

I Clap, You Clap, We Clap

What do you need?

- Just yourself and your child

How do we do it?

This is a lovely turn taking action game where children either copy what you are doing or you copy what they are doing. Don't worry about repeating the same action many times as repetition is important for children. For very young children it works really well to gently move their arms or legs for each action. This helps them to learn movements but also makes the child feel safe and cared for. So for instance when clapping we start off by gently holding the child's hands and "making" them clap. It doesn't matter what the actions are or even whether the children can do them or not. If it is all about fun then children will want to learn more actions. This will have a huge effect on their development.

I Clap

You clap your hands with a big smile on your face whilst saying "*I clap!*"

You Clap

You gently hold your child's hands to make them clap whilst saying "*You clap!*". Older children can clap themselves at this point.

We Clap

Either clap together if the child can clap by themselves or pat the child's hands in a high five type movement and say "*We clap!*" again with a big smile on your face.

Repeat these actions. This may get boring for us but for our children repetition is *really* important. Sometimes we have to put up with a bit of boredom if our children are enjoying themselves (remember not to show your child you are bored – keep smiling!). These early movements are essential for growing young brains and the repetition of simple language will help your child embed speaking. When the child is old enough you can play pat-a-cake with your child. The simple clapping movements in pat-a-cake are amazing for growing brains but also give a wonderful time for child and adult to play together and feel safe.

Other actions (depending on age of child)

- I stretch, you stretch, we stretch.
- I wriggle, you wriggle, we wriggle.
- I shake (a rattle, shaker or hands/feet), you shake, we shake
- I tickle, you tickle, we tickle
- I pull a funny face, you pull a funny face, we pull funny faces.
- I smile, you smile, we smile.
- I kick, you kick, we kick
- I wiggle my toes/fingers, you wiggle your toes/fingers, we wiggle our toes/fingers
- I pat, you pat, we pat.
- I dance, you dance, we dance.
- I sleep, you sleep, we sleep

Sometimes we can feel a little silly playing with our children. Mainly because play *is* silly! However, it is also the most important process for building our child's healthy brain and body. If we can ignore the silliness and sometimes feeling a little embarrassed, simple games like this will mean the world to our children and help them build strong healthy brains and bodies to last their whole lives.

