

Especially for parents of infants!

Made-Up Infant Lap Games

Rhymes and Sound Awareness

Made-up lap games can be just as much fun as tried-and-tested games. Here is an example of a game played by a parent whose infant has just learned to reach for things. It will give you some ideas about lap games you can make up and play with your own child.

What is the practice?

Lap games give infants opportunities to have adults repeat or start a game a child really likes or enjoys. These simple but very important activities help infants learn the your-turn/my-turn nature of adult-child interaction.

What does the practice look like?

Infants around 2 to 3 months of age become especially good at reaching for toys, food, and people. Infants are fascinated with what happens when they touch or swipe at something. Parents can use their baby's interest in reaching and turn it into a game. This will make the baby want to reach even more. Getting your child to do something he enjoys can be a fun learning activity.

How do you do the practice?

Here is how one father used made-up lap games with his daughter. See how she learned a fun way to play with her dad.

- The father saw that his daughter was especially interested in reaching for and touching his mouth.
- The first thing the father did was kiss his daughter's hands whenever she touched his mouth.
- The father changed the game by pretending to "nibble" on his daughter's fingers. This made the little girl squeal with delight. He said "munch, munch" every time his daughter reached toward his mouth.
- Finally, the father "made up" a rhyme to make the game even more fun. He said, "Daddy's getting hungry. He better eat some lunch. Can he eat (baby's name)'s fingers? Munch, munch, munch!" At the end of the rhyme he pretended that he was eating his daughter's fingers. The little girl hardly ever got tired of playing this game!



How do you know the practice worked?

- Does your child try to get you to play a game again?
- Does your child vocalize as part of playing a game?
- Does your child get excited during special parts of a game (e.g., by getting bright-eyed)?

Take a look at more made-up games ...

Kiss my nose!

Three-month-old Brianna especially enjoys a nursery rhyme her mother has made up. Here is how Mom gets her daughter to play the game. Mom says, "Brianna has 10 fingers. Brianna has 10 toes. Brianna has a big smile. Brianna has a tiny nose!" She touches her daughter's fingers, toes, and mouth and finally kisses the baby on the nose while saying the rhyme. Mom sometimes plays the game by holding Brianna's fingers and feet up in the air while she recites the rhyme. She waits for Brianna to smile and vocalize before kissing her on the nose.



Pull-up partners

Aisha, a 4-month-old, can't sit by herself without falling over. But she still loves to be in a sitting position! Her mother plays a game with Aisha that thrills her daughter. Mom places Aisha on her back. She holds out her hands for Aisha to grab onto and pull to a sitting position. Mom says, "Aisha's so strong. What can she do? Pull up, pull up. To see me and you!" Mom asks, "Do you want to play again?" She waits for Aisha to reach out toward her. Aisha squeals with delight while she reaches for her mom. The game continues!

Shake, Rattle, and Roll!

Luci has been home for five months after spending the first part of her life in the hospital. Mom and Dad spent a lot of time at the hospital with her. They would stroke and massage her arms and legs while she was in the hospital crib. After coming home, her parents noticed that Luci still likes to be touched whenever she is held. Mom turned the baby's interests into a simple but powerful game. Any time Luci moves an arm or leg Mom tickles and rubs her while saying "Luci's moving. Mommy knows. She likes to be touched. So here we go!" Luci has figured out to "shake, rattle, and roll." Mom massages and rubs the body part Luci moves. Mom tickles Luci after finishing her rhyme. Luci smiles and squeals with glee.

