

Kindergartener's Communication Game

Listening and speaking skills are a huge part of the kindergarten curriculum. While some parents have been insisting that their children use proper sentence formation for years, others are just now realizing that their homelife dialect probably won't hold up in a classroom. Is your family a little lax in the grammar department? Don't worry! This game helps to strengthen your child's speaking skills by teaching him to answer questions with complete sentences.

What You Need:

- Your child's favorite bike, trike or scooter
- A circular course of some sort (such as around a play structure, a chalked-up driveway or even just a circle in the backyard)

What You Do:

1. **Get into character!** For this game, you will be the toll collector, a strict and efficient gatekeeper who only lets vehicles pass when the driver pays the correct toll. Situate yourself at the beginning of the course. You can sit in a chair or stand, but as the toll collector, so you must stay put.
2. **Explain the rules.** Invite your child to play with you. But let him know that to get past the toll collector, he *must* pay the toll by answering a question with a complete sentence. Only answers formed in complete sentences will be accepted as correct fare. For example, if the toll collector asks, "What is your favorite color?" the driver must answer, "My favorite color is green!" to be let by. If the child just says "green," entry will be denied.
3. **Have your child navigate the course you've set.** When he gets to the toll collector (you), he must stop for your question. With kindergarteners, the questions you choose should be ones that your child definitely knows the answers to already, such as his personal preferences, best friends, favorite meals or anything else that will be easy for him to answer. Remember that the point of the game is to give him practice using complete sentences, not to stump him with the question itself.
4. **Increase the difficulty.** This is a game that can grow with your child. As your kindergartener begins learning his sounds, you can ask something like, "What sound do "T" and "H" make when you put them together?" With older children, you can try memorization questions, such as, "What is two plus two?" (The answer should still be a complete sentence, "Two plus two equals four.")



The key to this game is tapping into you child's great imagination. The stricter and more difficult you are as the toll collector, the more fun it will be. Use a broom as your toll gate. Make unique sounds as the "gate" opens or if your child fails to "pay" correctly. I've known gates that sing, squeal, ding, creak or even whistle!

Keep a good sense of humor about you and prepare for traffic, as your child's friends and neighbors appear to see what all the noise is about! But more than that, keep those questions coming! Before you know it, your child will be answering with complete sentences, like the perfect scholar he is, even when he doesn't have to! ("Yes, Grandma, I would like some more peas!") Well, you can dream, can't you?