

## Social Skills Games for Younger Children

### Looking

**Who's got the Ted?:** The group members close their eyes and the leader hides a small teddy under someone's chair or on their body, e.g. poking out of a pocket. The group is instructed to open their eyes and look to see who has got the Ted. The child who finds Ted can then be the leader to hide the Ted.

**Differences:** The leader chooses a child to change something about their appearance. The group looks at the child before the child leaves the room. The first child to notice the changes becomes the leader and chooses another child to have a go at changing something, e.g. different jumper, holding a toy, taking off a shoe, wearing glasses, wearing a scarf.

**Rolling a ball/throwing a bean bag:** The group members take it in turns to roll the ball to each other. They say the name of the child and then roll the ball to that child.

**Copy the action:** A child is chosen as the leader and the rest of the group have to copy their actions and they may change the action at any time.

**Miming actions:** Using action pictures, one child mimes an action and the rest of the group have to guess what it is.

**Kim's Game:** Put a small number of objects on a tray. Allow the children to look at the objects for a few minutes and then tell the group that one object will be taken away. Cover the tray with a towel and then remove one of the objects and ask the group to tell you which one was removed. If they struggle reduce the number of objects and use cueing questions, e.g. it's something you play with, it's round, it bounces, it's name begins with a 'b' sound.

**Lotto board:** Each child is given a lotto board (nouns/verbs/prepositions), the cards are placed face down and each child take turns at turning the cards over. The child names what is on the pictures and if it is on their board they can keep the card. The other children in the group have to listen and put their hand up if it is on their board. The child must look at the other child to win the card to put on their board.

### Listening

**All change:** The leader calls out 'Change places if you.... have brown hair, are called Jack, are 4 years old, are wearing X' etc

**Round games:** e.g. I went to the supermarket and bought... I went to a farm and saw..., I went on holiday and packed...

**Matching sound to picture/object:** Play different sounds on CDs/YouTube (e.g. animal, human, home, transport, instruments) and the children have to identify what is making the noise and choose a picture/object.

**Copying the instrument:** Lay out a selection of 3 instruments and the child is instructed to close their eyes or put a barrier up and then the adult plays one of the instruments. Then they remove the barrier and ask the child to choose the instrument they heard.

**Copying the beat:** The leader plays a beat using a drum/shaker/ bells and the child copies the beat.

**Locating the sound:** 'Keys Game' - Children should sit in a circle. One child sits in the middle blindfolded with keys on the floor next to them. One of the other children is chosen to go and take the keys. When the blindfolded child hears them moving they must point in their direction. If they point in the right direction then the blindfolded child can remove blindfold and go and sit in the circle with the others.

**Shopping game:** Lay 10 objects out on a table and talk about the items that are for sale in the shop. Give the child a shopping bag and send them to buy something. If this is too easy ask them to go and buy 2 or 3 items.

**Ready, steady, go games:** e.g. rolling a ball, throwing a bean bag, playing instruments, knocking down a tower, blowing bubbles. Adult says ready, steady and pauses before saying go so the children learn to anticipate what is coming next and when the adult says 'go', the children can then roll the ball/pop the bubbles.

**Stepping stones:** Each group member has 4/6 stepping stones to climb over to get to the treasure (brick/star/object) They can only move forward if the adult says their name. If they move forward without their name being called they return to the start.

## Taking Turns

**Feely bag:** Children take turns at passing the bag round the group and take an object out. Play music, and the children pass the bag around the group and when the music stops they can take something out of the bag.

**Posting pictures:** Lay out vocabulary pictures on a table near the post box (make sure there are enough pictures for each child to have several turns). The children will take turns to go and post 1 or 2 pictures named by the adult. When all the pictures are posted, open the box and ask the children to name the pictures.

**Skittles:** Set out a number of skittles in the traditional pattern. Place an action or object picture under the skittles. Each member of the group has a turn rolling the ball and naming the picture under the skittles that have fallen.

**Fishing:** You will need a commercially available fishing game with a pond and magnetic rods or you can make your own rods from sticks, string and small magnets. Attach a paper clip to individual small vocabulary/number/colour pictures and place the pictures in the 'pond'. Then the children can take turns at fishing using the magnetic rods. When they catch a 'fish' they should name the picture.

**Commercial Games:** e.g. Hanging monkeys, Pop Up Pirate, Build a Beetle, Snakes and Ladders, Snap are all good for encouraging turn taking..