**Day of the Child- Reading Day 2023**

**Introduction: Games played as a family—especially those requiring little more than imagination and creativity—are fabulous brain-builders and memory makers. Give one of these ideas below for ages 2+ a try and see.**

**Games with no props**

**I Spy and I Spy Plus** – I Spy with my little eye something… Usually one “spies” colors, but try to think of other ways besides color that can describe what you spy. (Shapes, rhymes, etc.) <https://teachingeveryday.com/2014/03/31/10-ways-to-play-i-spy/> or <https://empoweredparents.co/i-spy-my-little-eye/>

**Biff Says Baff** - aka "Don't Laugh" (prop “staff” optional, but a pencil or stick would serve well) – One person is chosen to play “Baff.” He or she recites the rhyme: “Biff says, ‘Baff!’ / He gave me this staff, / instructing me neither to smile nor laugh. / He (she/they) who carries his (her/their) face / with a very good grace / shall carry this staff / to the very next place.” “Baff” may then do anything to make the other person/people laugh except touching them in any way. The first to laugh is out. If more than two people are playing, the last to laugh is the new Baff.

**Substitute Teacher (a.k.a “Learn from Everything”)** – Pretend you are a substitute teacher and someone hands you a random object such as an egg carton and asks you to teach a lesson. (You can imagine the thing, if you don’t have one.) Ex. with egg carton…four bumps plus three bumps = seven bumps, if you put something in paired “cups” the number is always even, etc.

**The Expert(s)** - Pick an actual object, the more random the better, and try to say everything you know/can think of about it. You could take turns and see who fails to come up with a new fact or see how many things you can say about it in one minute or whatever.

**Specific Charades** (such as animal charades with no noises!) – or nursery rhyme charades, etc.

**Everyone’s a Comedian** – Tell as many jokes as you can think of, then vote for the best.

**Everybody Line Up!** – Everyone scramble to line up according to something like height or birth month or the number of letters in your first and last name combined, etc.

**Do as I Say, Not as I Do** – Shout directions and do the opposite…Players need to follow the directions and ignore what you do, or vice versa

**Source Code** – One person is the “programmer” and the other(s) must follow the algorithm of moves that he/she “codes” them to do. (Search “offline coding games” for more.) <https://codingideaswithkids.com/unplugged-outdoor-coding-activities-for-kids/>

**Finger pen** - “Draw a letter on your child's back or arm with a finger and see if they can guess it. Switch roles and see if you can guess the letter.” Or a message!

**Questions, Questions** – One person asks a question and the other has to answer it by asking another question for a series of back-and-forth questions that at least has some vague semblance of sense. A time limit to think of a question is optional.

**Attributes** – Just like 20 questions, but with a time limit on questions rather than a limit of 20 questions.

**Descriptions** - “Give your child the name of an object and ask what color it is, what letter it starts with, what shape it is, and whether it's heavy or light.” How many syllables, etc. For older children: can they make a new word or words out of the letters in the original words? How would you describe it to an alien who had never seen one?

**Same Here** - Pick two things and try to list as many ways they are the same as you can. (Ex. The ear and the eye.)

**Mirror, Mirror** - “Be mirror images of each other with one person leading the game.”

**Catch This!** - “Throw an imaginary ball, if space allows and you don't think it will get out of hand.”

**Anywhere Salon** - “Give or get an invisible manicure or pedicure.”

**What Do They Do?** - “Guess what the people around you do for a living.” – Or any “people watching” game where you describe what you notice about people.

**Do Tell** - Imaginary tea party in a year in the past or interview with someone from history

**Line by Line** - “Tell a story, taking turns, one sentence at a time, and see what sort of silliness you can create together. You can do the same with a poem, trying to end with rhymes.”

**Fancy Smancy Words** - Retell a story or nursery rhyme in the biggest, most impressive words you can! “Scintillate, scintillate, globule lucific! Fain would I fathom thy nature specific!” etc.

**Alphabet memory game** - One person says, “I went to the store and I bought [something that starts with A]” such as apples…The next person would say, “I went to the store and I bought apples, bananas…” etc. The first person to fail to remember the sequence is out.

**Alphabet Story** - Make up a story with each word beginning with each letter of the alphabet (in the right order) e.g. 'Anne Brown Came Down Every Friday…etc.' Share stories or collaborate on one. Recording the story on paper optional.

**Name Sentence** - Think of a sentence using each letter of your full name as the first letter of each word. All the letters must be in the right order and your sentence must make sense.

**Silence, Please** - Each person writes down as many words as they can that begin with a silent letter, such as the 'K' in knight. Give two points for words that no one else has on their list.

**One Letter Story** - Make up as long a story as possible with each word in the story beginning with the same letter e.g. “'Goodness gracious!” gasped Gertie grinning gruesomely ...' See who can use the most words.

**Tebahpla** - Challenge each other to see who can say the alphabet backwards in the fastest time.

**Telemessages** - Each person in turn calls out a letter of the alphabet which everyone writes down, until you have at least 6 letters. Then each person makes up a 'telemessage' one word beginning with each of the letters in the order they were called out. The messages must make sense! [Or call out an acronym and everyone makes up what that could stand for. Book extension: “T. L. C.” by M. H. Clark]

**Fizz Buzz** – Everyone sits in a circle. They start counting out loud in turn, but whenever a multiple of three comes up, say “fizz” instead. When a multiple of 5 comes up, say “buzz” instead. If the number is a multiple of both, say “fizz buzz.” The goal is to get to 100 without any mistakes. [Edited from source.]

**Guess the Steps** - Everyone estimates how many heel-to-toe steps they will need to take to cross the room or get to some other designated mark, such as a tree. Then see who is nearest to their own estimate.

**One-Minute Walk** - Start at one end of the room and aim to reach the wall (or another designated mark, such as a tree) at the other end in exactly one minute. See who can time themselves the best. (Okay, technically this game works better with the “prop” of a clock/watch/cell phone, but one person could just count with eyes closed.)

**Baron Munchausen** – One person is chose to be the “Baron.” Another is “the Questioner.” The Questioner says, “So, Baron, tell us about the time you \_\_\_\_.” For example, “So, Baron, tell us about the time you convinced the Royal Astronomer that the Earth is flat,” or anything else suitably outrageous. The Baron must immediately launch into an on-the-fly story, of any length, answering said question. When everyone has had a chance to tell a story, votes are taken as to the best one. Prizes optional.

**Flight Attendant/Tour Guide** – for when you are stuck sitting somewhere: Pretend you are on a plane/train/safari van/time machine, etc. and describe what you see, what you have packed in your suitcase, etc.

**Hand Games**

Miss Mary Mack

Double This, Double That

Say, Say, Oh, Playmate - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VehhDKHe5Ko>

My Hat, It Has Three Corners

Ladder – a two-person game hand game: One says a word that starts with \_\_ and then “clap, clap, two hands to their two hands”…They have to think of another word that starts with\_\_ in that time. Or you could name a book title or a rhyming word or whatever other category of word you want.

**Street/outdoor team games**

International Hopscotch – look up boards for hopscotch around the world

ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS RACE! - needs chalk lines

River! Bank! - chalk lines - <https://thriftyparent.co.uk/gifts-celebrations/37-fun-free-party-games/#riverbank>

Search “No equipment games” - <https://stacker.com/art-culture/50-classic-games-you-can-play-without-equipment>

**Games with low props**

**Balloon Bop** – just keep it in the air – add rules/nuance as desired (use one hand, only feet, must use alternate using your nose, etc.)

**Bean bag (or whatever) toss** – start close and with increase distance with each successful catch

**Guess my post-it** – a person, animal, word around a theme, etc. is placed on a person’s forehead or back and the person must ask yes-no questions of others to guess it

**Chopstick transfer** – try to move small objects from one place to another with chopsticks in a race.

**The Floor is Lava** – Get from point A to point B. Just don’t touch the ground. (Use rocks sit-upons, plastic dots, etc. to jump.)

**Rubbish Ball – From Reading Eggs:** Gather a clean rubbish bin and some paper. Pick 8–10 words from your child's spelling or vocabulary list from school and write each word on a piece of paper. Crumble each one up and place into the bin. Ask your child to take a piece of paper out, read the word, then crumble it back up and spell it without looking. For each word they spell correctly they can try and shoot a basket. Continue until each ball has made it into the basket. You could also write questions of any kind on slips of paper and if the child answers correctly, crumple the paper and give it to him/her for a toss.

**The Ad Man/Ad Woman** – Grab a random item and pretend you are trying to sell it to someone.

**String/Rope Games**

Cat’s cradle

“Magic” string - <https://kidspot.co.nz/activities/string-figure-magic-trick/>

Ayatori - <http://yabai.com/p/4292> (Japanese string game)

Jump rope games - Such as Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear: See J 398.8

**OTHER**

Basket of random items and maybe some golf pencils and dice and bits of paper – what game can you invent?

Games with regular cards – See J 795.4

Pocket/purse size word games such as UNO, Wordaround, etc. - <https://www.thinkfun.com/products/wordaround/>

Secret Code Games – See 001.54 or 652.8

**DIY Games**

**Freestyle** with game board template

**Make-your-own-card-game** with old business cards, index cards, etc. (Exs. “Is there such a thing?” Or “Random Quest”).

**Balderdash** using a large dictionary, paper, and pencils. Timer a plus.

**Dobble** with Dobble Maker

**Printable chess** - <https://www.printchess.com/download-printable-paper-chess-set/> - Print paper versions of other games for a game binder!

**Printable scrabble** with cardboard tiles

**Board games around the world** - (Add magnets for a car or on line version!)

**DIY puzzle** – cut up any photo (with permission!) or printed image

**Tic-Tac-Toe Plus** – say a word that begins with a letter printed on a tic-tac-toe space (or an equation that equals the number there…or even answer a trivia question!)

**Simple magic tricks** - with household items: See J 793.8

**Paper Games**

**ABC IRL** – grades K-2 - Students will be given small booklets to make an ABC book. (Kindergarteners may need help or need the letters pre-printed.) Children will have to fill in one letter of the alphabet each day with something they have seen/experienced. The book may be completed in any order until the book is full). [Template available]

**Paper People/Paper Zoo** – grades 3-4 Students will be given index cards folded like a small sandwich board and asked to draw both sides of a person or animal with crayons and then tell a story. Or cut from construction paper.

**Origami House** – fold and design…and any other origami for that matter! Have out paper and books from the library OR draw floorplans of your dream house. (Don’t forget the yard, garden!) See: 736.982

**“Step through an index card” trick**

**Paper Airplanes** – See: J 745.592 HAR

**Other** - <https://www.whatdowedoallday.com/pen-and-paper-games/>

<https://www.wales247.co.uk/101-games-that-you-can-play-using-pen-and-paper>

**Sources:**

https://stacker.com/art-culture/50-classic-games-you-can-play-without-equipment

https://www.verywellfamily.com/things-to-do-with-children-3105247

50 Ways to Keep Your Kids Occupied Without Toys - [www.verywellfamily.com](http://www.verywellfamily.com)

<https://www.whatdowedoallday.com/literacy-games-for-kids/> = Tons here!

**How to set up a chessboard:** Put a light square in the bottom right corner and set up from there. Put the Queen on the color that she matches.

