

Follow the leader (imitation game)

A big part of language development for young children is actually learned by imitation. Encourage imitation of non-verbal communication such as gestures, facial expressions and actions, with this imitation game activity.

Learning aims

- To develop listening skills – listening to instructions given
- To develop visual skills
- To develop thinking skills
- To strengthen and develop vocabulary
- To support social interaction.



Resources

A group of children (4 or more makes the game more fun).

Activity Outline

This game of follow the leader is a really simple imitation game that can take place anywhere. You can play the game in two main ways;

- By physically performing actions which children can watch and copy
- By giving verbal instructions which children listen to and perform

Here are the basic rules of the game:

1. One person is chosen to be the leader. To introduce the game, explain to the children that you will start by being the leader
2. The leader stands either facing the others or everyone stands in a circle so they can all see the leader
3. Make sure everyone has plenty of space to move around
4. Depending on which way you are playing the game, explain to the children that as leader you will: perform an action which they have to copy, for example, touching your toes / give a verbal instruction which they have to perform, for example saying, “touch your toes”
5. The aim of the game is to copy or perform the action as quickly as possible
6. Once children are confident with the game they can each take turns to be the leader.

Extension activity

- Add a theme to the game for example, animal noises or actions
- Add additional difficulty to the game by adding in amounts, e.g. clap five times, do three jumping jacks, sit down and stand up four times.

Extension activity

- *Ensure children have enough space to carry out any instructions safely so as not to hurt themselves or others*
- *Remember to be inclusive of all children present.*