



FIND THE SMILE!



HAVING FUN WITH SENSORY SOCIAL ROUTINES

Goal: Use Sensory Social Routines to increase your child's attention during face-to-face games and songs.

Why it works: Having fun = your child's attention is on you → more learning opportunities, improved memory, and encouragement of communication (smiling, reaching, looking, copying).

What is a Sensory Social Routine (SSR)?

Sensory Social Routines are playful, predictable activities — like *Peek-a-Boo*, *Wheels on the Bus*, *Ring Around the Rosie*, chase games, bubbles, swinging, bouncing games — that combine sensory input (touch, movement, sound) with social turn-taking.

- **Sensory:** Games involving touch, movement, and/or sound.
- **Social:** Focus is on interaction with another person, not just objects.
- **Routine:** Games become familiar, predictable and engaging.



Sensory



Social



Routine

Helpful Tips

1. Find the child's smile 😊

Notice what makes them laugh or smile. **Joy = engagement!**

2. Stay in the Spotlight

Position yourself **face-to-face** at their eye level to support connection and engagement.

3. Use Fun, Interactive Routines

- **Songs** e.g. *If you're happy and you know it*), **tickles** e.g. *Round the Garden*, and **physical games** like *chasing*, *swinging*, *Row Your Boat*, or *bouncing on a gym ball*, make play interactive.
- Exaggerate facial expressions, voices, sounds and movements to capture attention.

Nurturing Possibilities Pty Ltd

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1... 2... 3... Blow!

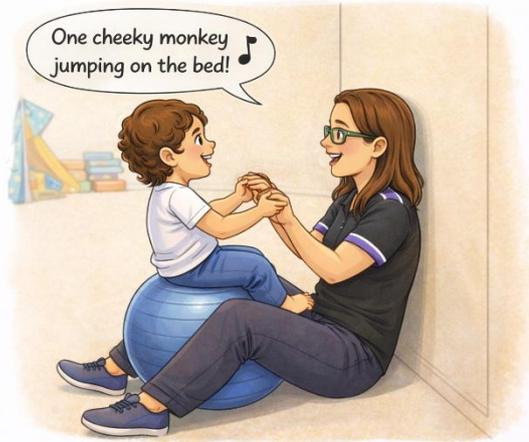


4. Narrate, repeat and pause

- Repeat routines 2-3 times.
 - Pause before the "BIG EVENT" (e.g. the most dramatic part of the song) with an expectant look to see how your child responds.
 - **Follow their cues** - Wait for eye contact, gestures, or sounds.
 - Acknowledge all forms of communication, even subtle ones.
- Example: "More?" when they look or reach toward you.

Examples:

- *Round & Round the Garden*: Start at the child's hand → knees → feet. Pause before the "BIG EVENT" (tickle at the end) to see if your child anticipates or responds.



- *Bubble routine*: Count "1...2...3...BLOW!" or say "Ready...Set...Go!" as you blow bubbles. Pause and watch for eye contact (i.e. "Ready, set..."), reaching, or vocalisations. Repeat 2–3 times, vary height/direction, and celebrate all attempts.

5. Vary the routine

- Add new verses, actions, sounds, props, or people to keep it interesting.

Example: Move *Round the Garden* from hand → knees → feet.



6. Adjust for energy

Alternate routines with object play for balance e.g. tabletop/play mat activity, followed by Sensory Social Routine.

- **Too high energy?** Slow down, soften voice, calm movements.
- **Too low energy?** Increase movement, voice, and expression.



Sensory Social Routines are a fun way to **boost attention, communication, and learning!**

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