



20 Zoom Activities

Simple and Engaging Activities
with Young Children

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FAIRY DUST TEACHING

What children need

Let's face it, conducting an early childhood Zoom meeting is not something anyone prepared us for! What are meaningful ways to engage with toddlers and young children in a virtual setting? There is nothing quite like interactive games.

Interactive games not only strengthen a playful bond with your students, it helps them learn vocabulary, observation skills, problem solving, pre-math skills, and pre-literacy skills.

Furthermore, research suggests that the quality of conversation we have with young children makes a huge impact on the children's literacy development. Engaging in fun talking and guessing games during your Zoom time is one way to expose children to words in a very meaningful context.

An added benefit? Games will strengthen your bond with your students and build joy into the virtual gathering.

1

I Spy With My Little Eye

I Spy is a great guessing game. I love to do this to name the children on the call. I tell them - *I am going to give clues about one of our friends. When you figure out it is you - wave! (Or shout out their name)*

I spy with my little eye a boy with a red stripe shirt on!

Keep giving clues until the child figures out it is them!

Variations:

- Let the children take the role of the I spy.
- Describe something in the background of your screen like a stuffed animal.

2

I Am Thinking Of. . .

This is a thinking game.
It's really not new.
But if you put your thinking cap on,
You can think of some too!

This is a fun game that you can use to describe places, things, animals, and people.

Places:

I am thinking of a place where we go to buy food to eat. . . .

I am thinking of a place where we went to visit and saw how people received their mail

Things:

I am thinking of something that is yellow and is also a fruit . . .

I am thinking of something that you can watch . . .

3 Simon Says. . .

This is a tried and true favorite.

Instruct the children:

- They are to do what you say **only if** you start the words 'Simon says. . .'
- If you say anything without saying "Simon says" . . . don't do it!
- Ideas: stand, sit, shake your hands, clap, jump, turn around, etc.

Variation:

With children five years old or older:

- Whatever Simon says, do the **opposite**.
- If Simon says, "Wiggle your right thumb," players wiggle the left.
- If Simon says, "Stand," players sit.
- If Simon says, "Big," you say little!

4 The Drumming Circle

Zoom is a perfect place to hold a homemade band. Ask the families to have a pot (or bucket) and a spoon ready.

Tell your students that their homemade drum is sleeping. No sound. Wait for you to tell them to wake it up. I say "I see Billy's drum is sleeping. Sarah's drum is sleeping, etc." to encourage no playing.

Wake your drum up. *The children clank away at their pots!*
Drums are sleeping!! *Children stop! (I put my hands up in the air!)*

Next, practice clanking rhythms together - AB patterns, ABB patterns, AABB patterns and so on.

A - clank your drum
B - no clank

5

Funny Face! Freeze!

This is a classic classroom game that is just as good on Zoom! All you need is music. Playing music on your phone works best.

Tell the children to freeze when the music stops. I like to encourage them to "freeze" in funny poses and faces. Change up the music - to add a little variety.

Variation:

Ask the children to freeze in special poses:

animals - tiger, monkey, bird, etc

shapes - circle, triangle, etc

letters - K, T, O, P etc

6

The Story Book Game

Pick a child and ask them to think of a storybook character from a book you read in class (or on Zoom). You can pre-arrange this with a family before hand. Have the child whisper their story book character to their parent.

Ask them questions:

- "Where does this character live?"
- "What problems does this character have?"
- "What does this character enjoy doing?"
- "What friends does this character have?"
- "Does this character do something we know about?"
- Keep asking questions until the children figure out who it is!

7

The Rhyming Game

A very simple game that helps build phonological awareness. You say a word and let a child say a rhyming word.

You: Cat!

Child: Bat!

(Google word families for rhyming word help!)

Variation:

You say three words and they guess the one that doesn't rhyme. Unmute and let everyone answer together.

You: Cat, Feet, Bat!

Children: Feet!

8

Land, Water, or Sky

Name an animal and have the children tell you where it lives or travels - land, water or sky! Unmute everyone and let them answer together!

You: Whale

Children: Sea

Land: Monkey, Cow, Hen, Dog, Cat, etc

Water: Dolphin, Shark, Fish, Salmon, etc.

Sky: Owl, Hawk, Robin, Eagle, etc

Variation: Reverse it

Unmute a child and say one of the three living environments.

You: Land!

Child: Cat!

9 Scavenger Hunt

This is super fun. Select a child (or everyone) and tell them to find something in their home and bring it back to the call.

You: Hi Bobby! Can you go find one of your books?

- Spoon
- Cup
- Penny
- Book
- Toy

Variation: Friend Scavenger Hunt

Select one child and ask them to find their friend whose name:

- Begins with the sound. . . .
- Ends with the sound. . .

10 Color Hunt

Tell the children that today we are going on a treasure hunt. Pick a color or object that is the treasure.

You: "Go find something red!"

Give the children a few minutes to go find that thing.

Unmute a child at a time to share their special treasure.

11

Treasure Box Game

This idea came from one of the members of the Wonder Tribe. She had a special box that she opened up with great excitement to share her “treasures.”

You: Let’s see what is in my special treasure box. Today I want to share my very special blue treasures. Can you find a special blue treasure?

12

The Clapping Game

This is a “call and response” clapping game. Tell the children you are going to clap and they need their super detective listening ears. They listen to how many times you clap and then they clap just like you did. Vary the number of times you clap.

You: Are you ready? Let’s go! Clap, clap, clap

Children: Clap, Clap, Clap

You: Clap

Children: Clap

Variations:

Use clapping your hands, and slapping your leg.
Use clapping your hands and waving in the air.

13 When They Woke Up

Explain to the children you have a magic wand and you can turn them into different animals. Tell them to pretend to go to sleep. Then wave your wand and say:

Sleeping, sleeping,
All the children were sleeping.
And when they woke up they were...
DOGS! Wake up, dogs! Waggle your tail like a dog! What do you say? Ruff!

Ask everyone to go to sleep again. Give them a new animal, and a few easy prompts for acting each out: stretch like a cat, slither like a snake, bounce like a bunny, the sound the animal makes, etc.

Variation:

- Use inanimate objects and things like robots, weather or babies!
- Let a child choose what they become.
- Hold up a photo of what they become!

14 Collaborative Storytelling

Make up a collaborative story! Let each child add one sentence to the story you are telling.

Start with a simple plot, like “a bunny and a spider went to the grocery store,” and unmute one child at a time to add the next line. The sillier, the better!

Tip:

- Some children may need prompts. If they say “I don’t know” ask, “What did the bunny and spider do?” “What did the spider want to eat?”

15 Statues in a Museum

This is a fun game of catching the statues moving! Tell the children to pretend they're a favorite character and to strike a pose that character would make, like they were a statue in a museum. Freeze!

You are the curator of the museum. Tell the children every time you turn around - they are to change their pose! If you turn around and they are still moving they get to be the curator!

Tip:

- Begin with just striking the pose as a statue. Children will not be able to hold it long so I like to say "Be a statue! Now relax. Be a statue!"

16 Guess the Wrong Word!

This is a great game to use with nursery rhymes. Say or read the nursery rhyme and use one wrong word. Ask the children to raise their hand if they heard the wrong word. Unmute one the children to share!

You: "Mary had a little lamb whose fleece was white as **monkeys**."

You: "Twinkle, twinkle, little **house**, how I wonder what you are!"

You: "The itsy bitsy **turtle** crawled up the water spout."

17

Guess the Shape Game

This is a great listening game. You will say a group of things that are a certain shape and they guess the shape.

You: Orange, Sun, ball, pancake, plate...
Children: Circle!

You: Pillow, door, computer screen, rug.
Children: Rectangle.

Variation: Use a powerpoint of photos of things of a certain shape.

Variation: Reverse it

You: Rectangle

Unmute one child at a time to name something that is a rectangle like door, box, a piece of paper.

18

Big or Little?

Another good listening game. You will say something and the children will say if it's big or little. You can do this with everyone unmuted.

You: A piece of rice!

Children: Little!

You: A giraffe!

Children: Big!

Variation:

- Add medium!

19 Animal Sounds

Toddlers and young children love making animal sounds. In this game you say the animal and they make its sound! Unmute everyone so it can be wild fun!

You: Cat!

Children: Meow!

You: Pig!

Children: Oink!

Examples: Cat, dog, owl, frog, pig, cow, duck, monkey, elephant, snake, lion, donkey, sheep, horse, hen.

20 Guess the Color!

A simple but fun listening game. Here's how to play - you will say a group of things that are all the same color. The children guess the color.

You: Apples, cherries, strawberries, tomatoes, Clifford, Stop signs

Children: Red!

You: Grass, frogs, peas, limes, the outside of a watermelon, celery

Children: Green!

“Conversations provide

Powerful

connections and
bonding that no
computer link or activity
can replace.”

#connectionoverlinks

Meet Sally



Sally Haughey is the CEO and Founder of Fairy Dust Teaching. Fairy Dust Teaching is built on the passion for the wonder and magic of early childhood. She believes young children have the right to play, to be collaborators in learning, and to dream. She currently resides in Paris, France and enjoys snuggling up with a good book and a warm cup of coffee.