

Tell Me - Tell Me - Tom

A Developmental Game to Promote

T.O.M. or Theory of Mind



Introduction: *Games are a great way for children to acquire and build developmental capacities to support healthy thinking and learning. One critical awareness for children is the notion that “You do not know what I am thinking, and I do not know what you are thinking.” This developmental task is called Theory of Mind or T.O.M. Without Theory of Mind, children can be confused and frustrated about simple social situations. Young children can play the game for 20 minutes; children 8 and older can play for 60 minutes.*

Directions: **Tell Me, Tell Me, Tom** is a thinking and imagination game played with at least two players. First set a timer for 60 minutes [or 20 minutes for young children under 8]. Choose who will play **Tom** first; one player will give **Tom** a suggestion ... like “**something you lost**” or “**a time you played with a friend.**” Then **Tom** will think of a thing, time, person, place, or idea that matches the suggestion.

After **Tom** thinks something that matches the suggestion, the other player(s) begin to ask **Tom** questions to try to guess what **Tom** is thinking. They ask by saying “**Tell me, tell me, Tom**, are you thinking about ...” Good questions will uncover clues about what **Tom** is thinking, like “Is it a person, place or think?” and “Is it something that happened to you or to someone else?” or even “Is it bigger than a car?”

When the players are ready to learn what **Tom** is thinking, they say “**Tell me, tell me, Tom**, what are you thinking?” Then **Tom** tells the others what he is thinking.

Next round, another player takes a turn being **Tom**, and the game continues until you run out of time. After finishing the game, adults can engage children in a lively discussion about how we never know what another person is thinking!!!

