

Special Educational Needs and Disability Support Service

Children's Speech and Language Therapy Service

Multisensory People Play



This play is about helping your child learn to share things and games with you. Because this play is simple, fun, and repetitive, there are many opportunities for your child to communicate and share with you. Multisensory People Play uses actions on your child's body or things that look, feel or sound interesting. It helps children with sensory preferences, vision, or movement differences.

Why do we do it?




Your child is learning to interact with you. People Play will help them to develop important skills they need for communication:

- Sharing attention and enjoyment with another person
- Reacting to or anticipating what's happening
- Making simple requests (using eye contact, or movement or voice)

What do I do?

Choose a song or rhyme you know and change the words, or make up some words to use every time you play together. Choose things that your child enjoys that go with the words. Sit opposite them so they can see your face easily.

Here is an example:

Activity	Words and Actions
<i>Incy Wincy Spider</i>   	<i>Incy Wincy spider climbed up the water spout</i> - Wearing glove, walk fingers up child's legs and body <i>Down came the raindrops</i> - Water mist spray above child's arms (if your child likes it) <i>And washed the spider out</i> - Run fingers down arms and legs fast <i>Out came the sunshine...</i> stroke firmly down head/arms <i>Incy Wincy spider climbed up the spout again.</i> - walk fingers slowly up body, ending near hands

Play Routines to practice communication

These people play activities can become predictable play routines by using the same words, actions, and things. Here is an example:

- **Play**— Do the “Incy Wincy” rhyme with a fluffy glove, massage actions and water mist spray. Do more actions in a pause between each line.
- **Explore**—Give your child a chance to explore the things you used for at least 30-60 seconds. Keep quiet so they can focus or say 1-2 words about what they are doing. See if they will let you explore together. If your child moves away to explore by themselves, try missing this step out.
- **Watch**—Notice changes to your child’s behaviour, for example: Change of facial expression, movements/ going still, looking, voice, breathing, body relaxed or tense, exploring toy, pulling your hand.
- **Interpret**—Guess what your child’s reaction means. Do they:
 - React to the things and actions you used, or something else?
 - Show what they did or did not like?
 - Protest that you stopped? For example, frown, using voice
- **Pause** – Move the things away from your child and wait.



- **Offer “more”** - Ask “more Incy Wincy?” and pause before starting. Do they:
 - Anticipate you doing more? e.g., excited - moving, voice, look at you
 - Show they want more? e.g., move your hand, reach, use voice, look at you
 - Show they want you to stop e.g., turn away/ push away?
 - Not react? Your child may not yet anticipate or understand “more.”
 - That’s ok. You choose whether to start again.
- **Continue** – Say “more Incy Wincy.” Start the activity again.
- **Or Stop**— say “finished Incy Wincy” if your child isn’t enjoying the activity, or if it’s time to finish.

Things to remember:

- Play together for a few minutes one or two times a day at home and school/nursery.
- You can play together at the same time as some everyday activities, for example at bath or changing time.
- Try other play ideas such as People Play with no toys, or sensory play.
- Choose activities and things that your child will enjoy.
- Find out what your child likes. Experiment with using different things, doing the activity fast or slow, and using firm or light touch. Then do the activity the same way each time.
- Use simple language throughout the play and repeat the same words.
- Say what you think your child means by their actions. Keep watching to see if your guess was right. Some children are still developing consistent reactions to the same things or change their minds while you are playing.
- Where possible, have a quiet environment without lots of distractions. Turn the television off and put phones and favourite toys out of sight.

For children with vision impairment:

- Start the activity by letting your child hear the thing you are using, then carefully put it on their arms or legs. If using something that vibrates, let them feel it through your hand or a chair before touching their body. Work towards touching other body parts such as hands, head, and face.
- Try to keep your hands or the toy touching your child's body through the whole rhyme, so they know where you are. At the end of the game, pause with your hands or the near their hands or tummy, so they know where it is.
- Use things your child can hear, and things they may be able to see a little, such as things that rustle or jingle, shiny, sparkly things, bright red or yellow things.

For more ideas, video and listening examples go to the Body Rhymes Website. Scan QR code on a smartphone or click link.

bit.ly/LPTBodyRhymes



SCAN ME