

Parenting the Preschooler

 **Working for Wisconsin Families**

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Waiting Games

It can be hard for your child to have to wait for things. He may have to wait in the house, at the doctor's, at the store. Maybe your child doesn't sit still, or does things she shouldn't, or she may get excited or worried.

There are things you can do to make waiting easier for your child.

You can talk about what to expect ahead of time. "There are many people at the clinic. We may have to sit and wait a long time." Or, "The party won't begin for an hour. It will be hard to wait."

You can tell her what to do. "You will have to sit down all the time on the bus." Or, "There will be only grown-ups there. They won't like it if you make too much noise."

You can think of things to do ahead of time. You will find quiet ways to spend time in this issue of **Parenting the Preschooler**. Some games are just talking games; others need things you have at home. Use your imagination to come up with other activities.

Finger Shapes

Shapes and letters of the alphabet can be formed with fingers. Show your child how to make a circle, a square, a triangle, or a cross with fingers.

Letters to show are o, x, t, c, l, v, p, d, f, e, and u. Some are easy, some are hard. See if your child can copy what you do. Shapes of real things (a tent, church, or eyeglasses) are fun, too.

Spider Fingers

Make your fingers creep up your child's arm like a spider. Ask, "Where is the spider going?" Try to name parts of the body such as elbow, knee, ankle, chin, cheek, shoulder, and forehead. Let your child make spider fingers crawl on your arm, hand, face, and back.

Happy or Sad

Have your child answer "happy" or "sad" to questions. "How would you feel if you fell down and cut your knee? If someone tickled you? If Grandma came to visit? If you got lost? If you were watching cartoons? If you fell off your bike?" Your child's answers may surprise you. Talk about the answers. Your preschooler may love Grandma, but feel sad when she comes because you will go out. You can begin to elaborate on your child's answer with more specific and varied emotions, thus teaching your child both new words and new emotions. "Yes, you'd feel happy, thrilled, excited." "Yes, you'd feel sad, lonely (or angry, hurt, or confused, etc.)."

I Am Thinking

You can play "I am thinking" anytime you have a few minutes to wait. "I am thinking of something that has four legs. It's in this room." Your child has to guess what you are thinking about. Keep giving clues until she guesses right. "It's hard. People sit on it." Then it's his turn. **Hint:** Don't guess too fast even if your child gives the game away by looking at the object. Telling clues gives your child a chance to use new words.

Rhyme Time

Any time can be rhyme time. Say silly words that rhyme. Try gop, top, grop, and snop. Then try schnobble and gobble, or sneep and creep. Help your child to understand which are real words and which were nonsense. (Mop is a real word. I clean the floor with a mop. Rop is a nonsense word. There is no such thing as rop.) When it's your preschooler's turn, ask him to think of real words that rhyme with mop, Dad, cat, or bed.

Whispering

The whispering game can help a child to listen carefully. It can also help him to speak more clearly. Take a paper towel tube. Hold one end of the tube to your mouth, the other end to your child's ear. Whisper a word. Or whisper a sound--sss, eeee, oooooh. See if your child can whisper the same word or sound back again. Then let your child take the lead. (If there is no paper towel tube handy, cup your hand and whisper into the ear.)

In the Bag

Take a bag with you. Put five things from your house into the bag. For example, a spoon, a plastic cup, an egg beater, a potholder, and a pencil. Don't show your child. First, have the

child try to guess what they are without looking, by feeling them in the bag. While you wait, let the child take the things out of the bag. Ask about the use of each item. Then have him close his eyes. Take one thing out of the bag and put it out of sight. Let the child look into the bag and guess what you took out. "What's missing?"

Point the Way

Teach your child about direction while you wait. Point your finger up, saying "Up," and ask your child to point the same way. Help your child learn up, down, left, and right with this game.

Guessing Noises

Have your child hide her eyes. Then make a noise she has heard many times. Shut a door, rattle your keys, zip a zipper, turn on the water, stamp a foot, honk a horn, close a book, blow a whistle. Ask your child to identify the noise. Then it's his turn to make a noise. Hide your eyes!

Secret Envelopes

Here is a game to take with you. You'll need a crayon and five envelopes. Put something flat into each envelope such as a small green leaf, penny, paper clip, button, and key. Tape the envelope shut. While you wait, take out one envelope at a time. Ask your child to feel the envelope. Then give him the crayon and let him lightly color the envelope. A design will show. Ask your child to guess what's inside. Then let him open the envelope to see if he was right.

Source:

While You're At It. Board of Cooperative Educational Services of Nassau County.

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