

## Drive Your Way to Better Speech and Language Skills

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Are you dreading those long car rides this summer with the endless cries of, “Are we there YET?” Use these simple and fun ideas to turn your children’s boredom into wonderful language learning opportunities.

### ► Naming Objects in Categories (And They Won’t Even Know They’re Doing It!)

Up for a little fun? Then give these two games a try! Play a version of the game, “I’m going on a trip, and I’m going to take \_\_\_\_\_.” Set the stage by going first and giving an example such as, “I’m going on a picnic, and I am going to eat a sandwich. What are you going to eat?” Have your children name as many food items as they can. Variations of this game include the beach, park, pool, mountains, toy store, etc.

Another fun game to play in the car is the “category game.” This game works by one person thinking of a category and everybody trying to name things that fit in that category. Take turns and start a new category when someone can’t think of anything to name. Use broad categories like colors, toys, or things in the sky. For more of a challenge, narrow the categories by adding two or more criteria (i.e., green vegetables). Make both these games into memory games by having each person attempt to remember the items and name each item before adding one of his/her own. These games enhance a child’s ability to think of and name items in specific categories.

### ► Develop Pre-reading Skills for the “Little Guys”

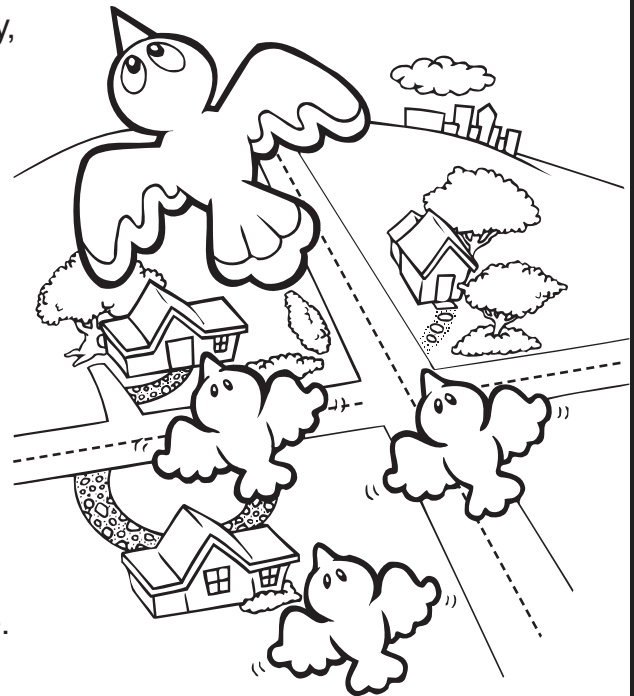
Children who are learning to spell and read enjoy hunting for letters everywhere. Help them find the first letter of their names on road signs or billboards while riding in the car. Develop these pre-reading skills by finding letters to spell their whole name or other common words. This type of activity is wonderful for helping your children learn to



recognize letters. The more practice your children get with these beginning stages, the better off they will be! For those children too young for letter-hunting, look for pictures or numbers on signs. Anything that will keep your children engaged in looking for a specific picture or figure will help with pre-reading skills.

► **Take a Look Around and Tell Me What You See!**

While you are driving in the car, talk about the scenery using describing words. You might say, "There is a tall tree," or "Did you see that white horse?" Situations like these help your child learn about how to take turns while talking. You say something, and then he/she responds. Turn taking during games and normal routines helps teach children how to take turns when talking to others. During a conversation, one person speaks while the other waits to respond. It is not much fun when one person does all or none of the talking. Games like these are great during car rides because they give your child something to do, and they help them polish their language skills at the same time.



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