## Parent-Child **Social Games**

When infants begin showing interest in their parents and other adults, the time is right to play social games. Social games are back-and-forth, your-turn/ my-turn infant-adult play accompanied by short rhymes or songs that engage infants in playful interactions. Some of the results of playing social games with your child are active child participation, lots of playful bouts of back-and-forth communication, and bunches of smiles and laughter. Enjoy!

## Learning Guide: Playing Parent-and-Child Social Games Begin by watching your child, paying special

attention to things that appear interesting

- to her. What kinds of things make your child smile or coo? If she seems interested in looking at your face or hearing your voice, she may enjoy the game of "Peek-a-boo." Peek-a-boo is played by covering the baby's eyes with a soft cloth and asking "Where is ?" Then remove the cloth and exclaim.
- "Peek-a-boo! I see you!" Notice your child's response. She might coo, smile, make eye contact, kick her legs, or do something else that tells you she likes the game. Follow your child's lead by continuing the game based on her response. Cover baby's eyes and wait for her to do something to tell you she wants you to pull the cloth from her eyes. When the baby coos, moves her arm, or uses any other behavior that is telling you to continue, respond immediately by pulling the cloth from her eyes and saying "Peek-a-Boo. I see you!" "So Big" is another engaging social game.
- Gently stretch the baby's arms above his head while saying, "How big is \_\_\_\_\_? SO BIG!" Then kiss or tickle his tummy or neck. Once you have played the game two or three times and know the baby likes it, try waiting a few seconds before lifting his arms again. If he moves his arms, coos, smiles, waves his hands, or uses another particular behavior, assume that he is telling you to do it again and respond promptly. When you wait for your child to respond, you are teaching how to take turns, and he may begin to learn that his behavior gets you to respond with the desired consequence. In other words: "When I wiggle, I get Daddy to play our funny game!" If you play social games often and begin to notice your child is not as excited as before, you may want to add something new—such
- laughter are important too! Watch a video of this Learning Guide

You'll know the practice is working if  $\dots$ 

The infant seems to understand how a game

Keep your games fun and simple. Smiles and

as a new challenge—to a game.

## The infant tries to start a social game. The infant smiles or laughs when the adult responds to the child's behavior.

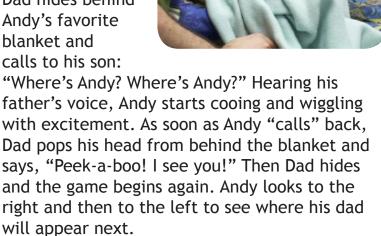
- A Quick Peek
- Andy, 3 months old, and his father have found a fun way to play

after sleeping, Dad hides behind Andy's favorite blanket and calls to his son:

will appear next.

Peek-a-boo. When Andy wakes up

is played.



For more ideas, ask a home visitor, teacher, early interventionist, therapist, or another experienced parent. Click here to download a free booklet full of lap game ideas from Pierce County Library (Tacoma, WA).





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