



Sammy the Dragon

Activity Area: INITIATION and REQUESTING

Activity Highlights:

- Interaction between child and teacher
- Choice and decision
- Speech and language practice
- Early literacy

Ages: 4-6 years and 7-12 years depending upon selection cards.

Materials: Shoe box. Cards with pictures and words on one side...with only words on the back side.

Cut out a dragon face or snake face on the box. Tape the face onto the box as a flap. Cut a slot under the face in the mouth to place the cards.

Participants: Teacher and one or two children.

Summary: This activity helps the student to request, take turns, and to practice his/her speech and language skills. Children love it because the dragon eats the items and sometimes pretends to eat the child's fingers. This activity can be modified to include just letters, action pictures, or even short sentences. Try using only four pictures at first and then build up to six pictures to select from.

Steps:

1. Use a slot holder to place the cards. At first, show the card side with the pictures.
2. Ask the child "which one is the apple?"
3. Help child select the picture card.
4. Have the child say, "Open 'Sammy' please" in order to get the dragon face to open.
5. Slip the picture card into the slot as if the dragon is eating the card. Quickly close the dragon mouth and say "Um, um, um" as if Sammy is eating the card.
6. Repeat until the cards are all gone.
7. Repeat steps but use the back side of the cards with just the words showing. Trace the word with your finger and turn it over to show the picture. Have child request Sammy to open his mouth to eat the word.
8. Sometimes have the dragon quickly (but gently) bite the child's hand as he is feeding the dragon.
9. You can take turns. Child selects and feeds dragon. Teacher selects and feeds dragon. When teacher is selecting, the child quickly closes the dragon mouth.

Comments:

1. You will need to demonstrate to the child how to interact with Sammy.
2. This activity can be modified according to the student's level. For younger children, who can not read yet, use the pictures and/or the pictures/words. For older children, show both sides or use only the side with the words. It is possible to use different categories like nouns, verbs, adjectives, and prepositions. Use your imagination and find appropriate pictures.

Zingo!

Play Zingo, making sure to stress taking turns and being a good sport.



Activity Areas: Social rules and executive function

Activity Highlights:

- Interaction among participants
- Speech and language practice
- Good sportsmanship practice
- Literacy practice

Ages: 4-6

Materials: Zingo game, available from ebay, amazon, and department stores

Participants: SLP, child, and parents/siblings/peers

Summary: The child uses attention and organizational skills to play Zingo similar to Bingo. The child uses social rules like good sportsmanship and taking turns.

Steps:

1. Give each participant a game board. Establish who is going first and in what direction turns will be taken. Also establish winning rules: full board covered or line. Once the routine is established, the child becomes more adept at choosing and matching the cards without prompts. The animal names may be written on the cards to provide a more literacy rich activity. The animal names could become sight words for the child.
2. For advanced children, cover over the pictures on the Zingo card...leaving only the words. When the child slides the chip, s/he has to match the picture/word to just the word.
3. Strategy: Load only the Zingo chips in the slide container that match the cards being used. Children attend longer to the activity when there are frequent matches.

Comments:

Children usually like this game. It is similar to Bingo, but it involves pictures and words instead of numbers and letters. If the child is not participating, you may use a hand over hand method to assist the child. Even if you are doing hand over hand with the child, you still want to be generous in your praise of the child's participation.



Brown Bear

Activity Area: Joint Attention, Initiation

Activity Highlights:

- Early Literacy
- Color Concepts
- Categorization

Ages: 1-3, 4-6

Participants: SLP, parent, and child

Summary: Child will look at pictures in a story book, recognize cards, and match the picture cards to a Velcro board. This highly structured activity will create a routine where the child feels comfortable in initiating.

Steps:

1. Begin reading the book, "Brown Bear, Brown Bear."
Gesture to the laminated cards in front of child, "Can you find the brown bear?" Assist the child in locating the correct card if he has difficulty.
2. Tell child, "Let's put it on top." Assist the child in putting the card on top of its match on the Velcro board (if necessary).
3. Repeat the process for each animal in the book.
4. Have the child repeat the line, at least repeat the color with the animal; such as, "red bird", "yellow duck" etc.
5. For advanced stage, print off only colors to match those in the story. For instance, print off a brown circle, a red circle, etc. Have child match the color circle to the color animal.
6. At the end, have the child help put away the pictures by saying, "bye bye brown bear", "bye bye red bird", etc.

Comments: It is important that the teachers, parent, or therapists all be informed regarding how to do this activity. It will help the child if there is consistency. It is important that the activity be something the child finds fun.



Busy Hands

Activity Area: Self-Regulation

Activity Highlights:

- Non-distracting method for replacing self-stimulating behaviors

Ages: 1-3, 4-6, 7-12, 13-18, 19+

Materials: A tactile, quiet object that fits in the child's hands (slinky, clay, rope).

Participants: Child

Summary: The child is given an object that is satisfying for him to hold and play with. This object will be a substitute for repetitive behaviors

Steps:

1. Explain to the child what behaviors we are trying to replace. "Johnny, when you are upset or bored you start rocking back and forth. We are working to stop that."
2. Show the child the replacement object. Explain its function. "Johnny, here is some clay. You can keep this at your desk. When you get upset or bored and feel like rocking, just grab your clay. You can roll it back and forth in your hands until you feel calmer."
3. Explain to Johnny that he may not always be aware that he is rocking. In that case, his teacher or therapist may say the word "clay" and that will be the **code-word** for him to stop rocking and pick up his clay.

Comments: This activity helps child to provide replacement techniques for less socially acceptable behaviors. The strategy is to find the replacement object that works best for the student. Besides clay, a knotted rope may work, or a slinky. Sometimes we use a soft message ball. Try different things.



Wheels on the Bus

Activity Areas: Joint attention, requests, and imitation

Activity Highlights:

- SLP and client interaction
- Making choices
- Early Literacy
- Pretend play

Ages: 1-3, 4-6

Materials: Toy school bus and little people (mommy daddy, baby, teacher, boy, girl) to put on bus. Story book of Wheels on the Bus. Possible CD or video for Wheels on the Bus song.

Summary: This is a structured activity in which the child makes requests for who he wants to put on the bus. After the bus is loaded, the SLP and child read a corresponding book. This teaches gender, requesting, sequencing, early literacy skills.

Steps:

1. Place the bus and two little people on the table, out of the child's reach. Ask the child, "Who do you want? Who is getting on the bus first." Require carry-phrase, "I want ____."
2. If the child does not choose, use the hand over hand technique to sign a request. Assist the child in putting the people on the bus. Tell the child to say "open" and "close" for the door. After each person is on the bus, help drive the bus around the table making the bus sound. Then say, "stop."
3. Continue letting the child make choices between two little people until the bus is loaded.
4. After every one has been put on the bus, play the CD song, or video, for "Wheels on the Bus." Have child do the hand motions to the song. Repeat the song if appropriate.
5. Then remove the people, one-by-one, from the bus. Label the people. Tell the child the people are going to line up. Ask, "Who is going to be first?" Then, "Who is going to be next?" Do this, and ask, "Who is going to be last?" Remove the first person and say, "Oh, ___ (mom) wants to be last, where does she go?" [This teaches order, first/last concept.]
6. Then get out the corresponding book and read it together. Use the child's finger to track as you read.

Comments: Children like to drive the bus around the table and make sound effects. Relational terms such as behind, under, in and on may also be introduced in this activity.



Tea Party

Activity Area: Social rules and imitation

Highlights:

- . • Interaction among participants
- . • Symbolic play practice
- . • Speech and language practice
- . • Sequencing practice

Ages: 1-2, 4-6

Materials: Cups, placemats, teapot, napkins,

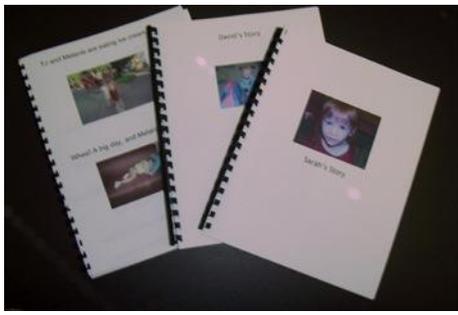
Participants: SLP and child, also parents or siblings may be included

Summary: Child will participate in a pretend tea party. This will give him the opportunity to imitate, learn social rules, and engage in pretend play.

Steps:

1. Tell child, “Were going to have a tea party!”
2. Give each participant a placement, cup, plate and napkin.
3. Ask child, “Would you pour everyone some tea please?” and model pouring from the tea pot.
4. Pretend to eat cookies and drink tea. Wipe your mouth with the napkin.
5. Ask child, “Would you like some more cookies or tea?” and pretend to give them more. If child is not participating, bring his cup near his lips or bring pretend cookies off his plate to his mouth. Give praise and encouragement.
6. Tell child, “Time to clean up and I need your help.”
7. Tell child, “Let’s have another tea party. This time I need your help in setting up. Please give everyone a placemat. Now a plate, etc.” If child does not readily participate, you can use hand over hand to assist him in setting the table.
8. Once the table is reset, tell child, “Now offer your guests some tea and cookies. Ask Mom first.”

Comments: This is a great pretend play activity with tons of speech and social interaction. This is also a functional activity, as it can help the child learn to do tasks such as setting the table at home.



My Own Story

Activity Area: Joint attention and self-awareness

Activity Highlights:

- Literacy skills
- Speech and language practice
- Interaction between SLP and child

Ages: 1-3, 4-6, 7-12, 13-18, 19+

Materials: Computer, photographs depicting child doing different actions/activities and friends/family, book binder

Participants: Therapist, parent, child, and family members and/or friends

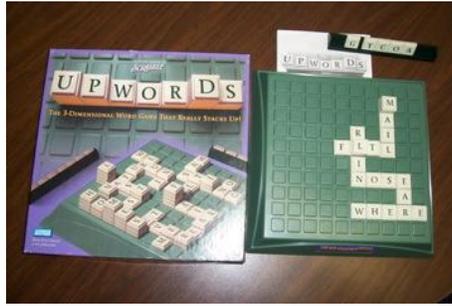
Summary: This activity helps the child see himself in various roles: sleeping, jumping, eating, crying, climbing, swinging, swimming, as a student, brother, son, friend, etc. Sentences or paragraphs are written under the pictures describing the activities or the concept. The child enjoys having his own book with personal pictures and stories.

Steps:

1. Family brings in pictures of child engaged in different activities, also friends and family members.
2. Either scan photos in or download them onto computer using a memory stick.
3. Place photos into Word document. Add sentences or paragraphs appropriate to the specific picture and level of the child. Print pages and either staple or bind together.
4. Have child read the book every session. For pre-readers, help them point and track along as you read. Encourage interaction by asking questions and making comments on the pictures such as, "That amusement park looks cool, what happened there?" "Tell me about it!" or "What did you and your sister do together?"
5. Use re-stickable glue and cut out second set of pictures or key words from the story lines. Place them on the left side blank page. Have child select the picture/word and match it the story line on the right page. This helps in matching and teaching word recognition/form.

Comments

The book can be remade as needed due to changes in child's interests, age, or abilities. The book could also be used in a group therapy environment. It is a great introductory activity for group members. Peer relationships could also be explored by including pictures of friends and using those pictures as a springboard to discuss friendships and peer relationships.



Upwords

Activity Areas: Executive Function and Social Rules

Highlights:

- Practice taking turns
- Interaction among participants and good sportsmanship
- Spelling, executive function (reasoning, organizing, planning, retrieval)
- Literacy skills practice

Ages: 7-12, 13-18, 19+

Participants: Therapist, parent, child, may also include siblings

Summary: This activity requires Executive Function skills to play. The student uses memory, spelling skills, organization, planning, alternative decisions, and social skills to participate.

Steps:

1. Explain rules of the game to participants. The child selects 8 chips. The child rearranges them on his holder to make words. Then someone starts by building a word. The second person then places his/her letters on top or connected to the first word. This continues until the individual can not play. Then the person must draw until they can play. Person who gets rid of their chips first wins.
2. Strategy is to be able to think going up, down, or add to the other person's word.

Comments:

This activity teaches basic spelling and retrieval skills. The child must be able to spell words correctly. The child must be able to plan, organize, and make alternative decisions in order to play. It teaches the child new words, new spellings, word roots, and word classes.

Many similar games focus activities, such as Scrabble, Scattergories, Cranium, and Taboo. Student's interests and age direct the game choice. During the game, the therapist may focus on good sportsmanship, turn taking, and conversation. If student is having trouble with executive function within the game, the therapist should "think out loud" her plays as a model for the student. Initially, the child may need an adult assistant to help organize his chips, make decisions, and demonstrate how to build words.



Feed the Baby

Activity Areas: Joint attention and imitation

Highlights:

- Symbolic play
- Social interaction between therapist and child
- Speech and Language Practice

Ages: 1-3, 4-6

Participants: SLP and child

Summary: Child will pretend to feed a baby doll after watching the SLP demonstrate.

Steps:

1. Bring out a baby doll and introduce it to the child, “This is Baby Sally.”
2. Show the child the bottle and say, “Baby Sally is hungry. I’m going to feed her.” Pretend to feed the baby doll.
3. Say to the child, “Now it is your turn to feed the baby.” Give the child the doll and bottle.
4. If the child does not participate, stand behind the child and use hand-over-hand method to assist child in feeding the baby.
5. Whether you are assisting the child or not, give positive feedback to child. “Thank you for feeding Baby Sally! She feels so much better now.”
6. Repeat activity using other food items. Say to child, “Now what does Baby Sally want to eat?” Wait for 5 seconds for the child to respond. If no response, then provide the word and select the item. Help the child to feed the baby the food item.
7. Repeat the activity, but give alternative choices to the child. Ask, “What does Baby Sally want to eat an apple or a cookie?” Wait for child to respond.
8. Repeat the activity but now say, “Baby Sally says ‘I want apple.’” You be Baby Sally and say it, “I want apple.” Repeat with different food item, but just say, “What does Baby Sally say?” [wait for child to say, “I want ____.”]

Comments: This type of activity allows the child to hear minimal speech to imitate. Once the child masters this activity, he can be prompted to use the phrase “I want” in many scenarios. Often, just the parent or therapist making the “I” sign will prompt the child to use the phrase in a useful manner.



Snack Time

Activity Area: Echolalia and requesting

Activity Highlights:

- Interaction between therapist and child
- Practice making choices
- Speech and language practice

Ages: 1-3, 4-6

Materials: Snack items

Participants: Therapist and child, parents may observe or participate

Summary: This activity provides a structured situation for the child to use functional speech. Echolalia is avoided by therapist by providing little or no speech to echo.

Steps:

1. Place two different snacks (for example, a piece of cracker and a piece of candy) in front of child, but out of reach. [place the items on a designated area, like a napkin or small plate for the child to see these are the items to be selected.]
2. Sign or gesture, “What?” and wait for child to indicate preference in some way.
3. No matter how the child indicates (eye gaze, pointing, reaching, etc.) therapist should model the sentence “Want _____” in both sign and speech. [provide just a little piece of the snack.]
4. The therapist may do hand-over-hand signs with the child at first, but later do not assist. Remember to wait 5 seconds for the child to respond.
5. Repeat activity by providing same snacks but in different order, or by replacing snacks with different items. It is important to use snacks that the child wants.

Comments:

This is a powerful first social-exchange activity. The key to making this work is keeping the items slightly out of reach of the child and using powerful snack items; i.e., those items the child really wants. The goal is to have the child request orally the item, but using signs or even pictures for exchange is a good social activity. Remember not to give the child too much otherwise they will not request again. Sometimes, the student will get frustrated and refuse to participate. This is when using hand-over-hand signing helps, because it encourages the child to continue and always provides a positive response, i.e., getting a food reinforcer.



Expressions

Activity Areas: Emotion recognition, self-awareness and pronoun confusion

Ages: 4-6, 7-12, 19+

Materials: Pictures of person/persons making various facial expressions, such as happy, sad, surprised, disgusted, angry, and ashamed.

Participants: therapist and child

Activity Highlights:

- Executive function (feelings, emotions)
- Speech and language practice
- Social interaction between therapist and child

Summary:

Child identifies facial expressions from photographs. Child also gives an example from his own life when he felt that particular emotion. Use boy and girl pictures to teach pronoun usage; for example, saying “he is happy,” or “she is surprised.”

Steps:

1. Show client a picture. Say, “See this girl? She feels sad. I was sad when my dog died last summer.”
2. Present the next picture and ask, “Look at this boy. How do you think he feels? [angry]” If he answers correctly, say “Can you tell me a time when you felt angry?” If the client does not answer correctly, look together at the picture in detail and point out facial cues that indicate that particular emotion. Then prompt the client to tell you about a time when he felt angry like the boy in the picture.
3. Continue the process with several-numerous pictures.
4. Have the child act out the facial expressions. If possible, take pictures of child producing different facial expressions. Upload photos and build a picture book of child’s different emotions. Label the emotions.
5. Therapist acts out the emotions and has child tell therapist what emotions are being acted out.
6. Read story by Emma Brownjohn “All Kinds of Fears” [both in English and Chinese]

Comments:

The therapist can modify this activity by asking the client to watch other people and their expressions. Therapist can take photos of herself with expressions. Have child explain the expression. Have the child view the therapist’s eyes.



Choosing Favorites

Activity Area: Initiation and Requesting

Activity Highlights:

- Speech and language practice
- Interaction between SLP and child

Ages: 1-3, 4-6, 7-12 (depending on what toys are presented)

Materials: 5 desirable toys

Participants: therapist and child

Summary: Therapist attempts to elicit initiation and requests from child by placing two desirable toys out of child's reach.

Steps:

1. Place two desirable toys out of child's reach.
2. Look at child and wait for initiation from child. Therapist gestures in an exploring manner, with palms up and moving across toys, and give the child a questioning look.
3. If the child continues looking at the toys but does not initiate, say, "What?"
4. Wait again for child's initiation.
5. After about 5 seconds, model "I want _____" in speech and sign language.
6. If child still does not request the desired toy, form his hands to produce the sign /want/ and give the toy to the child.
7. Let the child play with the toy for about 10 - 15 seconds and place it again out of reach.
8. Repeat the entire process several times, changing toys every time to entice the child.

Comments:

SLP may modify this activity by giving the child choices, such as "Johnny, do you want the ball or the car?" The SLP can then give the child the correct toy after the child says/signs the selection. After a routine is established, the therapist can then provide the wrong choice after the child has selected. Wait to see what the child says or does. If there is no response, then say, "Oh, I'm sorry that is not car. You wanted car. Tell me, 'No, I want car'." Repeat sequence until child makes appropriate requests.