



## Child Development: Jokes and Riddles

Question: What kind of beans won't grow in a garden?

Answer: Jellybeans!

Question: A faucet, lettuce and a tomato were in a race...what happened?

Answer: The faucet was running, the lettuce was ahead, and the tomato was trying to ketchup!

**Riddles and jokes are great ways to develop skills.** Riddles and jokes can

- Boost language development
- Enhance general intellectual development.
- Nurture social development

**How do jokes and riddles accomplish this?** With the discovery that a word can have two or more meanings, children begin to play with words. This increases a child's vocabulary and comprehension. Once children discover jokes and humor, they often want to read joke and riddle books. This is a natural way to nurture a child's relationship with books and reading. Another benefit is that humor is an important social skill. By encouraging a child's developing sense of humor, you are helping them develop social competence. People who have a good sense of humor tend to do better socially.

**There are many ways to incorporate jokes and riddles into your family.** One way is to use it as a ritual as you get ready in the morning. Perhaps you tell a riddle or pun as your children sit down to breakfast, and then give the answer as you are heading out the door. Perhaps you could use Joke Time as a bedtime ritual.

**Joke telling is a prime example of developmental levels at work:** young children are not able to understand jokes. Their brains just aren't ready for this kind of thinking. But they still like to be part of the activity, and will laugh with the family to get into the spirit of the activity. When a child starts understanding jokes, you can tell that they have moved into a new area of cognitive development.

If you don't know any jokes, riddles or puns, the library often has a lot of children's joke books.

For more tips, or if you need more information or would like to talk to someone:

**In Washington State:** Call the Family Help Line at 1-800-932-HOPE

**Outside of Washington State:** contact your local Circle of Parents agency at

[www.circleofparents.org](http://www.circleofparents.org)