

March 2021

# WORDS



## Activities Edition

*Try these fun, educational games with your toddler to see how much they've learned*



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# Introduction

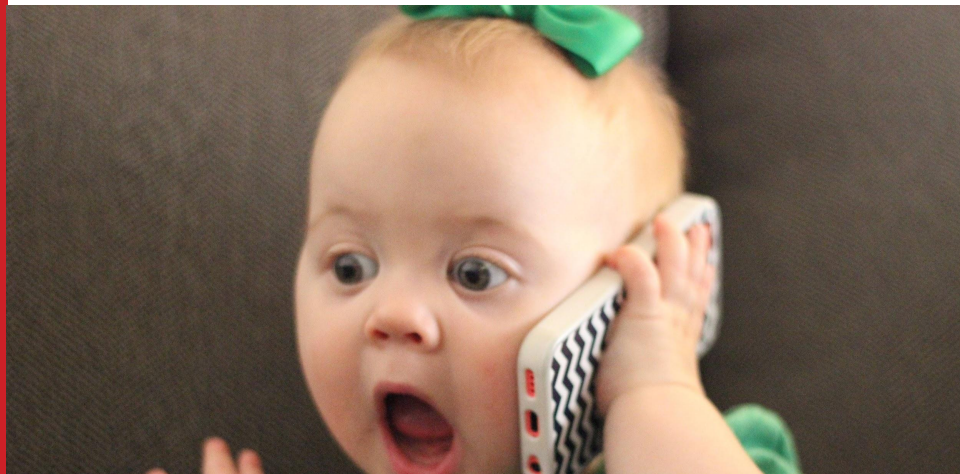
*How can we have fun while learning with our children?*

One thing many parents of young children can agree on from being stuck at home throughout the present pandemic is that finding ways to keep your child engaged and entertained might seem harder than ever. You might even be worried that your child's cognitive (mental) and language development is not progressing at a typical pace without the usual exposure to the world and face-to-face socializing.

But fret not! We have a fantastic series of activities here for you to engage your child, whether they're an infant or a toddler. They aren't only fun for you and them--these will also reveal to you just how much your child knows. These activities incorporate some of the same methods that professional linguists use in peer-reviewed research, so there is a lot to learn about your child through them! By the end, both you and your child will be learning and having fun.



*Interaction with your child is key to their development.  
These activities will help BOTH of you learn more!*





# Elicited Production

This test is effective for young children around two years of age. It is a great source to reflect the child's expressive grammar and ability of language comprehension. The main idea of this is to incorporate situations that are associated with particular meanings and to elicit the production of the structure being investigated.

To do this at home, have your child sit in a quiet room and present them with one picture. Set up a context for the picture and have your child explain what is going on in the picture and what they are seeing. For example, a cat is playing with their owner. Have your child explain what they are doing which would be the cat playing with the owner on the floor. So the caregiver would ask, "who is the cat playing with?"

The goal is for your child to be able to clearly explain the context of the picture. By asking them to produce sentences, it will show how developed their language production capabilities are.





# Object Retrieval

***Your child's choice between pairs can reveal a lot!***

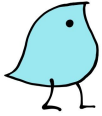
The Object Retrieval activity is perfect for young children across a range of ages. Whether they can only look or point at an object, or are already able to stand up and run to bring it to you, you'll both have fun with this. It's also easy to do using everyday objects around the house. Set up a contrasting pair of objects in the room with your child, and ask them to look at, point at, or bring you--whatever they're capable of--one of the selected objects. You can do this with just about anything around the house (as long as it's safe for the child!) to test what common vocabulary they have acquired.

There are some more interesting possibilities as well, though: try setting up a pair of objects with names that start with the same sound (like *tape* and *table*) or with names that rhyme or nearly rhyme (like *can* and *man*, or *door* and *drawer*). The younger the child, the more they might struggle with these closer pairs, but is an interesting way to potentially see what sounds your child is able to differentiate. You may see them take longer to decide between the objects, especially for the words that start with the same sound, because they have to listen to the whole word to make the choice--for other pairs, they can make the decision before the whole word even passes through your lips!



*Look, baby! Can you show me hugging? Where are they hugging?*

You might also try to set up more complicated objects that depict verbs/actions (i.e. *hugging* and *eating*), using pictures, drawings, or even posed stuffed animals. What you will find, especially if doing this with children younger than 5, is that they will probably get more of these action words wrong than with the regular nouns/objects from before. Studies have shown that nouns are cemented more solidly in children developing their vocabularies first before verbs, likely because the names of objects can be mapped onto a much more concrete mental image (Masterson et al., 2008). So don't worry if your younger child struggles with verbs--that's perfectly normal!



Do you know what a *wug* is? How about a *niz*? Have you ever *glinged* before?

If you're confused, don't worry -- all three of these amusingly nonsensical words do not (yet!) exist in the English language. However, they are incredibly useful for this next activity!

# Wug Test

To complete this activity, cut out the images on the following page!

The Wug test was designed by Jean Berko Gleason to display children's unconscious linguistic knowledge. Try this with your child, and you'll see how they are easily able to apply their linguistic knowledge to words they've never heard before!

## STEPS

1. Show image A to your child.
2. Read the prompt aloud. At the end, pause and wait for your child to finish the sentence.

They have probably answered, "*wugs*!"

3. Repeat steps 1-2 for images B and C.

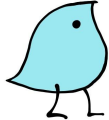
Your child has likely answered, "*niz*'s!" and "*glinging*!"

Your child's answers display that even though these silly words are completely new to them, they are able to correctly apply proper English grammar rules on them:

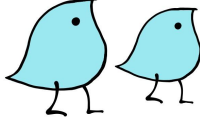
A) The plural *-s* ending, B) possessive *'s* ending, and C) *-ing* present progressive ending.

This test is simple, fun, and extremely useful in testing your child's application of unconscious linguistic knowledge. But don't worry if they didn't answer as expected! Every child's language ability develops at a different rate.

IMAGE A

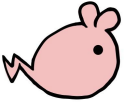


This is a WUG.




Now there is another one.  
There are two of them.  
There are two \_\_\_\_\_.

IMAGE B




This is a NIZ.



This is a NIZ who owns a hat.  
Whose hat is it?  
It is the \_\_\_\_\_ hat.

IMAGE C



This is a man who knows  
how to GLING.

What is he doing?  
He is \_\_\_\_\_.

# Conditioned Head Turning

Hi Moms and Dads! Having trouble deciding if your child is actually understanding and comprehending what you are saying to them? There are ways to access information through tests you can perform in the comfort of your own home, to cue you in on how much your child understands in reference to language.

A conditioned head turning paradigm is a test that can easily be manipulated to

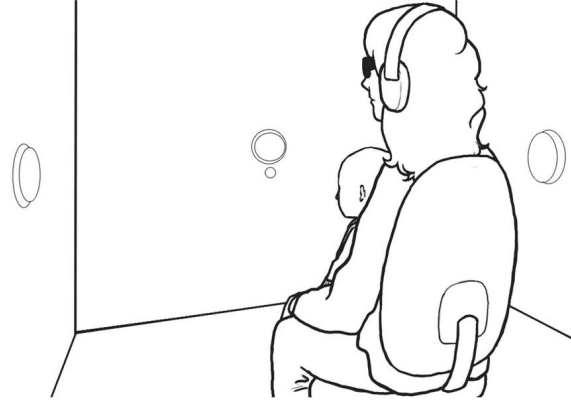
tailor to a multitude of age ranges so you can direct it towards what you want to focus on with your child. This is beneficial because although it is normally used to test younger children's



Understandings (6 months- 18 months), it is versatile enough to allow for manipulations to be made for children between the ages of 2-5 years old as well.

You can administer this test with infants by playing sounds that vary slightly, such as “bah” and “dah”. Setting this up at home, you first need to have two sounds recorded to play for your child.

Note: be sure to not react to the change in sounds, in order to be sure the child is not just reacting to your reaction. You should also set up a toy to draw their attention.



When the second sound plays. After doing this a couple times, you will notice your child start to turn their head in anticipation of the toy in the presence of the second sound, showing that they recognize the difference between the two sounds.

This can be tailored to older children between the ages of 2-5 years by switching the sounds to words. You would also remove the toy from the test, and instead just see if the child verbally or with a facial expression, confirms that they understand what is being said. You can also present context clues in their environment to lead them to understand the meaning of the word.

Take note of how long it takes for your child to react to the sounds or words you present to them. Also note that this is testing their auditory understanding of words. You will notice how much they do actually understand what is going on around them, and how they do differentiate between sounds and words presented to them at a young age!

# Intermodal Preferential Looking Paradigm

Sometimes it can be difficult to distinguish if your young child is acquiring language typically and at a normal pace. To reassure you of your child's abilities, yet another activity that could be helpful is something called the Intermodal Preferential Looking Paradigm (IPLP).

This activity is used to help you get an understanding of your child's comprehension skills through a series of photos paired with questions. Children at young ages understand a lot more words and expressions than they lead us to believe, and with this activity,

your child will show you how much they truly do know and can distinguish from context.

You can use photos and place them side by side in front of your child. When these photos are placed down, you then will then ask your child to point to one of the two things. This will help you see if they understand what is being asked of them and if your child comprehends what is in front of them.

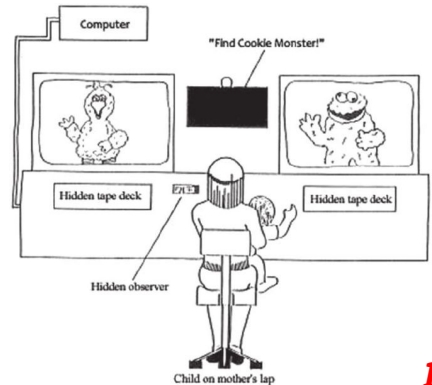
Say, for instance, you have an orange on the left side of the table and a block on the right side, you will then ask your child to show you where the orange or the block is.

"Look baby! Point to the orange. Where is the orange?" This activity will help in showing how many different things your child can actually distinguish from each other and knows! You can also use photos or cards or objects to help discover other things as well. This can consist of differentiating people standing with each other versus hugging each other. "Do you see hugging? Point to the people hugging?"

With this activity you will be able to see that if your child knows what an orange is, they will point to the orange, and if they know what a block is, they will point to a block, and if your child knows hugging, they will point to the people hugging! This activity helps show you what your child

knows, without them having to verbalize it.

Just because your child may not be producing an abundant amount of words and utterances, does not mean that there is anything to be worried about and they most likely are still developing language skills at a typical rate! Usually there is no need to fret, and tests like this make it clear that children know a lot more than they lead us to believe.





# Nonword Repetition Test

Have you ever wondered how well your child can remember things or what sound they may know? Then this is the test for you. It is a quick and fun test that can be done at home!

In order to do this at home with your children, your child would have to sit in a quiet room while the parent or computer provides a silly word. An example of this could be carleet or sockeet. Any silly made up word (nonword). You would then ask your child to repeat this word and compare how you or the computer said it to how you child said it.

Doing this, you will see what sounds they can successfully imitate and which ones they cannot. Learning new words is a complicated skill because they must remember what the word they heard was, hear all the sounds in the word correctly and keep the sounds in their short term memory. They then must find a way to say the word back and eventually say it. So by doing it at home, you the parent will be able to see how well they can go through this process. This test is quick to do and fun for your child and it is shown to have good correlation with school performance later in life.



|          |        |
|----------|--------|
| sobtate  | robet  |
| megfine  | trimug |
| tofake   | futek  |
| lisburne | rogam  |
| tresyate | webom  |
| bonsope  | trusag |
| triptate | flemon |
| wobshame | yapot  |
| questite | fuzam  |

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# Dear Moms and Dads,

We hope that these activities were simple to follow and a silly source of laughter and fun, and while doing them, you were also able to realize that your child knows so much more than you think!

Juggling your career, relationships, bills, dirty dishes, and the many other responsibilities of life is not at all an easy task... Especially not while caring for a little human. We want to remind you that your energy and efforts are not in vain. Keep going, we're cheering you on!

Words Magazine

P.S.

We really have to warn you though...  
Your child may now go around claiming that their favorite animal is a wug!

## CREDITS.

### Presentation Template: Ryan O'Donnell

Children's test Of Nonword Repetition (cn REP). (n.d.). Retrieved March 02, 2021, from [https://www.pearsonclinical.co.uk/Psychology/ChildCognitionNeuropsychologyandLanguage/ChildMemory/ChildrensTestofNonwordRepetition\(CNREP\)/ChildrensTestofNonwordRepetition\(CNREP\).aspx](https://www.pearsonclinical.co.uk/Psychology/ChildCognitionNeuropsychologyandLanguage/ChildMemory/ChildrensTestofNonwordRepetition(CNREP)/ChildrensTestofNonwordRepetition(CNREP).aspx)

Polka, L. (1997). The conditioned head turn procedure as a method for testing infant speech perception. *Early Development and Parenting*, Vol. 6, 171-178.

Masterson, J., Druks, J., & Gallienne, D. (2008). Object and Action Picture Naming in Three- and Five-Year-Old Children. *Journal of Child Language*, 35(2), 373-402. doi:10.1017/s0305000907008549