

## Red Rover, Green Rover

Red Rover is one of those classically fun children's games that never seems to go out of style. But with just a couple of twists, you can bring it up to date to bolster the shape-recognition and reading skills of your preschooler, too. This version works especially well with a group of kids playing at a park or at a kids' party.

### What You Need:

- Large construction paper shapes in a few primary colors
- One safety pin for each player
- Large flat open space

### What to Do:

1. Give each child a different colored shape and pin it on his or her shirt.  
If there are several players, it's OK to have more than one kid with the same shapes or colors.
2. Divide the children into two even teams. Players on one side hold hands and invite another kid or two over, identifying them by their colored shape. They might say, for example, "Red Rover, Red Rover, let the yellow triangles come over!" This is the cue for the children on the other team with yellow triangles to rush over and break into the line. If they succeed, they get to choose a player and bring him back to their home team; if not, the "rovers" must join the opposing team until there are no players left on the other team.
3. Alternate back and forth between the two teams for who is the calling team and who is the roving team. As kids get more comfortable, add in one last feature: try changing the "action words" (verbs) and giving the kids one more piece of learning practice. "Red Rover, Red Rover," the kids might say, "Let the green circles jump on over!"
4. Keep playing until those color words, action words, and shapes seem automatic, or until someone flops down in exhaustion. Kids should take away a sense of good clean fun—and hopefully an ever-more solid grasp of important kind.

