

Games

Playing Games

- ❖ Is fun!
- ❖ Helps children build relationships, gain confidence and self esteem
- ❖ Supports children to work cooperatively with others
- ❖ Helps keep children fit and healthy
- ❖ Develops physical skills; fine & gross motor skills, strength, balance, agility, flexibility, coordination
- ❖ Increases heart and lung function, builds stronger muscles and improves bone density
- ❖ Provides physical activity which is important for reducing chronic diseases

To make sure that everyone enjoys the games

- ❖ Choose the right games for the people you are playing with
- ❖ Avoid games where players have to sit and wait for everyone else to be 'out'
- ❖ Avoid games with too many rules; keep it simple for younger children
- ❖ Five and six year olds may not be able to cope with games that last too long
- ❖ Have a mixture of games with a varied pace
- ❖ Start with an easy warm up game that needs little explanation
- ❖ End with a slower game to calm and cool down
- ❖ Have a couple of games 'up your sleeve' in case some of the games aren't popular

You're Role

A good approach to games includes

- ❖ Keeping them fun rather than competitive
- ❖ Encourage children to choose and adapt games
- ❖ Making sure everyone knows what to do – have a run through first
- ❖ Include yourself, positive involvement from adults is key and sends positive messages to children
- ❖ Using your voice effectively – you don't need to shout!
- ❖ Listening to the children, include everyone, be responsive, flexible and imaginative
- ❖ Being willing to try new games and ideas
- ❖ Have any necessary equipment ready
- ❖ Know the game well and enjoy playing it
- ❖ Praising and encouraging everyone to play fair and look out for one another
- ❖ Evaluating...thinking about what worked and what didn't go so well?

Deciding who goes first or who's "it"?

- **Toss a coin** (heads or tails)
- **Numbers** (players number themselves off, leader turns back and calls a number out)
- **Pulling straws** (person who pulls the short straw goes first)
- **Foot-in** (Ip-dip, Eeny, meeny, miny, moe)
- **Fists-in** (Bubble Gum, One potato, Two potato etc.)
- **Rock paper scissors**
- **Next Birthday** (find out whose birthday is next - they get to go first)

Deciding teams?

Fish, chips and peas

Whilst standing in a circle go around the group naming the first person 'fish', the second 'chips' and the third 'peas' and so on. Now ask all the fishes to get together, the chips to get together and so on. Or ask the children for suggestions i.e. superheroes, fruit, food, animals, countries, colours etc.

Tag Games

The game of Tag is a classic childhood game enjoyed by children all over the world and there are many variations. Tag is a fun way to warm up and work on improving speed and agility. Starting, stopping, and changing direction are important skills for many different sports and Tag is a great way to develop these skills.

Some Tag games require very little if any equipment. You just need a large enough space to accommodate the size of the group and some bibs or sashes to identify the catchers.

The number of catchers will affect the time taken to play these games, so you may need to increase or decrease them to make the game more or less challenging. It's a good idea to mark out the playing area with cones or chalk. Adjust the size according to the number of players you have or to make the game more or less challenging.

Tag Games (no equipment)

Toilet Tag

When tagged the child becomes a toilet - they have to hold their arm out. To be released, someone has to flush their chain (push arm down).

Stuck in the mud

When tagged stand with legs apart, to be released someone has to crawl through their legs.

Banana Tag

When tagged stand with both arms up above the head, with palms together. Players can be released, by someone else 'peeling' them (by pulling their arms down and apart).

Shadow Tag

Catchers have to step on the other players shadows, if caught they also become a catcher.

Arch Tag

Everyone in pairs except those who are "it". When tug, the pair must form an arch. Pairs can be freed by another pair running through their arch.

Hug Tag

When tug, the person must stand still with arms open and can be freed by a hug from another player.

Chain/Blob Tag

When tagged join hands to form a tagging pair who chase other players whilst holding hands moving as a chain/blob. When another player is tagged they join the chain/blob that moves together in the same direction to achieve their goal. Chains/blobs can be made of 3-4 players before new chains/blobs are formed.

Disco Tag

When a player is tagged they stand on the spot and dance in any way they like. To be released someone has to stand in front of them and mimic their dance

Triangle Tag

In groups of four, three players form a triangle then pick one of the three to be chased by the fourth player outside the triangle. The other players in the triangle try to protect the chosen player by turning the triangle. When caught the player replaces the catcher. The chaser is not allowed to put his/her hand through the triangle.

Sponge Bob Tag

When a player is tagged they become wobbly; they can be released when someone stands in front of them and mimics their actions.

Pokémon Tag

When players are tagged they crouch down and form a ball. To be released someone has to tap their shoulder at which point they jump up and rejoin the game.

Wall to wall Tag

Usually played between two walls, players stand at one wall, catcher/s in the middle. On go - players have to run to the other side and touch the wall, without being caught. If they get caught they join the catchers in the middle until everyone is caught.

Line Tag

Play on a netball court or similar marked area in the playground. Players can only run along the lines of court. If caught they become the catcher.

Spider Tag

The game is played on all fours, chest upwards and bottom off the ground when moving. If tug, the spider must sit still until the game is over.

Flight Deck

Players make two lines facing one another (A & B) with a reasonable running distance between them. One player from team A is chosen to travel across to team B and tag one of the players. Who then chases them back to team A. If the player from team B catches them they join team B. If the player from team A makes it back they choose a player from team B to start the game again.

Poison Tag

Play in smaller groups, one person is "it" and stands in the centre holding out their fist (the poison bottle). Everyone else stands around them touching their fist chanting "what's in the bottle when the bottle goes pop"! If they say POISON the others run away, if 'it' says another word e.g. 'peas' they should remain still. The person who is caught becomes 'it'.

Tag Games (with equipment)

Peg Tag

Each player starts with 2-3 clothes pegs attached to clothing (avoid personal areas!) Set a time limit of 1-2 min. On GO! Players steal others pegs and attach them to their own clothing. The person with the most pegs at the end is declared the winner. Redistribute the pegs and repeat but this time the winner is the person with the least amount of pegs. In other words they have to put their pegs onto someone else.

Donkey Tail Tag/Cat & Mouse

You will need some team bands or pieces of fabric will also work. Children tuck a band or similar into the back of their trousers or pocket etc. Make sure the 'tails' can be seen. Set a time limit of 1-2min. The children run around the space whilst catchers try to collect as many tails as possible. If a child loses their tail, they can collect a new one from the leader. When time is up, stop the game and count up the number of tails collected. Variation - players (mice) run from one end to the other whilst catchers (cats) in the middle try to steal their tails. If a mice loses their tail they join the cats in the middle.

Sharks and Dolphins

With chalk, mark two parallel lines in the middle of the space about 3m apart or use existing playground lines. Make a safe zone at either end of the play area (an equal distance from each line).

Divide players into two groups 'sharks' and 'dolphins'. Ask groups to stand along the lines, sharks one side dolphins on the other facing a partner from the other side. When the leader shouts either sharks or dolphins they become dinner for the other and are chased towards their safe zone. The aim is for the chaser to tag their partner before they reach the safe zone. When caught, or reach the safe zone players swim back to the start line. The leader can shout 'change in tide' which changes the chaser and all players change direction.

General Games

Beans

Children jog around the area and follow the action when called out by the leader

Jumping beans Two footed/bunny jump on the spot

Runner bean Run on the spot

Chilli beans Shiver and shake on the spot

Broad beans Freeze in a wide shape

Frozen bean Stand still

Baked beans Back to back

Islands

Scatter several hula hoops around the play area - these are the islands. Ask the group to pretend to swim around the space until the word 'island' is shouted at which point they have to get into a hula hoop. Remove one hoop each time – but the aim is not to have people out, it's an exercise in co-operation so no one's feet get wet.

Sharks

A variation of the game islands, one person is a shark. Ask everyone to move around the space pretending to swim in the sea. When the leader calls 'shark attack' everyone must run to an island (hoop) avoiding being caught by the shark. If the shark catches a swimmer, they also become a shark. Reduce the number of islands each time. Players are asked to swim again and so on, the game ends when everyone is caught.

Optional * Add the following swimming actions—calm water (slow) rough water (fast) large wave (dive).

Cups and Downs

Place 20 or more markers in the middle of the space put half of them upside down and the other half the right way up. Divide the group into 2 teams and give each team a name (i.e. ups or downs) - the 'up' team needs to turn as many cups up the right way as possible, and the 'down' team needs to flip them upside down. When the allocated time limit is over, count all the cups and whichever team has the most turned up their way wins.

Jungle's on Fire

Players stand in a line at one end of the space and are given the name of a jungle animal, i.e. lion, elephant, monkey, tiger etc. The hunters are in the centre waiting to catch the animals. The hunters call out the name of an animal, and the animals must run past the hunters to reach the safe space at the other side. If caught, they also become hunters. If the hunters call 'jungles on fire'! All animals must run to the opposite side.

Fishing/Arches

Two players join hands and lift their arms to form an 'arch' or 'net'. The other children are the fish and they run around in a circle passing under the arch or net. The adult turns their back and shouts STOP! The two children gently lower their arms and catch a child. When two children have been caught they form another arch or net, and so on until only one fish remains.

Jump the River

Lay out two ropes a short distance apart (this is the river). Children jump over the 'river' without stepping in the water. Increase the distance each time and keep everyone moving!

Clear the Court

Played in two teams facing one another, arrange lots of different objects on the centre line (bean bags, quoits, balls etc.) The aim is to get rid of the objects to the other side of the line, in a set time. The team with the least objects in their court is the winner.

Magpie

Divide the group into four teams; one team should stand in each corner of the space with a hula hoop. Place one hoop in the centre of the space and fill it with small objects i.e. bean bags etc. On go, one person from each team runs to the centre and collects an object and returns it to their hoop. Repeat for each team member and once the objects have been collected, they may take them from the other team's hoops. Set a time limit and count the objects – the winning team has the most!

Mouse Trap

Half the group hold hands and form a circle. The other players run in and out of circle under the arms of the circle players. When the caller shouts 'mouse trap' the players in the circle quickly bring their arms down. Any players trapped inside join the circle and so on until one player is left and declared the winner.

Chicken or Hero

Players stand at one end with two catchers in the middle. Catchers choose a player and call either "Chicken or Hero?" If the player chooses 'Chicken' everyone must run to the other side and if caught they become a catcher. If they choose 'Hero' they have to go alone. If they get across without being caught, everyone gets a free pass. If they get caught they become a catcher.

Ladders

Two teams sit facing each other feet to feet with their legs straight. Ensure there is enough space between each pair to allow players to step over them. Give each pair a number.

When their number is called out pairs get up and race down the middle of the ladder, around the back of the seated players to the top then back down ladder to their space. First player back scores a point for their team. Continue calling out numbers until all pairs have taken a turn.

Captains Orders

Leader calls out the following commands and players perform the following actions.

Bow (font of ship)
Stern (back of ship)
Port (left)
Starboard (right)
Climb the rigging (climb a rope)
Scrub the deck (crouch down and scrub)
Sea sick (pretend to be sick)
Life boats (row)
Captains coming (stand to attention and salute)
Last one to salute becomes the caller

Crocodile Crocodile

All players stand at one end with 2- 3 catchers in the middle. Players call “Crocodile Crocodile can I cross your golden river?”

Catchers reply “Only if.....e.g. you are wearing red/you were born in May/ you had cereal for breakfast?” (or anything you chose). Players fitting the description can cross without being caught.

Everyone else has to make it over and if caught they join the crocodiles.

Red Rover

Players face each other in 2 teams holding hands

First team calls “Red Rover, Red Rover let (NAME) come cover”

(NAME) must run at opposing team and try to break the chain

If they are successful they take a person back to their team

If they don't they join the opposing team

Busy Bees

In pairs, caller shouts actions

Fly (run around)

Jump

Hop

Sting (burpee)

Back to back

Front to front

Switch (change partner)

Bee Hive (make a hive in centre)

Ball Games

Monarch

Good team game. Begin by defining play space - fairly large. Select the 'Monarch' and provide them with a softball. All other players must avoid being hit by the ball (below knees). If hit, they too become Monarchs but must remain frozen to the spot. As more Monarchs are created the scope for team play develops as they pass the ball between them to defeat the others.

Fox and Squirrel

The group has two balls, one smaller than the other. The smaller one is the squirrel and can only be thrown from person to person around the circle. The large one is the fox and can be thrown across the circle as well as around it. The idea is for the fox to catch the squirrel, in other words, to force one person to have to catch the two balls at one time.

Head & Catch

Arrange the players in a circle. Now stand in the middle with a soft ball. The object of the game is to throw the ball to each person in turn, saying 'Head' or 'Catch'. If you say 'Head', the person must catch the ball. And if you say 'Catch', the person must head it. Anyone who gets it wrong sits down until there is only one player left who is the winner.

Cappie Clappy

This is a traditional ball game played against the wall for small groups of players. It's a throwing and catching game. Any tennis size ball will do. Start by throwing the ball against the wall, now introduce the following rhyme and do the actions.

Cappie - straight forward catch

Clappy - clap between catch

Rolly - roll hands together before catch

Backy - clap hands behind back before catching

First your knees - touch knees

Now your toes - touch toes

Touch the ground - touch ground

And burl around - spin around before catching the ball

Once this has been mastered encourage the children to make up their own actions between each catch.

Guard the Treasure

Players stand in a large circle with a cone or plastic bottle in the centre.

The guardian stands in the centre protecting the 'treasure' whilst the other players try to hit the cone with a ball or bean bag. The player in the middle has to move quickly to defend the cone from being hit. Players can pass the ball across the circle but must remain in position. If the cone is knocked over the player who threw the ball becomes the guard. Vary the game by making the circle larger or smaller and introduce more balls/bean bags or defenders.

Spud

Define the playing space and ask for a volunteer to be 'it', as s/he counts (usually to ten) the rest of the players scatter. When s/he reaches 10 they all freeze on their spot. Then "it" takes 4 giant steps towards the closest person, and throws the ball.

If they succeed in hitting them, the person gets a letter "S", if "it" misses, then "it" gets a letter. The game continues until one person is SPUD (gets hit or misses 4 times).

Dodge ball

Define the playing space and ask everyone to spread out, one person with a ball aims to hit other players below the knee. Once hit they become "it".

Murder Ball

Play like dodge ball, but once hit below knee you have two players passing ball to catch others and so on until one player is left and declared the winner.

Bombers

Introduce lots of different sized balls. Players try to run from one side of the space to the other without being hit by a ball. Several throwers stand either side throwing balls across the running space. If runners get hit with a ball they become a bomber.

Line/Bench Ball

Played on a court, two teams face each other and a bench is placed behind each team. Instead of a bench you can use the playground line or mark one with chalk. The ball is then passed across the court and if a player gets hit by the ball they then stand on the bench behind the opposing team. Team members can release captive players by throwing them the ball. If the ball is caught successfully they return to the game.

Five Pass

Divide the group into two teams. Players have to throw and catch the ball five times without it being intercepted by the other team. Players must stand still when in possession of the ball.

Handy Shooty

Set up two goal posts with cones or markers at either end of the space. Divide group into two teams who must pass the ball using only the palm of the hand to score a goal. The ball should remain on the ground as much as possible!