

25 Fun Cluster Card Activities

Here are 25 fun activities that provide multiple opportunities for meaningful practice with the SLPath cluster cards. Children can enjoy these activities as part of treatment or home practice.

1) A safari hunt

The SLP or SLPA hangs the cluster cards high and out of reach of the child. The child has a paper towel roll or another long tube to use as a pretend magnifying device. He or she may say, "I see a *flamingo* in the wild" or "It's a rabbit with *floppy* ears."

2) Hopscotch

The child places a cluster card next to each section of an indoor or outdoor hopscotch course. While hopping and stopping at each section, he or she grabs the cluster card and says the word or a phrase like, "got the *sprout*." Alternatively, the child says the word or phrase on the card the number of times indicated on the hopscotch course. For example, when the child is on number eight, he or she says the word or phrase eight times.

3) Bowling

The child sets up bowling pins and places his or her cluster cards upright against the pins. After rolling the ball into the pins and cards, he or she says the names of the cards that fell down, such as "I knocked over *scribble*."

4) Bucket toss

The child holds his or her cluster cards while standing near a large bucket. He or she tosses the cards into the bucket and says things like, "Score one for *scream!*" or "*Scrubbing* went in!"

5) What's missing?

The SLP or SLPA displays three or more cluster cards (with the child's target clusters) face up. The child says each one aloud. Then the child covers his or her eyes while a card is taken away. The child guesses which card is missing. For example, the child may say, "*Splendid* is missing" or "I think you hid *shrub*."

6) Put cards inside bag

The child names his or her cluster cards and places them all inside of a bag or Ned's Head. Then he or she pulls out a card and shows it to others in the room, but does not look at the card. The child guesses until he or she says the right card. He or she may say, "I think its *flag*" or "Is it *springtime?*"

7) Head bands

The SLP or SLPA gathers all of the child's cluster cards and does not show the child. The child wears a head band that affixes to a cluster card. He or she cannot see the card, but others in the room can see the card. The child guesses until he or she names the correct card. For example, he or she may say, "Is it *squish?*" or "Is it *shrug?*" The SLP or SLPA

and/or other children in the group reply, “Yes, it is *squish!*” or “No, it’s not *shrug*. Guess again!”

8) Guessing targets

For this activity, one student displays all of his or her cluster cards face up for a partner to see. The partner mentally notes one card without revealing its contents. The child guesses until he or she identifies the card in question. For instance, a child may practice the cluster /fl-/ with the cards, *flea*, *flamingo*, *float*, and *flat*. The guessing child may say, “Are you thinking of *flamingo*?” to which the other child may reply, “No, I’m not thinking of *flamingo*.” This process is continued until the proper card is selected. During a short amount of time, both students practice the sound in several meaningful trials. Regardless of whether both students share the same target, they will each have multiple opportunities to practice and/or model the sounds.

9) Delivery driver

The child selects cards to “deliver” to stores. He or she places the cards in the back of toy trucks or pretends to drive a pretend car while sitting on a chair. When arriving at the store, he or she says “I’ve got a delivery of *squawking* birds for you.”

10) Paper clip/magnet fishing

Prior to the activity, the child affixes a paper clip to each relevant cluster card (saying each word while doing so). During the activity, he or she “catches” the cards with magnetic fishing rods from fishing games. The child can say, “I caught *spread!*” or “It’s *squeeze!*”

11) Stomping on cards

The child says his or her cards while placing them face up on the floor. While wearing “monster clompers” (<http://www.alextoys.com/product/772>), he or she stomps on the cards and says, “I stepped on *scrape*” or “Hop on *scrawny*.”

12) Mailbox

The SLP or SLPA finds a play mailbox or the child makes a mailbox out of a shoebox or paper bag. The child puts his or her cluster cards in a pile. While putting the card in the mail slot, he or she says, “I’m mailing *freckles* to my grandma” or “The *flute* is going to Florida.”

13) Slide cards across table to catch

Two children (or a child and an adult) sit across from each other at a table. One person has all of the cluster cards. Then he or she slides the cards quickly across the table and says, “Here comes *slice*” or “Try to catch *flowing*.” The other person says, “I caught *spruce*” or “Oh no! *Three* is on the floor!” After the first person catches all of the cluster cards, the two players switch roles.

14) Hide and seek with cards

Children love to play hide and seek or to partake in scavenger hunts. One quick way to generate fun, meaningful practice is to play hide and seek with the cluster cards. For the last five minutes of the session, one child is selected and his or her cluster cards are hidden by the other students while he or she does not look. As he or she looks, the other children know the location of the cards

and say “You’re getting close to *thread*” or “You’re far away from *street*.” When the child locates the card, he or she says “I found *thread*” or “*Street* was under the desk!”

15) Shopping for items with target sounds

Children enjoy playing with a toy cash register or money for this activity. One child acts as the “store owner” while the others shop at the store. The store owner owns the cluster cards (with target words) of the other children. He or she sets the price for each card, about which the other children inquire. The child looking to purchase one of his or her cards may say, “How much does *floppy* cost?” To that, the cashier may reply, “*Floppy* costs two dollars.”

Given this basic scenario, children adopt these roles and practice their sounds frequently during a short time span. Both children producing the target words works one of two ways. It may be the case that both children are working on the same sounds, in which case they are afforded more opportunities to practice the targets. Alternatively, the child playing cashier may be working on different sounds. In this instance, he or she provides a good model of the target sounds for the child learning the sounds represented on the cards.

16) Jump and tap

The SLP or SLPA holds two cluster cards high above the child’s head. The child jumps up and taps each card while saying the name of the card.

17) Hang cards on whiteboard with magnets

The child hangs his or her cluster cards on the whiteboard with magnets. Then he or she draws similar pictures as shown on the cards and says, “I’m drawing *squad*.”

18) Matching words to pictures/words on cards

The SLP or SLPA (or the child) writes the child’s words on individual index cards. The child matches each word to its corresponding picture and word on each card and says “This one says *scrape*” or “*Squish* goes with this picture.”

19) Description game

The child places all of his or her cluster cards face up on the table. The SLP or SLPA describes a card to the child without saying the word on the card. The child guesses the card being described. For example, the SLP or SLPA says, “This is something you do before dancing to get your muscles ready” and the child guesses, “*Stretch!*”

20) Tunnel driving

The child leans his or her cluster cards like tents on the floor (so that two cards are touching at the top). He or she drives toy cars or trains through these tunnels and says things like “I’m driving under the *sledding* card” or “I’m driving through the *freezing* tunnel.”

21) Silly sentences

The child places his or her cluster cards face up on the table. He or she creates as many silly sentences as possible that involve at least two words. For instance, a child says, “I *throw three threads* through the tunnel.”

22) Sorting clusters

The SLP or SLPA places several cluster cards face up on the table, including some cards that do not feature the child's target clusters. For example, the child sees many cards on the table, such as 10 /fl-/ cluster cards (his or her target) as well as 5 /spl-/ and 6 /str-/ cards (not his or her targets). The child then sorts the cards by clusters and puts the /fl-/ cards together in one area and the /spl-/ and /str-/ cards in other areas. After the sorting is complete, he or she says, "I put *floating* in the /fl-/ pile" or "*Stray* goes with the /str-/ pile."

23) Silly phrases

The child places his or her cluster cards face up on the table. The SLP or SLPA provides cards with different color names written on them. The child creates as many silly phrases as possible that involve a color word and cluster target. For instance, a child says, "Purple *fruit*" or "Red *freeway*."

24) Animal voices

The child lines up a few stuffed animals or animal figurines. He or she teaches the animals how to say the cluster cards, such as "Say *scrubbing*" or "It's your turn to say *scrapbook*." Then the child talks for the animal and uses a different voice for each animal when responding.

25) Telling stories

Whenever possible, treatment should offer a range of simple to complex opportunities for practice. Telling stories is a challenging task so children may require more modeling of this skill than others. Ideally, the SLP or SLPA models a story involving 3-4 of a child's cluster cards, such as *flamingo*, *floppy*, *flying* and *flock*. A story may go like this, "Once upon a time, there were a *flamingo* and *floppy*-eared bunny who were friends. The *flamingo* and *floppy*-eared bunny decided to have an adventure. Along the way, they came upon some *flying* birds. The *flamingo* said "Hi" to the *flying* birds and the birds waved hello with their wings. Later, the *flamingo* and *floppy*-eared bunny met a *flock* of sheep and they all became friends. So it was a great day for the *flamingo*, *floppy*-eared bunny, *flying* birds and the *flock* of sheep. The end." After that, the child tells the same story or makes up a new story in the same way. The SLP or SLPA may also keep track of the number of cluster targets the child says during his or her story. After that, the child says, "I think I said 12 /fl-/ words."