

The Power of Peek-a-boo

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I could write an entire book on why peek-a-boo is an amazing game to play with babies and toddlers, but who has time to read books when you're taking care of babies?

So, here are the highlights of why peek-a-boo is quite possibly the greatest game ever invented! (in no particular order)



- It's timeless and universal – kids around the world since the beginning of time have loved this game
- It requires **NO TOYS**, **no batteries**, and minimal effort to get babies interested
- Babies can play with anyone – parents, grandparents, siblings, even with themselves in a mirror
- It teaches object permanence so that babies learn that people and objects are still present even when you can't see them – and that mommies and daddies do come back
- It teaches babies to anticipate what might happen next by listening to your intonation and watching your fingers wiggle or watching a blanket shake before the excited “boo!”
- It can easily be adapted as babies grow so that they can actively participate as early as when they first smile until they can hide behind their own hands or under a blanket
- You can change the words but keep the same intonation pattern for other phrases for them to start to fill in the blank “peek a ___”; “ready set ___”; “1, 2 ___”
- You can play anywhere! No need to pack anything or worry about missing pieces.
- Peek-a-boo teaches ALL of the preverbal skills that are so important to speech and language development – attention, imitation, turn-taking, gesturing, understanding of language

Tips for playing peekaboo:

For babies under 6 months of age, go a bit more slowly and don't cover your face completely so that you don't frighten them

The real magic will happen between 6-12 months when they start to understand object permanence! Make sure you pause before that last “boo” and give them an extra second to really get excited or maybe even vocalize to fill in the last part.

When they show you (by smiling, laughing, reaching) that they want to play again and again and again... make sure you ask “more?” And then play...again...and again...and again!

*For more play ideas and strategies to help little ones learn to talk, go to www.letsplaythespeechandlanguageway.com.

