

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	Toy animals
Maps	Toy people
Grids	Toy cars
Beads	Pictures
Interlocking cubes	Pairs of cards
Colouring books	Plastic letters/numbers
Sticker packs/sticker books	

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.