

Creative Ideas for Using Educational Products in New Ways

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Have you used your card decks the same way time and time again? Have you played that certain game day after day? Are your students becoming bored with your educational materials? Never fear! Here are some creative ideas for putting excitement into your card games, board games, and fun sheet activities. Let the fun begin!



Card Treasure Hunt - This suggestion works well with children who have speech and/or language delays combined with sensory (tactile or touch) deficits. First, buy some dried pinto beans OR sand, and add to a plastic tub. Take turns hiding therapy cards in the beans/sand and practicing the words or skill. Make sure you allow the child to be the teacher while you “practice” the words, too. Finding the cards with his/her hands gives the child tactile stimulation while working on speech or language goals.

Stick to it Cards - This suggestion also works well with children who have sensory deficits. Tape contact paper (sticky side out) to a door or table. Place laminated picture cards on the sticky surface of the paper. When working on articulation, vocabulary, following directions, “wh” questions, etc., have the child “pull off” the correct answer.

Flashlight Fun - Tape cards under a table, on a table, etc. Turn off the lights and have the child use a flashlight to locate the correct card. This is also a fun way to read books with a child who has a limited attention span.

Hungry Puppets - What’s more fun than “feeding the animals”? Not much...and kids will agree! It’s easy. Use a cloth puppet from your classroom materials OR make a puppet from an old sock or a paper bag. Let the puppet “eat” the articulation or language cards (Make sure you make crunching, growling, and lip smacking sounds for effect!). You may want to use the puppet’s mouth to move game board pieces, roll the die, or spin the spinner. Also, let the child be the “teacher” and you be the student. Have the child correct you if/when you give an incorrect answer. This will work with any area—from fluency to voice, puppets make it fun! (This idea has worked really well with those children who are hesitant to talk during therapy.)

Gift Surprise - This activity works well with holidays or a child’s birthday. Simply gather some old gift bags of different sizes, colors, and shapes. Choose some activities that are appropriate for the child’s skill and “wrap” each like a present. To each bag/box, add a simple surprise.

Allow the child to pick a gift, unwrap it, and play whatever game is inside, then show him/her the “surprise.” The child may have played each game before, but making it look like a gift will add new excitement!

Check out these additional ideas that are perfect for group settings.

Group Card Games

- Distribute the cards among the class. Have each student make a list of all the objects, people, things, etc., he/she sees in the illustration on his/her card. Each student then writes a story using these objects in the story or have the student categorize the objects in a web.
- For card decks that have sentences on the cards, use the sentences as practice for finding subjects, verbs, and other parts of speech. You can even use a dry erase marker on laminated cards to underline the parts of speech and then erase.
- For card decks that come in pairs, give each student one question card and one answer card. Make sure to give the student a question/answer card set that does not make a match. Take turns having individuals in the class read their question card. Each student must check his/her one answer card to see if he/she is the one with the correct answer.

Group Activity Sheets

- Copy and laminate activity pages for centers. You can even put an answer key on the back for self-checking.
- Give a copy of a worksheet from a book to two students. Have the students take turns answering every other question. For the questions that the student does not answer, he/she must check his/her partner’s answers. The “checking” student can put his/her initials next to the answers he/she agrees are correct.

Group Games

- Use pieces from games to create your own games. Many products have generic game boards that can be used for any teacher-created game. Use the tokens, dice, and other game pieces in your own teacher game. This will make learning any skill fun!

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Date

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