

## Environmental Education – Van & Car games by Tammy Mills, Cincinnati ICO

We all know the feeling of having a load of excited kids in a van, and then the problems begin – boredom, poking each other, yelling, etc. So here's a list of some great games and activities that can help with those issues. I've tried all of these out on kids from 5 to 14. They all work. **Happy Exploring!**

### **I SPY**

I spy is a good easy guessing game for all ages. You start by choosing a subject which can be anything that is in full view of all the players. Then you reveal one thing about the subject. You could say, "I spy something red," or "I spy something soft," or "I spy something metal." You don't say anything else about it. The other players then start to guess what your subject is. Instead of answering just yes or no, you answer according to how close they come – in space – to the subject such as "you're warm," "you're hot," "you're cold," etc.

### **TWENTY QUESTIONS**

Twenty questions is the classic guessing game. One person thinks of a person, place, or thing and announces the category to the group. Then the guessers (taking turns) can ask 20 questions to find out what it is. The questions must be ones that can be answered yes or no. The player who guesses what it is becomes the next player to select the subject.

### **GRANDMA IS STRANGE**

In this game, each player takes turns having a strange grandmother. For example, the first player starts out: "My grandma is very strange. She loves tennis, but she hates games." The combination is based on a secret combination that the player has thought up. The next player asks a question, such as: "Does she like carrots?" The first player answers and gives another clue: "Yes but she hates peas." Another player asks: "Does she like dogs?" The first player answers: "No but she loves raccoons." The secret here is that grandma likes anything that has a double letter in it. As players discover grandma's secret they join in giving clues to the other players. Grandma can be strange in other ways: she can hate anything with a certain letter in it, anything that starts with a certain letter, anything with 2 syllables, anything with 4 legs, anything that grows, etc.

### **LICENSE PLATE NUMBERS**

This is a good game to play in heavy traffic, especially when a lot of cars are passing you. The object is to find numbers from 1 to 20 on the license plates you see along the road. The rule is that you can score only one number at a time in sequence. For example, let's say the first license plate you see is NSW5. You can't score any points because the only number you can use at this point in the game is a 1. If a car comes along with the license plate 1M237, you'd be able to score the number 1, and then you'd need to start looking for a license plate with a 2 in it. You can't score the 2 and 3 from the same plate, because only one number can be scored from any one license plate. When you get into double numbers – from 10 to 20 – the two digits must come side by side.

### **THE WOOLLCOTT GAME**

One person keeps time while another keeps score while all the other players concentrate for 60 seconds. During that time the players must say all the words that they can think of that start with a given letter. That's all there is to it. Sounds easy, well try it. The timekeeper calls out a letter and starts the stopwatch. The scorer marks the words off in groups of 5. The order of frequency as a starting letter: SC-P-A-B-T-M-D-R-H-E-F-L-G-I-W-N-O-UV-K-J-Q-Y-Z-X.

### **BUZZ**

"Buzz" is a simple counting game and the players take turns counting from 1 to 100. But the catch is that instead of saying any number that has a 7 in it, or is a multiple of 7, you have to say BUZZ.

So that means that you must say BUZZ instead of 7, 14, 17, 21, 27, 28, 35, 37, etc. At 77 you must say BUZZBUZZ. Anyone who doesn't say BUZZ when one of these numbers comes up is out of the game.

### **CATEGORIES**

Decide in what order player will take their turns. The players set up a six-beat rhythm. It goes like this

Tap your thighs twice

Clap your hands twice

Snap your fingers twice.

All the players do this at the same time, and no one stops or misses a beat. Now when you have the rhythm going well, the first player begins by saying, "category" on one set of finger snaps, and then giving the title of the category on the next set of finger snaps. Categories should be broad – such as trees, animals, flowers, TV shows, colors, etc. All the players keep up the rhythm as the second player names something in the category on the next snap. Then the next player must give another name without repeats until somebody misses. That player is out. The next player restarts the game by choosing another category.

### **MY GRANDMOTHER'S TRUNK**

Poor grandma traveled with the strangest collection of stuff. Once she took a trip and in her trunk she carried fruit, feathers, foreign cars, fake jewelry, fountains, and anything else that began with a F. To play the game, the first player mentions one item the grandma carried in her trunk. The next player repeats this item and adds another item that must start with the same letter. The list must be said in the same order it appeared originally. The first player to make a mistake is out of the game. Note for a harder version of the game, the first item starts with A and each added item progresses through the alphabet in order.

### **FROZEN YOGURT**

Think of a noun and keep it secret while the other players try to guess what it is. They ask questions about anything they want. You answer all the questions any way you like, but in every answer you have to mention the secret noun. How can you mention it and keep it a secret at the same time? Because instead of actually saying the noun, you say, "frozen yogurt." For example, if the secret noun were "ghost", the game might go like this:

Guesser 1: How do you feel today?

You: Not as bad as a frozen yogurt.

Guesser 2: What is your favorite thing to do?

You: Tell frozen yogurt stories.

Guesser 3: Where are you going for the holidays?

You: Out west to visit a frozen yogurt town.

Guesser 4: What is your favorite movie?

You: Frozen Yogurt Busters

The first person to guess what the frozen yogurt stands for chooses the next subject.

### **BURY THE COWS**

This game works best when driving through the country. Divide the vehicle in half with half of the players looking on the right side of the road the other half on the left. Any time you see cows on your side you count them (estimate if it is too many to count). You get to keep adding to your total unless you pass a cemetery on your side of the road. If that happens, you must bury all of your cows and start over.