



Teach Me To Talk!

Helping Parents and Professionals Teach Toddlers To Understand and Use Language

UP DOWN!

(from [*Teach Me To Play WITH You*](#))

Materials: None

Great for a Child Who:

Has no or few other "games" she can play

Will sit on your lap and hold your hands for at least a short time

Likes to be held, but really doesn't "connect" with you when you hold him

Likes movement/bouncing games

Likes to crash into objects or fall down

How to Play:

Sit down on the floor with your legs outstretched in front of you, and seat your child on your knees facing you. Hold your child's hands. Lift your child up on your knees saying,

Up..... Up.... Up.....

(Slowly lift up your knees on each word and build anticipation with your voice.)

Down!

(Quickly lower your legs flat touching the floor.)

Experiment to see how fast or slow your child likes for you to raise and lower your legs. Most children like the slower pace going up and prefer a fast-paced, crash-landing on the floor as a big surprise for "down."

Child's Goals:

Watch for her response to this game. We want her to connect with you and enjoy your time playing. You can see this by a smile, increased eye contact, and hopefully, even a "twinkle" in her eyes.

If he doesn't respond positively, be more fun! Increase your own level of animation. Try a big hug after "down" to get him laughing and smiling.

Vary your speed or the number of times you say, "Up – up" to find what your child likes best. For a child who won't stay in one place for very long, quickly move to "down."

Another goal for this game would be for him to reach for your hands as you hold both palms out and up, as if to invite him to play. Wiggle your fingers toward him as an invitation for him to grab your hands.

After you've played this one for a while, help your child initiate this game with you by putting him on your lap and then asking him if he wants to play by saying, "Up? Up?" but don't hold his hands to begin. Leave your hands in your lap, or even put them behind your back, to see if your child will initiate grabbing your hands to begin.

Toddlers learn through repetition. Children with difficulty paying attention need even more repetition. Play this game over and over throughout the day with several repetitions each time so that he "learns" the game.

As with all our play routines, eventually your child should play this game several times in a row before moving on to another game or toy with you during your 1:1 play time.

Expand the Game:

1. Play with a new person. Have the person watch you several times to learn how to play the game exactly like you do.
2. After your child likes this game, expand how and where you play. You could play this game by picking your child up from the floor, bed, or chair. Lift him high into the air for "up," and then crash him down on his feet or bottom for "down."
3. If your child seems scared when you lift her up, which is called gravitational insecurity, try the next game, "Humpty Dumpty."

Find other games and instructions like this in my therapy manual [Teach Me To Play WITH You](#) from teachmetotalk.com. These ideas are the BEST way I know to teach toddlers to stay with you, play together, and enjoy being with you! Once you get them to that point, then they're ready to learn other things from you... including HOW TO TALK! Start here. Use the coupon code **PODCAST** to save \$10 on your purchase!