

TOP FIVE PARTY PURSUITS REVEAL KIDS ARE GETTING BACK TO BASICS

Submitted by: Playtime PR

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Forget professional entertainers and over-the-top goody bags, today's under-5s are shunning expensive gimmicks in favour of traditional party fun such as musical chairs and pass the parcel.

I CAN (<http://www.ican.org.uk>), the children's communication charity, today unveils the top five children's party activities from a survey of 1500 UK parents of under-5s. It's a list full of fun pursuits that build communication and social skills and encourage interaction with other kids:

1. Dancing games like Musical Chairs, Musical Statues and Musical Bumps
2. Party games like Pass the Parcel and Pin the Tail on the Donkey
3. Playing outdoors with other children
4. Eating party food
5. Singing and rhyming games like the Hokey Cokey and Row, Row, Row Your Boat

Yet more than a quarter of parents (27%) may not realise that there is a serious side to the fun at children's parties and these can help enhance their child's social skills. The research shows that, although children are invited to an average of five parties per year (which is one more than their parents), 17% of mums and dads feel parties have no impact on speaking and listening skills.

I CAN (<http://www.ican.org.uk>) Communication Advisor, Kate Freeman said "Children's parties have become more sophisticated in recent years, with many parents spending lots of money on entertainment for children. Yet today's research shows that, when it comes down to it, children still prefer the traditional games and party fun. The top five activities all involve communicating and socialising with their friends – from pass the parcel, which boosts turn-taking and listening skills to singing and rhyming games like the Hokey Cokey. This type of activity enhances children's understanding of the structure and meaning of language – and there is no better environment for a child to develop their confidence than with a group of friends and adults in a relaxed and fun setting like a party".

I CAN (<http://www.ican.org.uk>) is inviting hundreds of thousands of children to take part in the annual fun and educational event for nurseries, pre-schools, childminding and community groups. Now in its 12th year, the 2013 Chatterbox Challenge (<http://www.chatterboxchallenge.org.uk>): Mad Chatter's Tea Party with Humf asks groups to organise sponsored tea parties where children can join in with popular songs and rhymes to develop their communication skills in a simple and enjoyable way. Thanks to the kind support of Openreach, funds raised through sponsorship will enable I CAN to help even more children who struggle to communicate.

Liv Garfield, Chief Executive, Openreach, said, "Communication is at the heart of the Openreach business and we know how important it is for children to develop good communication skills to succeed in life. This is our sixth year sponsoring I CAN's Chatterbox Challenge (<http://www.chatterboxchallenge.org.uk>) as part of our 'First Mile' programme. The Chatterbox Challenge (<http://www.chatterboxchallenge.org.uk>) is a great way for young children to develop their own speaking and understanding skills whilst helping children who struggle with communication. By sponsoring the Chatterbox Challenge (<http://www.chatterboxchallenge.org.uk>), we hope all children will get the best

start in life.”

This year I CAN is partnering with Entertainment One to make its pre-school character Humf the brand ambassador for the 2013 Chatterbox Challenge (<http://www.chatterboxchallenge.org.uk>) Mad Chatter's Tea Party with Humf. Rebecca Harvey, Head of Marketing from Entertainment One said, “It’s a pleasure to be involved in I CAN’s annual Chatterbox Challenge (<http://www.chatterboxchallenge.org.uk>)! We hope the children involved will enjoy their tea party with Humf and we are thrilled to be linking with I CAN on the important issue of children’s communication.”

Each Chatterbox Challenge (<http://www.chatterboxchallenge.org.uk>): Mad Chatter’s Tea Party with Humf will raise valuable funds and awareness for I CAN’s work with some of the one million children in the UK who struggle with speech, language and communication, as friends and family will be encouraged to sponsor children for taking part and joining in. Groups can register now for their free fundraising pack at the Chatterbox Challenge (<http://www.chatterboxchallenge.org.uk>) website (www.chatterboxchallenge.org.uk).

The singing and rhyming activities for the 2013 Chatterbox Challenge (<http://www.chatterboxchallenge.org.uk>): Mad Chatter’s Tea Party with Humf have been developed by I CAN speech and language therapists and teachers. Lesson plans, which include Humf and his friends in the activities and illustrations, link to key aspects of the new Early Years Foundation Stage including Communication and Language, Physical Development, and Personal, Social and Emotional Development. All the activities are aimed at supporting and developing children’s speech and language skills.

Speech, language and communication are crucial for reading, learning in school, for socialising and making friends, and for understanding and expressing emotions or feelings. 1.2 million children in the UK have long-term difficulties with their speech, language and communication and will need extra support. The Chatterbox Challenge (<http://www.chatterboxchallenge.org.uk>): Mad Chatter’s Tea Party with Humf encourages children to think about communication, whilst helping support those who find talking and understanding difficult.

Chatterbox Challenge (<http://www.chatterboxchallenge.org.uk>) week is 1st – 8th March 2013 and most groups will be holding their Tea Party with Humf during this week, though groups can actually take part at any time during 2013.

To register and get involved in this year’s Chatterbox Challenge (<http://www.chatterboxchallenge.org.uk>): Mad Chatter’s Tea Party with Humf, go to <http://www.chatterboxchallenge.org.uk>

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About the OnePoll Survey:

- 1500 parents of children aged 0-5 years were surveyed online between Thursday 25th October and Wednesday 31st October 2012.
- OnePoll are a well respected organisation who undertake a wide range of market research projects on

behalf of companies from various sectors within the UK and around the world www.onepoll.com.

Press contact:

For more information, pictures and interviews, please contact Emma Selim (I CAN Senior Press and PR Officer) on eselim@ican.org.uk or 0207 843 2543

About I CAN:

- I CAN is the children's communication charity. <http://www.ican.org.uk> or <http://www.talkingpoint.org.uk>
- We are here to ensure that no child is left out or left behind because of a difficulty speaking or understanding.
- Nobody wants a child's potential to be wasted. It happens because communication difficulties are not visible, often mistaken for something else, or not noticed at all.
- I CAN's mission is to make sure that everyone in contact with children knows how important communication is, what a communication difficulty looks like and what they can do to help.
- We do this through:
 - Increasing public awareness of the problems children face.
 - Giving expert advice to parents and families about what to look out for and what to do.
 - Providing assessments for children so that their families know what support will meet their needs.
 - Giving teachers and people working with children the skills to help children who struggle.
 - Campaigning to ensure children and families get a better deal.
 - Producing resources, DVDs, posters and other information to help parents and practitioners support children with their communication development.

At the very heart of I CAN are our special schools which give expert care and education to children with problems so severe their needs cannot be met elsewhere.

About Openreach:

- Thanks to the support of Openreach, more of the money you raise through the Chatterbox Challenge goes towards helping I CAN support children across the UK that are struggling to communicate.
- Openreach maintains and improves the network that connects tens of millions of homes and businesses to telephone exchanges across the UK. We do so on behalf of our Communications Provider customers, who sell communications-based services to consumers and businesses
- We're also the lead deployment arm of BT's £2.5 billion investment to make Super-fast Fibre Access available to our customers across the UK. Which in turn means that up to two-thirds of UK premises should be able to enjoy super-fast broadband services by the end of Spring 2014.
- With communication at the heart of its business, Openreach is passionate about I CAN's work, and recognises how critical good communication skills are to every young child as they embark on life's journey.
- Learn more about Openreach at www.openreach.co.uk/csr

About Entertainment One:

Entertainment One Ltd. (LSE:ETO) is a leading international entertainment company that specializes in the

acquisition, production and distribution of film and television content. The company's comprehensive network extends around the globe including Canada, the U.S., the UK, Ireland, Benelux, France, Germany, Scandinavia, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. Through established Entertainment and Distribution divisions, the company provides extensive expertise in film distribution, television and music production, family programming and merchandising and licensing. Its current rights library is exploited across all media formats and includes more than 24,000 film and television titles, 2,700 hours of television programming and 45,000 music tracks.