**Book-based Reading Games**

Playing book-based reading games provides children with a wide variety of ways into reading. These games are one way of creating greater equality of access to reading for all children. The playing of book-based reading games also gives children the opportunity both to re- enact and actually to re-read some of the text. It helps children’s early moves into reading by providing a context for practice which is pleasurable and meaningful.

Because of the relationship between the book and the game, children often begin to discuss the story as soon as they start to play. In playing the game the children are putting themselves ‘in’ the book and entering the world created by the author. Through such experiences they come to ‘own’ the text more fully, both through knowledge of the plot and knowledge of the story language. This notion of ownership is closely linked to the growth of confidence. Children become more motivated to read the book for themselves. Through repeated readings, their knowledge of the text is continually enhanced, and they have more opportunities to look closely at the print.

Here we recommend two types of game, one or the other of which can be used for most stories.

Choose your game to suit the narrative shape of a story.

- A track game which suits stories in which the characters take a journey (for example, ‘Beegu’, ‘The snail and the whale’, ‘Where the Wild Things Are’)

As with stories involving journeys, stories involving problem-solving also lend themselves to being made into track games – the problem being solved as players progress along the track. The end of the game becomes the resolution of the problem, and this nearly always coincides with the end of the story.

- Word Bingo games: suits stories which use repetitive phrases of 6 to 8 words. Choose sentences which are memorable, (for example, ‘No Dinner’, ’Mister .Magnolia’, ‘Aarrgghh, Spider’)

These games are usually made for four players, with one other person – adult or child – to hold the spare cards. At the beginning of the game, it is important to make sure that each child knows what the board in front of them says. Reading through all the boards with the children is a good way to start the game.

The person holding the pile of cards lifts one of them from the pile and shows it to all the players. If a child can see the word on their base-board then they can have the card. It is usually appropriate to give the card to the first child to ‘put their finger on the word.’