

A Game and a Giggle!

Games provide a great way to achieve tasks quickly and without a fuss with young children. They hold the power to change a challenging moment, without the child even knowing it. So much fun is in the air! Games are perfect for the toddler and pre-school years; they can lose their power later on.

Play a game and see...

The young child does not want to put her socks on and it is cold.

Place the sock on your hand and pretend it can speak. "Hello I am Sammy Sock and I was made to keep your feet warm. I want to eat your toes right now, yum. Please let me take care of your toes..."

A child does not want to eat at the breakfast table.

Can you invite teddies to join in with the morning porridge? Your child is Goldilocks, while the bears are on their walk. "Hurry up and try some porridge, before they get back." Then give all the bears a pretend bowl and your child, a baby sized bowl.



Magical blowing bubbles!

A young child is refusing to get into the car (or put the seatbelt on). He does not want to leave the park or home. Children love bubbles, they are magical. Keep bubbles in the glove

compartment of your car and if met with avoidance, play a bubble game after the seatbelt says, 'click!' Blow the bubbles for your child to catch when ready.

A child is slow to get dressed.



Beat the timer or, "Can you get dressed by the time I finish washing up?" is a fun way to get pyjamas on or to get dressed in the morning. Place an egg timer upside down and see if the child can complete a task, with your help, before it runs out. Some children love a challenge, "I bet you cannot find your gumboots and put them on before I find my coat. Ready steady, go..."

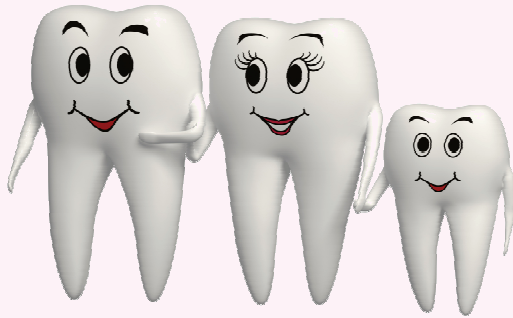
More dressing fun!

Singing can be a useful tool (do not worry if you think you can't sing, your children will not notice). Create little songs whilst dressing and in the bath: "This is the way we put on our vest, put on our vest..." "This is the way we wash our tummy..."

Teethy Tales.

As you clean your child's teeth each night, tell a daytime tale of each of the tooth's adventures. "This tooth ate cornflakes for breakfast, this tooth played in the park, this tooth loved

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the slide, and this tooth listened to a story...”
Children enjoy hearing about their day (however simple), and teeth will be cleaned like magic! Remember to march like the Grand Old Duke of York to bed, or take a shoulder ride.

Treasure Hunt.

Play a game of treasure hunt if an item is lost. This is a very useful game for lost car keys, to keep the parent relaxed!

The saying, “She is good with children”, usually means that the person loves to play games and is ‘light-hearted’ around toddlers. If you feel you are not a natural ‘game player’, your child will not notice, any effort is usually appreciated. Do not worry about constantly thinking up new ideas, children gain enjoyment from the same game played over and over, not a new one each time. Children may even play the game by themselves, after a while and after playing a game or two, you can realise that ‘games’ get faster results than nagging with the added benefit of a good mood.

All of a sudden life is fun...

Lou Harvey-Zahra is a mother of two, primary, special needs, and Rudolf Steiner trained teacher and playgroup leader. Her book *Turning Tears into Laughter: Creative Discipline for the Toddler and Preschool Years* (published by Five Mile Press) is available from bookshops and her website: www.skiptomyloparenting.com. Lou runs regular community talks, check out her website for details.