

Chance

Your child will be dealing with chance (probability) over the coming days. S/he has already been introduced to chance in Third Class. Probability or chance is a measure of the likelihood of a particular event actually taking place. Your child will need to know the mathematical language associated with chance: impossible, unlikely, likely, even chance, certainly, never, possible, always, definitely.

Game 1: Memory – go fish in the pond

This game is best played with two players. Pick out five pairs from a deck of cards, e.g. two 5s, two aces, two 9s, two 10s and two queens. Shuffle the 10 cards and place them face down in neat rows on a table (5 x 2 or 2 x 5). Explain to your child that the aim of the game is to make a match (matching pair) by turning over any two cards at a time. If a match is made, the player gets to keep the cards. If a match is not made, the cards are turned back over for the next player's turn. Throughout the game, ask your child questions about the chance of him/her making a match, e.g. Is it certain that you will make a match? Is it possible/impossible that you will make a match? Is getting a match on your first go likely or unlikely? Encourage your child to use the language of chance throughout the game.

Game 2: Higher or lower

To play this game, each pair needs a deck of cards and a pencil and paper to keep track of the score. One person is the dealer and the other is the player. The dealer holds all the cards and turns them over one at a time. The player must predict whether the next card will be higher/lower than the previous card. If s/he guesses correctly, a tick is recorded beside his/her name on the piece of paper. If the player predicts incorrectly, the dealer gets a point. The player with the most points at the end of the game wins. Encourage your child to use the language of chance while playing the game, e.g. It's likely to be higher. I'm certain that it will be lower. There is an even chance that it will be higher/lower.

Game 3: Mystery card

This game is similar to the Higher or Lower game above. The card in the middle (face down) is the mystery card. The player must predict whether the mystery card will lie somewhere between the values of the two overturned cards or lie outside this range of values. If the prediction is correct, s/he gets a point.

If the prediction is incorrect, the dealer wins the point.



Game 4: Beads in a bag

For this game, you will need some beads, counters, cubes, toy bricks, etc. and a bag or box that your child cannot see inside. Encourage your child to use the language of chance as outlined on the left during this game. Place five coloured beads into the bag, e.g. three blue, one red and one yellow. Explain that you are going to pick one bead out of the bag at random. Discuss the possible outcomes, asking questions such as:

- Am I certain to pick out a blue bead? (No.)
- Is it possible that I will pick out a red bead? (Yes.)
- Is it likely or unlikely that I will pick a red bead? (It is possible, but it is more unlikely than likely.)
- Is it possible that I might pick out a green bead? Why? (No, it is impossible because there are no green beads in the bag.)

Extension: Play the game using different combinations of beads, e.g. 4 red, 3 green and 2 blue; 3 red, 4 green and 5 blue, etc.

Snakes and Ladders

Play the traditional board game with your child. As you play, discuss the role played by chance in the game – players have an equal chance of winning but each roll of the die has different outcomes – you might land on a snake or a ladder – it's all about luck!