

Parent and Community Resource Coalition

Lakewood Memorial Library

Word Games

What is it?

We want children to develop large sight vocabularies. These are words children recognize by sight without having to sound them out. Games are a great way to encourage this kind of learning. Here are four adaptable game formats. Have fun!!

Word Sorts invite children to think about different aspects of words, how they are alike and how they are different. To begin, make a deck of about 20 words for sorting. These can be vocabulary or spelling words. Write the words on individual cards or slips of paper. Now ask your child to group the words. You can support your child if he or she needs it. Children can also work with partners. They can group words however they want to but ask them to explain their thinking. Or you can provide categories for grouping (choose tasks that will be challenging but not frustrating). Complete as many sorts as your child wishes; each one takes only 3-4 minutes. Here are a few ideas:

- Has a long vowel sound, does not have a long vowel sound
- Has a short vowel sound, does not have a short vowel sound
- Is a thing, is not a thing
- Is an action, is not an action
- Has one syllable, has more than one syllable
- Has a prefix, does not have a prefix
- Has a suffix, does not have a suffix

Wordo is a vocabulary version of Bingo. You will need a list of 9 or 16 words. You will also need a Wordo sheet (a three-by-three or four-by-four square matrix; make the squares large enough for your child to write in). If you would like to use the same Wordo card several times, you will also need movable markers of some sort—dry beans, pennies, or little scraps of paper. Then

- Write the words you have chosen on a separate piece of paper.
- Give your child the Wordo sheet. Ask him or her to choose a “free” box and mark it with an X. Then have him or her write the words you selected, randomly, in each of the remaining boxes.
- Now say a clue for each word. You can say “Find the word_____.” Or “Find a word with a long vowel sound.” Or “Find a word that means _____.” Ask your child to find the correct word and X it (or put a marker on it if you want to play the game

more than once).

- When your child has three (or four, depending on the chart you create) Xs or markers in a row, column, diagonal, or four corners, he or she can call out, “Wordo!” If you are playing with markers, you can clear the sheet and begin again.

Word War is similar to the familiar card game. Your child will need a partner (you, another family member) to play the game. Assemble a large deck of word cards, perhaps by saving those you have used in other activities. Deal them out to the two players.

- Each player turns a card over and says the word on it. Then both players count the letters in the word. The player with the longest word wins both cards. Play resumes with each player turning over another card.
- If there is a tie for longest word, those players reveal an additional card, say the word, and count the letters. These “word wars” continue until someone’s word is the longer one, at which point he or she takes all the cards that are turned over. Then play resumes as above. When all the cards have been turned over, the player with the most cards wins.
- Alphabetical order rather than word length can be used to determine the winners.

Memory or Concentration: The object of this game is to find two word cards that match. To play, you will need pairs of cards with the same word on them. You and your child can play together.

- Shuffle the deck of word cards and then deal them upside down. You can make a square—four rows and four columns, for example.
- Take turns trying to make matches. Ask your child to turn over two cards. If they match, your child keeps them and takes another turn. If they don’t match, your child puts them back facedown, and you take a turn. The person with the most cards when all matches have been found wins the game.