

Play Doctor! A Reading Game

Is your nose stuffed up? Do you have a broken toe? Playing doctor is not only fun, it's also a way to teach kids about the parts of the body and how they are spelled. From ankles to neck bones, your child can practice reading new words while learning simple anatomy. The best part is she gets to be a doctor (without even going to medical school). With you as her favorite patient, your child can diagnose and learn to read all the different parts of the body, from the hand to the heart.

What You Need:

- Pen
- Sticky notes
- Doctor toys or costume (optional)



What You Do:

1. Grab the sticky notes and write the following parts of the body: forehead, ear, head, nose, mouth, neck, arm, hand, stomach, leg, knee, ankle, foot, toe, and heart. Be sure to write each letter clearly so your child can practice recognizing initial letters or clusters of letters.
2. Put the sticky notes on the edge of a table so that you can easily pick them up.
3. Help your child read through the words on the sticky notes. Make sure and emphasize the initial sound of each word so your child can begin to connect the first letter of the word with the sound it makes.
4. Now head to the doctor! Using your best acting skills (Now's your chance to be a theatrical star!) pretend that you aren't feeling very well. Ask your young doctor if she might be able to diagnose the problem. If she wants, your child can dress up as a doctor and use pretend doctor equipment such as a stethoscope.
5. Without telling your child, choose a body part that is on one of the sticky notes and begin acting like that part of the body hurts. Perhaps you turned your ankle playing soccer or hurt your arm lifting something heavy. Be as dramatic as possible.
6. Have your child guess what body part hurts and then have her find the sticky note that matches the body part. Tell her to put the sticky note on the correct location of your body.
7. Once your child has correctly found the word, pretend that another body part hurts. Repeat the game until all of the sticky notes are gone.

By the end of the game you will be covered in sticky notes. If your child wants to be the patient, play the game again with you as the doctor and her as the patient. Have her help you find the correct sticky note after you guess the body part that hurts. By saving the sticky notes after you're done playing, she can continue to study the letters and words. This will help her build her vocab recognition skills.