

# Learning with fun at the Nursery

Group games:

General

Colors and shapes

Language – pre reading

Mathematics – counting and numbers



# Learning with fun at Nursery school

## General Colors and shapes Language – pre reading Mathematics – counting and numbers

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# General

## 1. A heart in the circle

The children are sitting in the circle. A heart is going round.

When a child gets the heart he tells the name of a friend and tells what he likes about that friend.

You can cut a heart of paper.

## 2. Which animal

Put pictures of all kinds of animals on the floor.

Ask a child: "what animal would you like to be?"

Take that picture and ask the child why he or she likes to be that animal.

The child puts the picture back and another child chooses a picture.

## 3. Follow the leader

The leader (teacher or child) makes a move (like hands up, clap, and hands on the head), the other children follow.

*Variation:*

Make a sound and the others are following.

## 4. Show your feelings

Show being: happy, sad, surprised, .....

## 5. Making faces

One child is making a face, the other ones copy everything he is doing

## 6. Show by face and/or attitude

The children show with their face and/or attitude how they feel:

- When it's your birthday
- When you get a present
- When you lost your present
- When you find it back
- When somebody kicks you
- When somebody helps you
- When there is a fly flying around your head
- When the fly bites you.
- When .....

## 7. Matching

Make two or more cards that match. Give each child a card. Let them find a child with a matching card. E.g. the same colour, the same picture, the same shape.

*Variation*

Cut a picture in 2 pieces and let them match both halve pictures.

## 8. My, my, who am I?

The teacher chooses a child, who has to sit in the middle of the classroom with his/her eyes closed

The teacher then chooses a second child who has to ask the first child in a funny voice (in order to hide his/her identity) 'My, my, who am I?'

If the first child guesses the name correctly, he or she can continue, till he or she makes a mistake or after the third turn.

**9. Who can remain quiet for the longest time?**

Together with the children, you agree to hold a competition to see who can remain quiet for the longest (not making a single noise).

There are two versions of this game: Either the first child to make a noise loses the game, or the last child to remain silent wins.

The children will usually enjoy playing this game, and the teacher will definitely enjoy the temporary peace and quiet.

**10. What is missing?**

Place a number of objects in front of the children (for example a pencil, book, cup, doll, ruler etc..)

One child closes his/her eyes while a second child removes one of the objects and holds it behind his/her back.

*Variation:*

Change the order of the subjects.

Make it more difficult by putting more things

**11. Hide and seek**

One child leaves the class. The others hide something.

The child may come back and start seeking the hidden thing. When he is near the hidden thing the other children clap loud, when is far away they clap quietly.

**12. Who is not on the picture?**

One child is the photographer and leaves the class.

The other children make a group for a picture. One child hid behind the group.

The photographer comes in. Does he know who is missing in the group?

**13. Pre writing**

Make drawings in the air. What do I draw?

You can draw figures, numbers or letters.

**14. Who sings?**

The children are standing in the circle. They pass the ball.

One child is not looking. When he calls 'stop', the one with the ball has to sing a song (or another task).

**15. Play with a balloon**

Try to keep the balloon in the air.

*Variation:*

- The boys try to keep the balloon in the circle, while the girls try to smash it out the circle.

- Make 2 groups. Each group gets his own area. Try to smash the balloon in the area of the other group.

**16. The zoo!**

Divide the group in small groups. Each group gets a name of an animal. Each group gets 5 points written on the blackboard or showed with e.g. bottle tops.

The teacher calls the name of an animal. The children of that group start making the sound of that animal.

When somebody of another group makes a sound they get one point taken away from them because it wasn't their turn to make the sound.

### **17. What do I feel?**

Cover the eyes of one child with, like a tea towel or a scarf.

Another child gives something in his hands. This child has to guess what is in his hands just by touching and feeling it.

Does he know what it is?

When it is difficult, you can give hints.

*Variation:*

You can also put an object in a sack.

### **18. Making groups**

The teacher calls a few children who have something in common, like wearing the same clothes, the same hair, having an earring, ....., without telling what it is.

Can the rest of the class see what these children have in common?

### **19. Who do I have in mind?**

One child is leaving the circle.

The other children take a child of the class in their mind.

The child is coming back and asks question like: is it a boy? Has the child long hair. ....

The children answer only with yes or no.

When the child knows who they have in their mind he tells the name.

## **Colors and shapes**

### **20. Sorting**

Give each child a shape. Give tasks like:

- When your shape is a circle you put it in the air, or lay it in the middle of the circle.
- The teacher lays a shape in the circle. When your shape is the same you lay it next to this one.
- All children with the same shape stand together. So they make groups.
- Make groups with different shapes. Two of the same is not allowed.

*Variation*

You can do the same games with colors.

You also can combine shape and color: all red circles in the middle, etc.

### **21. Search**

Look for something that is color red, blue, etc. Or: with shape circle, triangle, etc.

### **22. Touch the color**

When the teacher says red, the children touch something red. When she says green, the children touch something green.

### **23. Throw with a color dice**

Throw with the big color dice. Name the color and name something with that color.

# Vocabulary

## 24. I am

The children are sitting in the circle. Ask the children to say their names and something they like to eat. The teacher starts: I am ....., and I like to eat.....

Variation:

Instead of what they like to eat they can say: I like colour...; I like to play with....; etc.

## 25. Presentation

The teacher calls the names of the children, one by one. When the name of a child is called, this child needs to say the name of a colour, an animal or something to eat .....

## 26. Stories and books

Tell the children a lot of stories and, if you have, read books for them. They learn new words, listening and stimulate their imagination. And it is fun!

## 27. Talking about

Talk with the children about different themes. Ask them what they know and teach them more about these themes. If possible use pictures and other objects.

## 28. You tell ...

Let the children tell about what they like; what they did; about a theme; etc.

Give the children turns:

Give one of the children a stick or make a microphone (e.g. of a tp roll). When the child finishes his story, he gives the stick or microphone to another.

## 29. Interview

Give one of the children a stick or microphone (see You tell) and let them ask one or more questions to someone else.

## 30. What do you see?

Show pictures and let the children talk about it.

Ask questions, using what, where, who, why and when. Like: What do you see? How can you use it?

## 31. The story ball

The children stand in a circle. Throw a ball. Who catches the ball can say something.

Give a theme. E.g. talk about your family, animals, etc.

You can also let them finish a sentence. E.g. Yesterday I eat .....; I like .....; My favorite colour is colour .....

## 32. The world upside down

The children have to do the opposite of what the teacher is doing.

When the teacher stands up, the children sit down. When the teacher puts her arms up, the children put their arms down. When the teacher starts to cry, the children are laughing.

Introduce with a story about upside down. Also a child can be the leader.

### **33. Opposites**

Match opposites like big – small; high – low. Use pictures or show it.

### **34. Category**

Name a category, like animals, things in the house, etc, and let the children mention words that belong in that category.

You can also use pictures and let the children sort them.

### **35. Concepts**

E.g. first – last; left – right; up – down; bottom – top: Important words children have to know when they start reading and writing. Practice the words by making a row with the children or with objects. Give tasks: the first one sits down; the one at the left now goes to the right; point the last one or the first or the one in the middle; etc.

### **36. True or false**

The teacher says something true or false and the children react like:

true: hand up – false: hands down / true: stand up – false: sit down;

true: thumbs up – false: thumbs down.

You can say things about:

- colours: the sky is purple; the trees are blue; the grass is green, ....
- who sits where: Sara sits next to Peter, .....
- animals: a frog barks; a cow moos; a young pig is called a calf
- others: I enter the house through the door, human beings have 3 ears, .....

### **37. Commands**

The leader gives commands like: lift your right hand; put your hands on your knees; place your hands on your head; etc. The other follows. Increase the speed.

### **38. Story telling**

Start telling a story, let the children finish it.

### **39. Description game**

The teacher (or a child) describes another child or an object. The children have to guess who it is or what the object is. The first one to guess correctly wins the game.

E.g. You can eat it; It is yellow or green; It grows on tree; ..... = a banana

He works with timber; He uses a hammer; He makes furniture; .... = a carpenter.

## **Listening**

### **40. Where are you?**

One child is hiding while the others close their eyes. The one who is hiding makes a sound, e.g. the sound of an animal. The other children point to the place where they think the sound is coming from. You can also make a sound with a music instrument.

#### **41. What do you hear?**

Let the children listen to different sounds, e.g. from music instruments or with materials of the environment like stones and sticks. Then put them behind something. Let a child make one of the sounds. Ask the other children what sound they hear.

#### **42. Telephone**

The teacher whispers a word in the ear of the child who's sitting next to her/him.

The child whispers the same word in the ear of the next child.

Go on till the word is gone through the whole circle.

The last child says the word out loud. Is it still the same?

#### **43. The thief**

One child is sitting in the middle of the circle. Blind fold him or let him keep his eyes closed.

Next to him there is an object. Point to one of the children: that's the robber. The robber tries to steal the object. When the child in the middle hears the robber coming she/he says: stop. If she/he says stop when the robber is not there yet, give another child a try.

#### **44. Match**

Match a sound with the right picture. Like sounds of different animals or things in and around the house.

#### **45. Whisper and listen**

Whisper words or a sentence. Let the children repeat it correctly and in the right order.

More difficult: stand back to back.

#### **46. Do, say and sing after me**

Let the children repeat what you do, say or sing. Use also words that don't exist.

#### **47. React**

Read a story of a book. Choose a word that is often mentioned. Ask the children to raise their hands when they hear that word. Instead of reading a story you can say a lot of words.

Or: react when you hear a specific sound.

#### **48. Correct order**

Let the children repeat words in the correct order. Start with three. Add more and more words. How many can they repeat in the correct order?

Use words that are related (like all names of animals) or that just are not related

#### **49. Which words are the same?**

Say 3 or more words, repeating 1. Which word did you hear twice? E.g. farmer – duck – farmer.

Or:

Say two sentences. Which word do you hear twice? E.g. I see a big house – my house is in the village. To make clear what you mean, start with two sentences with their own name. E.g. My name is Helen – Helen is a beautiful name.



**50. Which word is missing?**

Say the same group of words twice, missing one word the second time. Which word did you hear only once? E.g. house – roof – wall – door / house – roof – door

**51. What doesn't belong?**

Say 3 words. Which one doesn't belong in the row? E.g. dog – cat – tree. Tree doesn't belong in the row because it isn't an animal.

**52. Do you remember?**

Say a word or sentence and ask the children to repeat it. Make the sentence longer and longer. Try also words without a meaning.

## Words and sentences

**53. Count the words in a sentence**

Say a sentence. Let the children clap, stamp or take a step for each word.  
Or: let the children put an object (like a block or stone) for each word in the sentence.

**54. Make the sentences longer**

Say a short sentence and ask the children to make it longer.  
E.g. The house is ..... I like to ..... I see a cow .....

**55. Make a sentence**

Give a word and ask the children to make a sentence with it.  
Make it more difficult by saying that the sentence has to start (or to end) with the word.

**56. First – last word**

Say a sentence. Ask the children which word is the last / the first.

**57. Compound words**

A compound word is a word that is made of two other words. E.g. foot-ball; book-shelf. Give picture of the small words and let the children combine the words. Or give one word and the children make the word longer.

You can also give the compound word and ask the children the words they hear.

For some words there are a lot of possibilities. Give a word and ask the children how many words they can add. E.g. school: school bell; school class; school book; etc.

**58. Short – long words**

Say two words. Which one is longer? Write the words and show them. In the beginning children will choose the word of the biggest object. Like pencil and tree: they will say tree because that object is bigger. When you write the words they see that pencil is a bigger word. They don't have to read it yet.

*Variation*

Which sentence is longer.

## Parts of words (syllables)

### 59. Clapping names or words

The children clap or stamp at each syllable of their name. Like: Do-ro-thy.

Then say other words. Like: ba-na-na-tree.

Or let them take a step on each syllable

### 60. Count syllables

How many syllables you hear in this word. Like: grasshopper = 3

### 61. What am I saying?

I saw a cro-co-dile; I like to eat cab-bage; I see you this af-ter-noon

You can also practice this while you are reading a story.

Let the children try to say words in pieces by themselves.

### 62. Gigo Giraffe

The children stand with their back to a wall or behind a line. At the other side is one child: Gigo Giraffe.

One by one the children ask: 'Gigo can I travel?

Gigo: 'Yes, what can you bring'

Child: names something, like umbrella. By saying this the child jumps or step for each syllable of the word. E.g. um-brel-la = 3 steps

Then the next child can ask. Who is the first that reaches the other site?

## Rhymes

### 63. Hello, my name is .....

Make a word that rhymes with your name. Like: Jimmy – timmy; Job – cop.

The children will name nonsense words by changing only the first letter. That's oke.

### 64. Rhymes / songs / poems

Reading and singing rhymes, songs and poems, makes the children realize that words rhymes. Like: cat – rat; floor – door; took – book. The last parts of words that rhyme sound the same. It's allowed to say words that make no sense.

### 65. Fill in the rhyming word

Say a sentence or tell a story and let the children fill in a word that rhymes.

E.g. In the house, I saw a ..... (mouse)

I was sitting al alone, on a big ..... (stone)

I saw a big cat, sleeping on the .....(mat)

### **66. What rhymes**

Put a number of things on the ground or table. At each object ask the children to say one or more words that rhyme. E.g. stone – bone; top – stop; block – sock.

You can also say a word and let the children pick the thing that rhymes. E.g. when you say bone, the children pick the stone.

Another possibility is mixing sets that rhyme and let the children match.

### **67. Make a rhyme**

Show an object or picture and let the children make a rhyme with it. E.g. by ball: this is a ball and it will fall; by tree: the bee is sitting in the tree.

### **68. Rhyme ball**

The children stand in a circle. The teacher says a word and throws the ball to one of the children. The child who catches the ball says a word that rhymes. Then he says a new word and throws the ball to another one who has to rhyme with that one.

## **The first sound**

### **69. Names with ...**

Play a game like: when your name starts with s, stand up; when your name start with p, clap your hands; etc.

### **70. Do you hear the sound?**

Name a sound. Then say a lot of words. When the word starts with that sound the children react by raising hands, clapping, stamping, ...

You can also read or tell a story and let the children react by a specific sound,

### **71. Yes or no?**

Name words and the first sound. When it's correct children stand up, when its wrong children sit down. (Or hands up / down; or go to the side with yes / no)

E.g. Flower starts with sound f: yes; school starts with sound l: no.

### **72. What's the first sound?**

Say a word and ask the children what is the first sound of this word is. You can also use objects or pictures.

### **73. Match Words with sounds**

Make as many words as you know starting with a particular sound. E.g. s: snake, snail, soft, sugar, etc.

Make a list. The children don't have to read the words but they will see that the first sound is the same by each word.

### **74. Drawing**

Let children draw pictures starting with a specific sound

### **75. Sorting**

Sort out objects or pictures by the first sound. E.g. flower – foot – face / tree – tap – toes  
You can also give them written words. They don't have to read the words but recognize the first letter.

### **76. I see, I see**

I see something that starts with sound .... The children guess what you have in mind.

### **77. Poster**

Make a poster with things that start with a specific sound. Draw or cut and paste.  
When you hang different posters on the wall, you can create a letter wall.  
You can also hang the words and or pictures on different branches.

### **78. Pick the wrong word**

Say 3 words: 2 with the same sound at the beginning and 1 starting with another sound. Ask the children which word doesn't belong in the row. E.g. snake – snail – cup. Cup doesn't belong in the row, because it starts with sound c and the other words start with sound s.  
make it more difficult by saying more words.

### **79. Go to the sound**

Put different object or pictures on different places, e.g. one in each corner of the class. The objects all start with a different sound. Say a word and let the children go to the object with the same sound. E.g. object: pen, scissor, necklace and book. When you say paper they have to go to the pen, because both starts with sound p.

## **Last sound / sound in the middle**

### **80. See: the first sound of a word.**

Instead of asking for the first sound in a word you can ask for the last sound or the sound in the middle

## **Blending**

### **81. Slow names - blending**

Say the names sound by sound. Who is it? E.g. t i m = tim; p a u l = paul

### **82. Snail talking - blending**

Tell the children that you talk like a snail, very slow. Like: p a n. What's the word? (pan)

### **83. Draw what you hear**

Draw a p e n = pen

**84. Give me**

Put things or picture on the ground or table.

Ask the children: Give me the b oo k = book

**85. Segmenting**

Show an object or picture. Ask the children to say it in sounds. Like: bal = b a l.

Start with words of 3 letter sounds

## Mathematics

**86. Counting children**

Count the number of children sitting in the circle.

How many boys? How many girls?

How many children are wearing a uniform, How many are wearing trousers? How many are wearing something red? Etc...

**87. Counting objects**

In the circle (or on the table) you can count everything: blocs, beads, pencils, children, etc.

Make 2 groups: what's more, less, the same?

You can count with different things. Do they understand that 2 big books are less than 3 small beads?

**88. How many fingers**

Put up a number of fingers. The children show the same.

Put your hands behind your back and then show another number.

How fast can the children follow?

**89. The robber**

Put 10 blocks on the table.

One child is the robber. The other children close their eyes.

The robber takes some blocks. The children open their eyes.

How many blocs did the robber take?

You can also use other things than blocks.

You can make it easier or more difficult by using less or more blocks.

**90. Counting together**

The first child says 1, the second 2, the third 3, etc.

**91. Build a tower**

Each child gets a block.

The first one puts the block in the middle of the circle.

The next child puts his block on the first one, then the third, etc. until the tower falls down.

The children count each block they put on the tower.

**92. Step by step**

You can play this outside.

The teacher calls a number; the children take that amount of steps. They can also step backwards.

Can you make big steps, small steps?

### 93. Counting with the drum

The teacher beats a drum while the children count out together with the beats of the drum. Begin by beating the drum 5 times at a normal pace while the children count aloud with each beat. After this, you can try counting to 10, and then even to 15 or 20 depending on how well the children are doing.

You can then beat the drum at a faster or slower pace. The children have to count out faster or slower according to the beat of the drum.

#### *Variation*

- The children close their eyes. The teacher beats the drum a number of times. The children then have to count how many times the teacher beats the drum.
- Play soft and loud beats on the drum during which the children have to count out softly or loudly according to the volume of the drum: for example beat 1 very loud, beat 2 soft, beat 3 loud, beat 4 very soft etc..

### 94. Counting with a dice

Throw a large dice into the circle.

The children clap with their hands (or count aloud) the number indicated on the top of the dice.

#### *Variation*

- A child closes his/her eyes. The other children clap the number indicated on the top of the dice. The child with his/her eyes closed has to listen to the clapping and estimate the number on the top of the dice.
- Ask the children to show the number on top of the dice with their fingers in the air.
- Place some beads, bottle tops or whatever, on a table. Choose one child who has to take the correct number of beads from the pile (according to the number on the top of the dice). The other children watch and check that the child takes the correct number. If the child takes an incorrect number of beads, start again and choose another child to take beads from the pile.
- Place a number of play blocks on top of each other to form a tower according to the number on top of the dice. After each throw of the dice, more blocks are added. When the tower is so high that it falls, let the child/children count the number of fallen blocks.
- The children stand up. Let them guess what you throw. Let them show it with their fingers. After you throw the children with the wrong number sit down. Play again. Go on till one or two children still stand.

### 95. Divide

Use beads or other things.

You can ask a lot of questions, like:

- Are there enough for all the children
- Why do you think so: why yes, why no
- How many beads are there
- Can you divide them in 2 even groups
- Can you divide them in 3 groups, 4, etc.
- Who has more or less.
- Make groups of 3 or 4, etc.
- We put 3 beads in a basket. We put 2 more in it. How many are there now?
- There are 4 beads in the basket, but we want 10. How many more do have to put in.

**96. Forbidden number**

Let the children count but name a number that is forbidden to say.

Instead of saying the number they clap in their hands. E.g. 5 is the forbidden number. They count: 1, 2, 3, 4, (clap), 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

Let them stand up. The child that makes a mistake sits down,

**97. The bus**

Put some children in 'the bus' (place in the circle).

Tell them that ..... children enter the bus. How many are there now? Let also children go out of the bus.

E.g. 4 children in the bus; 2 enter; now there are 6; 3 go out; now there are 3.

**98. Make groups**

The children are walking around.

Name a number, e.g. 3. Children now make groups of 3 children.

*Variation:*

Make groups with objects.

**99. Stop by....**

Name a number, e.g.8.

A child starts counting (pointing) children, but has to stop at 8. At number 8 he names another number and that child starts counting and stops at the given number, etc.

**100. Memory and count**

Put 5 cups upside down. The children close their eyes.

The teacher puts something under 1 cup. The children open their eyes.

What do you think, under which cup did I put something. The first, second, the third...

