

Pocket Playground Games

volume 1

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Introduction

Traditional playground games provide the ideal opportunity to engage children in enjoyable activities together, promoting positive relationships between the children themselves and the children and adults.

The games encourage valuable social skills such as:

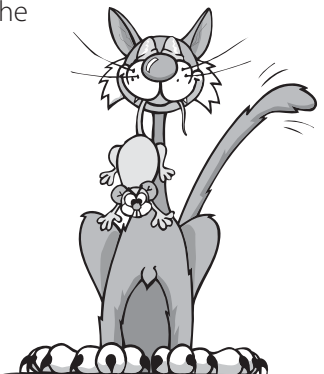
- Turn-taking
- Developing speaking and listening skills
- Developing a positive attitude to participation
- Learning to abide by rules
- Interacting with others
- Co-operating
- Having fun

Playground games also encourage physical exercise, an important aspect that is often neglected in today's hi-tech society and that is an essential part of physical well-being.

The traditional games included in this booklet are set out in a clear, accessible style with easy-to-follow instructions. Playground games provide an ideal occupation for free time that can motivate all children to be part of a group. They will enhance playground experiences for the children involved, creating a positive dynamic and generating much fun and enjoyment for all.

Cat and Mouse

1. Choose one child to be the cat and another to be the mouse.
2. Split the remaining children into groups of five or six and arrange them in lines, one line behind another to form a maze.
3. The children hold hands along their lines.
4. Position the cat and mouse in different positions between the lines.
5. The object of the game is for the cat to chase and catch the mouse between the lines of children.
6. In order to escape capture, the mouse can call '**Change**' at any time. On this command, the children drop hands in their rows, make a quarter turn anti-clockwise and then take up hands with the children on either side of them, thus creating new corridors.
7. The mouse continues to call '**Change**' every time the cat is getting too close.
8. When the cat catches the mouse or if the players become too tired to run any more, a new cat and mouse are chosen.



Stuck in the Mud

1. Choose a child to be IT.
2. The remaining children spread out around the playground.
3. IT chases the children and tags them by touching an arm.
4. When a player is tagged, they must stop running and stand with arms and legs spread wide open. They are now 'stuck in the mud'.
5. They can be released from this position if another player crawls between their legs without either being tagged again.
6. If a player is tagged whilst trying to free another player, both become stuck in the mud.
7. The game continues until all players are stuck or IT becomes tired.
8. A new IT is chosen and the game begins again.



The Dog's Bones

1. Choose a child to be the dog and six other children to be the bones.
2. The remaining children form an inward facing circle with the dog and bones in the centre.
3. Number the children 1,2,3 or 4 consecutively around the circle.
4. The object of the game is for the players in the circle to try and steal a bone from the dog. They do this by catching hold of a bone's arm and pulling them from the centre to the circle of children.
5. The dog tries to prevent this from happening by tagging the thieves. If a thief is tagged they must freeze and remain in the circle until the end of the game.
6. The game is played by calling a number 1-4. The children in the named category enter the circle and try to take a bone. When you call '**STOP**', everyone stops play and the thieves resume their places in the circle.
7. You then call a different number to play.
8. The game continues until all the bones are stolen, all the thieves are tagged or the dog becomes too tired to chase the thieves.
9. Choose a new dog and bones and repeat the process.



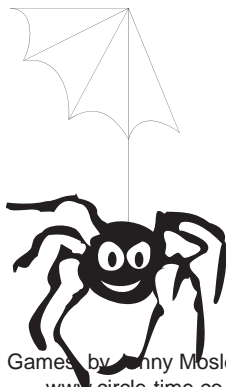
The Birthday Game

1. Choose one child to be the caller.
2. The remaining children form a large circle around the caller.
3. The caller shouts out a month of the year. Anyone with a birthday in the named month has to cross the circle to the opposite side. The caller tries to tag as many children as possible as they cross the circle.
4. Any player who is tagged is out and either sits on the sidelines or joins the caller in the centre and helps tag the players who cross when the next month is called.
5. The game continues until all the players have been tagged.



Spider and Flies

1. Mark out an area approximately 12m square. This is the playing area.
2. Choose 4 children to be the spider. They face each other and join hands in a circle. They must keep hold of one another's hands throughout the game and move together.
3. The remaining children are flies. They mill around in the playing area, trying to avoid the spider.
4. The spider chases and catches flies by putting a pair of joined hands over the flies' heads and capturing them within the circle of their bodies.
5. The flies cannot leave the playing area in order to avoid capture. If they do step outside of the playing area they are automatically out.
6. Once a fly has been captured it is out of the game and must sit outside the playing area.
7. Play the game for five minutes or until all the flies are captured, then choose a new 'spider' and repeat the process.



Chain Tag

1. A child is chosen to be IT and the remaining children spread out.
2. IT chases the other players. When a player is tagged they must hold hands with IT and continue to chase the others.
3. Each time a player is tagged they join hands and become part of the chain.
4. The chain can only have 5 players, so when a sixth is tagged that player also becomes IT and begins a new chain.
5. The game continues with two chains and these also divide once they have reached 5 players.
6. The game ends when all the players have been tagged.
7. The chains of children can work together to corner and capture an elusive player.



Turned to Stone

1. Choose a player to be IT.
The other players spread out.

2. IT chases the players and anyone who is tagged must stand still and freeze as they are 'turned to stone'.

3. They can be 'unfrozen' if they are touched by another player.

4. You can make the game more exciting by choosing 2 or more ITs.



Red Light, Green Light

1. Choose a player to be IT.

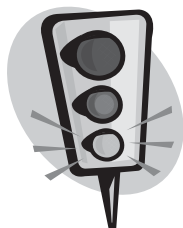
2. IT stands at one end of the playing area facing the wall and the remaining players stand at the opposite end.

3. When IT calls, "**Green light**," all the players can move forward.

4. IT then calls, "**Red light**," and turns round to face the players.

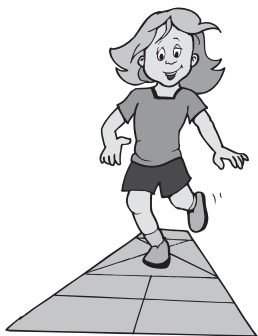
5. All the players freeze and anyone who moves is out.

6. The first player to tap IT on the shoulder without being detected becomes the new IT.



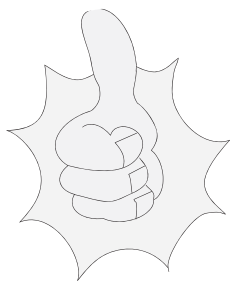
Archway Tag

1. One person is chosen as IT and the remaining players spread out around the playground.
2. IT chases the players and tags them.
3. The first player to be tagged stands still with arms raised to form half an arch.
4. The second player to be tagged, moves to where the first player is standing and raises their arms to complete the arch.
5. The 'arch' must remain still, until another player walks through under the raised arms and frees them. They can then join in the game again.
6. Each time a player is tagged, they look for another tagged player to form a complete arch.
7. Players cannot be freed unless they have formed an arch with a second tagged player.
8. The game continues until IT is tired or all the players have been tagged.



Seven Up, Thumbs Up

1. Seven players are chosen to stand at the front.
2. The remaining players put their heads down and close their eyes. Make sure that they don't peep.
3. The seven chosen players each gently tap one of the remaining children on the shoulder.
4. When they have done this the seven players resume their places at the front and shout, **"Heads up, thumbs up!"**
5. The children look up and open their eyes and the seven who were tapped put their thumbs up.
6. The players with raised thumbs each have a turn to guess who tapped them. If correct, they swap places to become one of the chosen seven for the next turn.
7. If the guess is incorrect, the chosen player remains at the front for another turn.
8. Allow a player up to three turns at the front.



Doggy, Doggy, Where's Your Bone?

1. A player is chosen to be the doggy.
2. The remaining players form a circle around the doggy.
3. A small object is needed to represent the bone and this is passed behind their backs from player to player around the circle.
4. The doggy kneels or crouches in the centre of the circle with eyes closed.
5. The 'bone' is handed to one player who begins the passing.
6. The players call, "**Doggy, doggy, where's your bone?**"
7. The doggy opens its eyes and has three guesses to try and locate the player with the bone.
8. Each time the doggy names a player, they must show their hands.
9. The bone continues to be passed at this time. However, all the other players pretend to be passing the bone to try and confuse the doggy.



Ghost in the Graveyard

1. A base is chosen to be the 'home', such as a pole, tree or small area.
2. A player is chosen to be the ghost.
3. All the players, except for the ghost, stand at the base with their eyes closed. Make sure that there is no peeping.
4. They count slowly together from one o'clock to eleven o'clock.
5. During this count, the ghost finds a suitable hiding place.
6. After eleven o'clock, the players shout, **"Midnight!"** They open their eyes, spread out and search for the hidden ghost.
7. When a player finds the ghost they shout, **"Ghost in the graveyard!"** and everybody runs for home.
8. The ghost tries to tag someone who will become the next ghost.



Captain, Captain

1. Choose a player to be the captain.
2. The captain stands at one end of the playing area with their back to the players.
3. Number the remaining players either 1,2,3,4 or 5.
4. The players call to the captain, "**Captain, captain, how can we come on board your ship?**"
5. The captain names a number and a method of moving, for example, "**Number 3's take two giant steps.**"
6. All the children in this category move forward two big steps.
7. Other ways to move are:
 - Baby steps: heel-to-toe
 - Hop forwards
 - Take sideways steps
 - Take backwards steps
 - Jump
 - Skip
 - Bunny hop
 - A body length(The children may think of some other ways to move).
8. The first player to tap the captain on the shoulder becomes the new captain.



Bounce, Catch

1. Mark off an area approximately 8m square.
2. The players stand around the area with a large, bouncy ball.
3. One player is chosen to stand in the centre of the area and be the interceptor.
4. The players bounce the ball in the marked off area for another player to catch.
5. The interceptor tries to capture the ball before it leaves the area.
6. Once a player has caught the ball, the players all chant, "**1,2,3,4,5.**"
7. The player with the ball must continue play before the count of 5 or they are out.
8. If a ball rolls away from the area the counting is suspended until the player is standing by the edge of the area again.
9. The interceptor cannot leave the marked off area to catch a ball.
10. When the interceptor successfully captures a ball, the last player to throw becomes the new interceptor.



Forty, Forty

1. A player is chosen to be IT.
2. IT stands by the 'base', for example, a tree or post.
3. IT counts to 40, while the remaining players hide.
4. When IT has reached 40 they begin to search for the hidden players.
5. The players can now leave their hiding places and run for the base.
6. When they reach the base they shout, "**Forty, Forty, I'm free.**"
7. If a player is tagged, they become the next IT.



Bad Egg



1. A player is chosen to be 'Bad Egg' and turns their back on the remaining players.
2. Bad Egg asks the players to name something from a given category, for example, a colour, a chocolate bar, a football team. (If you have a large number of children playing, you could number them 1-5 and Bad Egg could choose a number for just those children to answer.) Tell the children to remember what they have called out.
3. Bad Egg throws a tennis ball over their shoulder and at the same time calls out one of the answers given by a player.
4. The player whose answer has been called out attempts to retrieve the tennis ball as quickly as possible, whilst the other players run in all directions.
5. As soon as the player has retrieved the tennis ball, they shout, "**Stop.**"
6. All the players stop running and stand still with legs wide apart.
7. The player with the ball tries to roll it through the legs of one of the other players.
8. If successful, that player becomes the new Bad Egg.
9. If, however, the player with the ball fails to roll it between another player's legs, they become Bad Egg.

Hot Potato



1. All the players stand in a circle.
2. They pass a bean bag from player to player whilst chanting:
**"1,2,3,4 the hot potato's at your door
5,6,7 and, the hot potato's in your hand
GET RID OF THE HOT POTATO!"**
3. At the end of the chant, the player left holding the bean bag is out.
4. Play continues in this way until there is a winner.

Lost at Sea



1. Place a series of markers, such as skittles, around the playing area. These represent life buoys.
2. Explain to the players that each life buoy can sustain two players.
3. The players 'swim' around the playing area.
4. When you blow a whistle, they run for a 'life buoy' and are safe.
5. Remove the life buoys, one at a time, after each whistle blow.
6. If a player is unable to find a life buoy to stand by, they are out.
7. Continue in this way until you have one life buoy left and two winners.

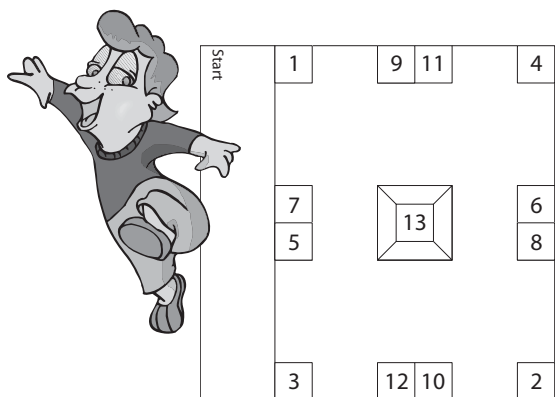
Mr Motion

1. Choose a player to be 'Mr Motion'.
2. Mr Motion stands halfway down the playing area, facing the other players.
3. The players call to Mr Motion,
**"Mr Motion we want to come through,
so show us what we have to do."**
4. Mr Motion replies, **"Today I'm having a.....
day"** naming a form of movement. It could be hopping, jumping, walking backwards, crawling, skipping or any other way of moving.
5. Both the players and Mr Motion have to move in the designated way.
6. The players try to get past Mr Motion to the other end of the playing area whilst Mr Motion tags as many as possible.
7. Any player who is tagged is out.
8. Once the players have all reached the other end they turn round and repeat the process with Mr Motion naming a different way of moving.
9. If Mr Motion is having trouble catching players, any players that are tagged can join him in the catching role.



Skully

1. You will need to draw a skully board approximately 2m square (see below).
2. The game is played using round counters such as bottle tops or draught pieces.
3. The object of the game is to flick or throw the counter into each of the numbered boxes in succession.
4. If a player successfully lands in a box they are awarded another go. If they fail to reach the box their counter remains where it has landed until their next turn.
5. Each time a player lands in a box they use that as their starting position to aim for the next box.
6. The winner is the first player to reach box 13.
7. If a player's counter lands in the area, 'skully', around the 13th box, they must go back to box 10 and repeat the next few boxes.



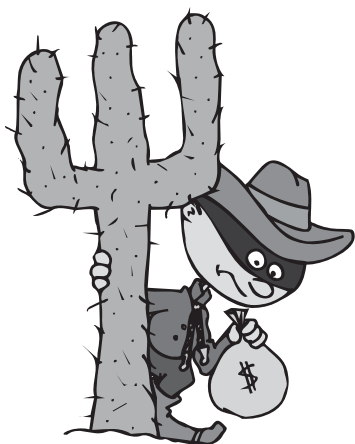
Shark Attack

1. It's a good idea to prepare and laminate a set of cards for this game that can be used again and again. On most of the cards write 'Fish', but on two or three of the cards write 'Shark'. You can decide how many sharks to have according to the number of players.
2. Put the cards into a container and invite the players to each take one. They must not show or tell anyone else what is written on their cards.
3. Tell the players to 'swim' around in the playing area. The idea of this game is that the players do not know who the sharks are and so must be very vigilant.
4. The sharks begin to 'attack' the other players by tagging them.
5. Once a player has been tagged they must stop running and stand still, so gradually everyone will know who the sharks are.
6. The object of the game is for the sharks to tag as many players as possible before they are recognised.
7. Allow several minutes for the game to continue then repeat the process.



Bandit

1. The children sit or stand in a circle.
2. One player is chosen to be IT and stands in the centre of the circle.
3. IT points to a player and shouts "**Bandit**".
4. The player (Bandit) must put both hands over their ears.
5. The player to the right of the bandit must put their left hand over their left ear and the player to the left of the bandit must put their right hand over their right ear.
6. All of the above actions must take place before IT counts to 5. (If this time allowance seems too short, IT can count to 10).
7. Any player who fails to react, puts the wrong hand over the wrong ear or who puts two hands over their ears instead of one, is out.



Pocket Playground Games



Playground Games contains well-loved favourites and more unusual games. They are designed to go into the pockets of midday supervisors to help answer the plaintive "what can we play now"!

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