

Barrier games

Barrier games can help to develop a range of oral language skills:

- Giving & receiving instructions
- Asking and answering questions
- Monitoring information and clarifying
- Developing descriptive vocabulary

Additional skills:

- Interacting and turn taking
- Developing auditory memory
- Sequencing
- Visual discrimination
- Fine motor skills

Useful equipment:

Dolls and clothes

Maps

Grids

Beads

Interlocking cubes

Colouring books

Sticker packs/sticker books

Toy animals

Toy people

Toy cars

Pictures

Pairs of cards

Plastic letters/numbers

Screens: big books, box files, cereal packets, large plants

Basic Guide- lines for each game:

- Set out materials needed e.g. 2 pots of coloured beads and a screen.

- Introduce the game

e.g. *“We’re going to play a game threading beads. I’m going to tell you which beads to use to make it exactly like mine.”*

- Model instructions as you thread the first beads.

e.g. *“First put on one yellow bead and then a red bead.”*

- When the child has done this successfully put the barrier between you and continue.

- At the end of the game, remove the barrier and check the beads.

- As the child becomes more confident ask him/her to give the instructions

- Include some incomplete instructions so that the child has to ask for clarification.

e.g. *“Did you say a green bead?”*

- As the child becomes more skilled use more detailed pictures or objects or relate the game to a specific topic

e.g. describing dinosaurs

Variations to extend the skills:

- Ask questions instead of giving instructions
- Limit the number of questions
- Omit key parts of the instruction
- Ban words such as colours

Types of barrier games:

Making patterns or sequences:

- Use beads, blocks etc. to describe and make coloured sequences or patterns

Matching pairs:

- Use pairs of picture cards or dolls. Describe it (without naming it!) so that the person behind the screen can find the missing item.

Assembly:

- Put parts together to make a whole picture or object.

Construction:

- Describe the steps needed to build a lego model

Location:

- Describe where to place objects on a picture lay out board.
- e.g. animals on a farm

Grids:

- Describe the position of objects using a grid reference.

Route finding:

- Describe how to get from one point to another on a map: the listener draws the route on an identical map.

Spotting differences:

- Use pairs of slightly different pictures or objects; describe to each other and mark the differences.

Colouring:

- Use matching pictures and describe object and which colour to use.