise, and his direct, active experience will lead to a deeper understanding of position words. Talking about to and from increases your child's understanding of these basic directional words and helps him learn how to use them.

What to do: Name your child's actions as he plays. Talk about what he is doing (running) and in what direction (from the door to the big tire). Invite him to repeat the action, but change the direction. For example:

- You are running to the tree. Can you run to the fence? It is farther.
- You are skipping from the swings to the sandbox. Can you skip from the sandbox to the slide?
- You are running to the bottom of the hill. Can you run half way up the hill? All the way up the hill?



Suggested Book:
Muncha! Muncha! Muncha!
by Candace Fleming

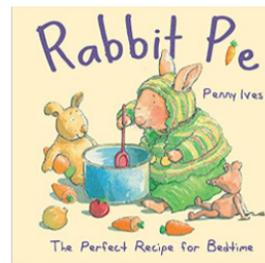
First, Next, Last

Use picture cards and the words *first*, *next*, and *last* to teach your child a simple recipe. Your child's ability to remember the order of events in a process will improve. This game provides a fun situation for learning sequencing.

What to do: Invite your child to help you make something from a simple recipe. Show her three index cards and explain that as you work you will draw pictures of what you did. Pick up one card and say, "This card is for what we do first. We collect the things we need."

As you name the objects (spoon, bowl, measuring cup, and water), make a simple outline drawing of each object on the card. Explain the next step and ask for help. "Next, we have to put the JELL-O and the hot water together. How could we do that?" Wait for her suggestions and respond, "Right; we put them in a bowl and mix them. That's the next step. Let me put that on the card."

Review the completed step and then move on to the last step. "The last thing we do is put the JELL-O in the refrigerator." Illustrate the third step on a card before reviewing all three steps. Ask your child to look at the cards and remember which came first, next, and then last.



Suggested Book:
Rabbit Pie
by Penny Ives

*Activities should be done under the supervision of an adult or older sibling.