



PLAYWORKS INDOOR RECESS GUIDE

4 Corners

Group Size: any size

Grade : K-6th

Equipment Needed: no equipment needed

Skills Practiced: quick thinking, self control, decision making

Set Up

Use an area with four corners. This can be a classroom or an area on the playground.

Before You Start

- Have players split equally among the four corners (or as closely as possible.)
- Do a practice round with the leader in the middle.

How to Play

- The player in the middle will close their eyes and count slowly and loudly from 10 to 0.
- While they are counting, all others may stay where they are or quietly move to a different corner. When the counter gets to 0, everyone must be at a corner (if not they must sit down).
- After counting, the player in the middle points to the corner of their choice and can only open their eyes after having done so.
- Anyone standing in that corner must sit down.
- If no one is standing at the chosen corner, all players sitting may stand up and get back into the game.
- When only one player is left standing, they become the counter for the next round.

Variations

Change the middle person when one person has been in the middle for 2 minutes.

The counter can say that they will point to the loudest corner.

All Tangled Up

Group Size: any size

Grade: 2nd-8th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: problem solving, cooperation, verbal communication, strategic thinking

Set Up

Provide enough space for all participants to move freely.

Before You Start

- Divide everyone into small groups of up to twelve and have them form a tight circle.

How to Play

- The players take one hand and grab the hand of anyone in the group except the people standing next to them.
- The players take their other hand and grab the hand of anyone in the group except the people standing next to them and the person they are already holding hands with.
- The challenge is to get untangled without letting go of each other's hands.
- Emphasize that getting untangled requires a lot of communication and cooperation.

Variations

Make the groups larger.

Add restrictions to their communication methods.

Ants on a Log

Group Size: 10 or more

Grades: K-3rd

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: teamwork, communication

Setup

Identify a line on the ground to play on.

Before You Start

- Have everyone stand on a line in a specific order.

How to Play

- The object of the game is to get the whole group to switch positions on the line without falling off the line.
- At the end of the game, the order of the players should remain exactly how it was before, only in reverse. That means that the player who started on the left end of the line ended on the right end of the line.

Ball Toss Race

Group Size: any size

Grades: 1st-8th

Equipment Needed: small balls (tennis balls, gator ball, etc.)

Skills Practiced: awareness, hand-eye coordination, verbal communication

Set Up

Designate a space for the group and one or more balls that can easily be thrown/caught—bean bags, tennis balls, dodgeball or other.

Before You Start

- Have the group get into a circle and have one or more balls (appropriate size for throwing and catching) ready.
- Go around the circle allowing everyone to say their name so that the others can hear.

How to Play

- The leader begins by throwing, rolling or bouncing a ball (depending on the age and skill level) to another player while saying the other person's name loudly. Explain that it is very important to remember who you have passed the ball to.
- Keep passing the ball around the circle so that everyone has received the ball one time. You can have players sit down or cross their arms once they have received the ball, so make sure nobody gets it twice.
- When the last person gets the ball, have them pass it back to the leader.
- Now without the ball and in the same order, have each player say out loud who they will pass the ball to so that the pattern of the ball's movement is established.
- Once everyone remembers who to pass to, try again with the ball and see how fast they can go.
- After trying a couple times, ask the group:
 - Who has an idea for how to get the ball to everyone more quickly?
 - What do you think about adding a second ball?
 - Shall we time ourselves and then try to beat our time?
- Allow the group to try again with their new ideas. Debrief the game by asking:
 - What do you think this game teaches? Is it fun?
 - Can you think of anything that would make this game better?

Variations

To make the game more challenging, add more balls and balls of different sizes.

For lower-skilled players try Catch and Throw Style (PK-2)

Have the players form a circle around the leader.

The leader can then pass the ball to each player in the circle.

When the player catches the ball everyone in the class yells out their name.

Go around in a circle until everyone has a turn, then randomly pass the ball and see how fast they can go.

Big Cheese

Group Size: any size

Grade : K-8th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: decision making, quick thinking

Set Up

All players need an arms length of space.

Before You Start

- Practice the call and response of "I am the Big Cheese", with all the players responding "You are the Big Cheese."
- Introduce the 3 different movements:
 - Cheddar Cheese (hands circled in front)
 - String Cheese (arms stretched overhead)
 - Stinky Cheese (waving hand in front of nose)

How to Play

- The leader begins each round by saying "I am the Big Cheese!" and the other players respond, "You are the Big Cheese!"
- The leader then counts "1...2...3!" On the "Three," players pick one of the 3 predetermined movements to show (Cheddar, String, or Stinky Cheese). At the same time, the leader shows one of the 3 movements.
- Players who make the same movement as the leader are recycled (or out) and can sit down or move elsewhere.
- The object of the game is for players to stay in the game by doing a different sign than the leader. The last player standing gets to be the next "Big Cheese."

Birds of Prey

Group Size: 10 and up

Grades: 1st-8th

Equipment Needed: bandana or blind fold and a coin

Skills Practiced: cooperation, teamwork, patience

Set Up

Designate boundaries in an open space.

Before You Start

- Divide the group into two equal teams.
- Have each team get into two single file lines holding hands with the teams facing each other.
- The leader stands at the front between the two lines.
- Place the bandana on the ground at the rear of the lines directly in between the two lines.
- Remind everyone that they must keep their eyes shut and remain silent.

How to Play

- Flip a quarter. Only the first players in each line can watch to see if it lands on heads or tails.
- The rest of the players must have their eyes closed.
- If the quarter shows heads, the player at the front sends a squeeze (or pulse) down the line which should reach the end of the line.
- When the squeeze reaches the last player in line, he or she tries to pick up the bandana first.
- Whichever team wins the bandana, the player in the front moves to the back of the line and the players rotate forward.
- If the coin is tails, no action happens. The leader just flips the coin again.
- The game ends when the player who began the game at the front of the line reaches the front again.

Variations

Play sitting down.

Have a different signal to pass back.

If a player sends a pulse when the leader does not show heads, the player at the back returns to the front of the line, making the game more challenging and longer.

Bob the Bunny

Group Size: any size

Grade : PreK-3

Equipment Needed: a small object like a ball or stuffed animal

Skills Practiced: observational skills, awareness, self control

Set Up

Space to form a circle.

Before You Start

- Introduce the students to “Bob the Bunny,” a small object or ball, preferably a bunny.
- Gather a group of students in a circle. Have students place their hands behind their backs.
- Choose one student to be in the middle.

How to Play

- The person in the middle is trying to guess who on the outside of the circle is holding the bunny.
- To begin, the person in the middle closes their eyes while the group begins chanting in rhythm, “Bob the Bunny, Bob, Bob, the bunny!”
- As you are chanting, start passing the bunny around the circle, keeping the bunny behind you.
- Once the bunny is in motion, the person in the middle opens their eyes. They get 3 tries to guess who is holding the bunny; the group is still chanting and passing the bunny.
- If the person in the middle guesses correctly they change places with who was caught holding the bunny.
- If the person in the middle does not guess correctly within 3 tries they become part of the circle and a new person is chosen to go in the middle.

Variations

Give students the opportunity to change the name of the character (i.e. incorporate the school/local sports team mascot, birthday students’ name, etc.)

Play with multiple bunnies.

Bridge Ball

Group Size: any size

Grades: 1st-5th

Equipment Needed: a soft ball

Skills Practiced: strategic thinking, hand eye coordination

Set Up

Designate a safe play space in which the group can stand in a large circle.

Before You Start

- Have everyone stand in a circle, foot to foot. Their legs should be slightly more than shoulder width apart, forming a "bridge."
- Have everyone get into a ready position with their hands on their knees.
- Make sure all players know not to reach in front of others in order to get the ball.

How to Play

- The object of the game is for players to try to hit the ball between other players' bridges (formed by their legs) and block balls from coming through their own bridges. Players get a letter in the word "bridge" each time the ball goes through their legs. Once the group has spelled "bridge," the game restarts.
- Players may only hit the ball with an open palm (low-five hits). No throwing.
- They may catch the ball if it is head height. If the ball is caught, players must place the ball on the ground and hit it back into play.
- If a ball goes outside the circle, the player closest to it when it goes out may go and get it.
- If the ball goes between a player's legs, they get a letter toward the word bridge. That player may go get the ball and hit it back in play.
- Variations
- Instead of spelling "bridge", players can turn around and play backwards once the ball has gone through their legs 1x, 2x, or however many times you decide.
- Add a ball or two once players know how to play.
- Put a player in the middle of the circle to keep the game moving faster.

Booty Ball

Group Size: 10 or more

Grades: PreK and Up

Equipment: cones, beach ball or balloon

Skills Practiced: hand eye coordination, teamwork

Set Up

A rectangular area divided into two areas, each large enough for half of the group to comfortably sit with space for each player.

Before You Start

- Set up chairs facing outward to enclose the playing area and act as the “net”.
- Teach the game to the students and ask them to explain it back to you.
- Teach the concept of the set and passing to teammates.
- Demonstrate the concept.
- Be ready for students to be very silly the first few times they hear the name of the game.

How to Play

- Divide the group into two teams.
- Everyone sits on their team’s side, spaced out evenly on the floor.
- Drop the ball into play in one of the team areas.
- Players attempt to hit the ball to the other team, over the chairs which are dividing the court.
- Players may hit the ball with arms, legs, or any body part, but may not lift their bottom off of the ground.
- There are only three hits allowed per side so help the students count aloud.
- Players try to keep the ball volleying back and forth as long as possible.

Variations

- **Knee Ball:** Same as above, except students must stay on their knees.
- **Chair Volleyball:** Students are divided into teams and spread out on the court, sitting in chairs. They can hit the ball with any body part but cannot get out of the chair.
- **Multi-balls:** Add one or more balls into the mix. Follow the same exact format.
- **Competitive:** Add the serving component and award points following regulation rules.

Boppity Bop Bop

Group Size: 10 or more

Grades: 1st- 5th

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: verbal communication, strategic thinking, hand-eye coordination

Set Up

The group should be standing in a circle, shoulder-to-shoulder.

Before You Start

- Go over instructions. Provide examples of each sequence and use call and response to make sure everyone knows how to play the game.
- All ties are resolved with Ro Sham Bo.

How to Play

- The group gathers in a circle with one player in the middle (selected by the leader).
- The player in the middle walks up (or points) to someone in the circle and says, "Boppity bop bop bop." If the player in the middle completes the phrase before the other person says, "Bop," the two switch places. If the player on the outside says, "Bop," before the middle student finishes the phrase, the game continues with the same player in the middle.
- The player in the middle can fake out students on the outside by simply pointing and saying, "Bop," to a player in the circle. If the outside player says, "Bop," the two switch places.

Variations

- Play as a name game by...
 - The person in the middle walks up (or points) to someone in the circle and says either, "Left," "Right," or "Center," followed by "Boppity bop bop bop."
 - The player in the circle must say the corresponding person's name (i.e., the person to their left, right, or center/in the middle) before the person in the middle completes saying the phrase, "Boppity bop bop bop." If they don't, the players switch places.
- Make the game more challenging by adding any of these commands:
 - **House:** Player in the middle walks up (or points) to a player and says, "House." The player pointed to must squat down and say, "Come in! Come in!" while making a "come here" gesture with their hands. The two players on either side of the squatting player must use their arms to make a roof over the squatting player. The player who reacts last out of the three goes to the middle.
 - **Airplane:** Player in the middle walks up (or points) to a player in the circle and says, "Airplane." The player pointed to makes aviator sunglasses/goggles with their hands. The players on either side make an airplane wing with the appropriate arm (student to the left sticks out their left arm and the student on the right sticks out their right). The player who reacts last out of the three goes to the middle.
 - **Palm Tree:** Player in the middle walks up (or points) to a player in the circle and says, "Palm Tree." The player pointed to makes themselves a palm tree in the breeze with their arms in the air, waving them side to side. The two players to the immediate left and right of the palm tree do the hula dance. The player who reacts last out of the three goes to the middle.

C'mon In and Sit Down

Group Size: 10 and up

Grades: 1st-2nd

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: teamwork, cooperation

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Have players form a circle, holding hands.
- Players let go hands and make a quarter turn to the right so that everyone's left shoulder is pointing to the middle of the circle and their eyes are on the back of the person in front of them.
- Have the group take a couple side-steps towards the center of the circle so that everyone is nice and snug.
- Make sure everyone is standing close together and listening for the count of three.

How to Play

- Once everyone is in position, the leader explains that on the count of three everyone should sit down on the knees of the person behind them.
- If it is successful, everyone should be sitting comfortably on someone else's knees.

Variations

For older kids, try walking together if the circle is tight. As the challenge gets easier, add more people to the circle and ask the children if they have any ideas to make it more difficult.

Cat and Mouse

Group Size: any size

Grade: 3rd- 5th

Equipment Needed: jump rope

Skills Practiced: foot eye coordination

Set Up

Pick a space that will allow a large jump rope to spin safely, room for the player to run around the rope and a nearby line.

Before You Start

- Review how to safely jump into a spinning jump rope.
- Review how to tag softly—like a butterfly—on the shoulders, upper arms or back.
- Pick two players to turn the rope.
- Pick one person to begin as the cat and one person to begin as the mouse. Everyone else remains in line and waits for their turn.
- Review how players will rotate roles. A person may rotate roles in the following order: cat, mouse, rope turner, rope turner, in line.
- Demonstrated how to play.

How to Play

- Players will travel in a figure eight, jumping into the rope one time, then around the turner, back into the rope one time and around the other turner.
- The mouse begins.
- Once the mouse has jumped out of the rope around the first turner, the cat may jump.
- The object of the game is for the mouse to not be tagged and for the cat to tag the mouse.
- If the cat tags the mouse, everybody rotates.
- If the mouse misses a jump, everybody rotates.
- If the cat misses a jump, everybody rotates

Variations

Allow the cat and mouse to run through the rope instead of jumping once.

Require the cat and mouse to jump two times (or more) before running out of the rope.

Chair Game

Group Size: 10 or more

Grade : 3rd-5th

Equipment Needed: chairs

Skills Practiced: teamwork, non-verbal communication, strategic thinking

Set Up

This game can be easily played in a classroom.

Have every player bring a chair and arrange them in a close circle with no gaps.

Before You Start

- You will need an equal number of chairs to the number of participants.
- Review safety rules (no diving, no head first lunges, one person to a chair)

How to Play

- Every participant should start seated in a chair in a circle.
- The leader chooses one player to stand in the middle, so one chair is open.
- The goal of the person in the middle is to sit in the empty chair.
- All seated players must work together to stop the person in the middle from sitting in the open chair. Someone next to the empty seat tries to beat the person in the middle to it by shuffling over, creating a new empty seat.
- The game continues until the person in the middle makes it safely to the open seat. The facilitator then picks someone new to go into the middle.

Variations

Instead of chairs, have players stand on cones (safer, can be played outdoors).

Charades Tag

Group Size: 10 and up

Grades: 3rd -5th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: non-verbal communication, teamwork

Set Up

Three lines of equal distance apart.

Before You Start

- Make sure the players understand how to play charades.
- Do a couple of warm up rounds so they get the idea of acting in silence and guessing the action.
- Divide the group into two teams.
- Each team comes up with an action or scenario they will act out.
- Give categories to help the kids decide. Younger grades: animals, occupations and sports.
- For older grades make it more challenging with movies, songs, people and so on.
- Have one person from each team tell you what their charade will be.
- Demonstrate safe tagging:
 - Light touch, like butterfly wings, on the back or shoulder.
 - Unsafe tags: hard contact that might cause the person being tagged to fall.

How to Play

- Once each team has told you what their charade will be, have the two teams face off, by standing equal distance from the middle line.
- Decide who will act out their charade first.
- On your signal one team acts out their charade while the other team guesses.
- When you hear a correct guess say 'yes' or give another signal.
- The team that guessed correctly will then chase the acting team back to the acting team's safety line. If anyone is tagged they join the other team.
- Then the next team acts out their charade and the process is repeated.

Variations

You can also combine categories e.g. an animal doing a sport.

Concentration Ball

Group Size: any size

Grade : 1st- 5th

Equipment Needed: balls

Skills Practiced: memory, attention, making decisions

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Explain how to make a good, underhand toss with eye contact.
- Explain that everyone has to say the person's name (recipient) before throwing.

How to Play

- You pick a theme, such as animals.
- Then one person starts with the ball and says an animal then says the name of someone in the circle and tosses them the ball.
- That person must say another animal and toss the ball to another person.
- You may not repeat answers and you only have three seconds to say yours.
- If a player fails to do so, you may have them do some jumping jacks before rejoining the circle. Once three people get stuck you switch themes. Some examples of themes include, sports, colors, fruits, singers, etc.

Variations

For younger players you may go in a circle handing off the ball or you may try rolling it instead.

If you notice this as a problem, you may also add a rule about not throwing it back to the person that tossed it to you.

Dance Freeze

Group Size: any size

Grades: K-6th

Equipment Needed: no equipment needed

Skills Practiced: quick reaction, fitness, attention

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom.

Before You Start

- Designate an open area free of obstacles. If objects are present that cannot be moved, point them out and remind everyone that they must be careful not to touch another person or object.
- Have the radio or music player ready with an appropriate station or music selection.

How to Play

- In this activity, everyone dances as the music plays.
- When the music stops, each player must freeze immediately and hold that position until the music begins again.
- If a player does not freeze immediately, they do 10 jumping jacks during the start of the next round and then rejoin the dance.
- Since this is an aerobic game, it is better not for players to get "out."

Variations

Assign players as a look-out and have them pick out a unique dance move. When the music stops, they demonstrate the move for everyone; the group tries the new move at the start of the next round. Rather than have players do 10 jumping jacks, have them do something else- push ups, a balance challenge, act as DJ, etc.

Dead Fish

Group Size: any size

Grades: K-2nd

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: body awareness, following directions, gross motor skills

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom.

Before You Start

- Tell players to find their own space; there is no touching in this game.
- Talk about what a dead fish might look and act like.

How to Play

- The leader of the game calls a countdown [5-4-3-2-1 DEAD FISH!], during which the players can run around and make as much noise as they want. (If you are playing in a classroom, have students walk and talk quietly).
- When the leader says 'Dead Fish', everyone must do their best impression of a dead fish. Often this involves lying down.
- The leader walks among the fishes, looking for movement.
- If a player moves (beyond blinking), they must go to the line.

Variations

When players get out, they can help look for movement or try to entice other players to move.

Detective

Group Size: any size

Grades: K-5th

Equipment Needed: no equipment

Skills Practiced: memorization, recall

Set Up

Classroom, other indoor space.

Before You Start

- This game can be played in a circle or at their desks.
- Roll call with every player to check if there is a player who does not know everyone's names.

How to Play

- One player leaves the room and becomes the detective.
- Choose one player to hide in a place in the room where they will not be visible.
- The rest of the circle changes places or changes seats.
- Call the detective back into the room.
- The detective then tries to guess who is hidden.
- If they guess correctly, they are the detective again.
- If they are wrong, the hiding player is the new detective.

Variations

This game can be played in a circle or at their seats. If they are at their seats, all players must trade seats before the detective enters the room.

Detective Frog

Group Size: any size

Grades: 1st-8th

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: self control, awareness

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

How to Play:

- The job of the Detective is to seek out the Poison Dart Frog before they poison too many participants. The Detective has 3 guesses to spot the Frog before they get away.
- All students stand in a circle. Select one student to be the Detective and ask that student to close their eyes. All students then stand in the circle with their heads down as the leader chooses the Frog. The Detective opens their eyes. The Dart Frog can now begin to poison victims.
- To poison victims, the Frog must stick their tongue out (or point with one finger) at their target.
- When the Poison Dart Frog poisons a participant, that participant takes a seat.
- Based on who and where players fall, the Detective must use this information to identify the Frog. Remember, they only have 3 tries.

Variations:

- You can place a time limit on how long the Detective has to find the Frog.
- It can be a race to see how fast the Detective can find the Frog before they nab a specific amount of victims.
- You can give out clues as to who the suspect may be (works well if the suspect takes a long time to nab victims).

Duck, Duck, Goose

Group Size: 10 and Up

Grades: K-2nd

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: social comfort, decision making

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Gather the children in a circle, sitting down.
- Demonstrate safe tagging:
 - Light touch, like butterfly wings on the shoulder
 - Unsafe tags: hard contact that might cause the person being tagged to fall

How to Play

- One child is chosen as the fox and walks around the group, lightly touching each player on the head while saying "Duck," with each touch.
- When the child says "Goose", the person who was touched gets up and tries to tag the fox.
- Once the fox picks a goose, s/he is trying to run around the circle and sit down where the goose was.
- If the fox gets tagged, s/he goes into the middle, the cooking pot, for one round.
- The goose then becomes the next fox and another round begins.

Variations

Children stay in the cooking pot until there are 5 people, then they can re-join the game.

Duck, Duck Splash: Instead of tapping children on the head while saying "duck", give the fox a half cup of water to dip their fingers in and flick a bit of water on each person. When the fox wants to choose a goose s/he dumps the remaining water on their head and says "splash!"

Allow children options to play without getting wet.

Fox and Rabbit

Group Size: 10 and up

Grade : 4th-8th

Equipment Needed: two balls of different size and/or color.

Skills Practiced: strategic thinking, cooperation, awareness

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Have the group form a circle.
- Hand the balls out to two people on opposite sides of the circle.
- Designate which ball is the fox and which one is the rabbit.
- Explain that each ball is like a hot potato and should not be held for more than one second.

How to Play

- The object of the game is for the fox to catch the rabbit.
- Both the fox and the rabbit move by being passed (not thrown) around the circle in any direction.
- If a student is holding the fox they should pass the ball to the person next to them, whomever is closer to the rabbit. Those players holding the rabbit should pass to someone farther away from the fox.
- When the fox catches the rabbit, a new round.

Variations

For younger groups start, with a Hot Potato warm up, giving them the basic idea of how to receive the ball and get rid of it quickly.

If the group can't catch the rabbit, add an extra fox to the game.

Add multiple balls and see if they can cross over each other.

Giants, Wizards, and Elves

Group Size: any size

Grades: K-5th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: cooperation, group decision making

Set Up

Define the playing field, such as a basketball court, with enough room for everyone to line up shoulder to shoulder.

Before You Start

- Demonstrate movement and sound for each main character in the game:
 - The giant stands up very tall with hands raised over the head and makes the sound, *Aaargh!*
 - The wizard stands with one foot in front of the other, arms extended toward the front with the fingers wiggling and makes the sound, *Hissssss!*
 - The elves squat down and move from side to side with their arms waving about and make the sound that comes when you blow air out of your lips.
- Have the whole group practice each of the movements and sounds.
- Explain which character wins over which: giant over wizard, wizard over elf, and elf over giant.
- Demonstrate safe tagging.
 - Light touch, like butterfly wings, on the back or shoulder.
 - Unsafe tags: hard contact that might cause the person being tagged to fall.
- Make two random teams (such as numbering by 1's and 2's) and put each team on opposite sides of the middle line.

How to Play

- Each team huddles up on their side of the play area and chooses a first and second character to be.
- Each team moves to the middle line, play begins when the leader yells, *One, two, three, what's it going to be?* Each team flashes their first choice. Whichever team has the dominant character chases the other team back to their rear boundary line.
- Anyone who is tagged before getting to that rear line becomes part of the opposite team.
- Explain also that if both teams choose the same first choice, the leader calls out a pre-defined signal and the teams change to their second choice. If they choose the same second choice, the teams regroup and pick two more.

Variations

Use three different objects, movements and sounds. Possible options include:

baseball/football/basketball with the sounds, *"strike"* *"hut hut hut hut"* and *"swooooooooosh"* or Lions, Tigers and Bears with roars, growls and snuffles.

Going on a Picnic

Group Size: 3-25

Grade: K-5th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: memorization, sound and letter recognition, practice spelling

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Have the whole group seated in a circle.
- Give an example of a food that begins with the same letters as your first name.

How to Play

- Explain to the group that they are all going on a picnic together and are all responsible for bringing a food item.
- Each person is to bring a food that begins with the first letter of their first name.
- Ask for a volunteer to go first. They are to say their name and what they are bringing to the picnic.
- The next person, first introduces the person (and the person's food choice) who just went then themselves and their food.
- The third person to go introduces the first two people and then themselves and so on until everyone has gone.

Gotcha!

Group Size: any size

Grades: K-5th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: hand eye coordination, listening, goal focus

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Have students form a circle.
- Each student takes their left hand and puts it out toward the person next to them – hand open, palm up.
- Each student then takes their right pointer finger and places it pointing down into the middle of the palm of the person next to them.

How to Play

- All players must keep their left hand flat until the magic word is said.
- The coach starts the game by telling students that they should be listening for “Gotcha” or the magic word.
- When they hear the magic word, they will try to grab the finger in their left hand while at the same time pulling their finger away from the person to their right. The goal is to grab the finger of the person to your left and not have your right finger grabbed.
- Coach will start telling a story, randomly inserting the magic word into the story so students have to listen carefully for the word. After a couple of rounds, have a student or teacher tell the story.

Variations

You can use this game to talk about goal focus and shifting thinking by changing the goal after a few rounds. Tell the students you are now working as a team to see how many finger grabs you can get. Don't give them any further guidance, but play a few more rounds and ask in between if anyone has ideas to help them get to their goal. They should figure out after a few rounds that they can all just leave their fingers in place and let the other person grab them.

Group Count

Group Size: any size

Grade: 1st -6th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: fine and gross motor skills, counting

Set Up

Review counting up to ten with younger kids.

Before You Start

- Explain to the group that mistakes will be made and mistakes should be celebrated.
- Demonstrate with a few students how to take turns calling numbers.

How to Play

- Your group is trying to count to ten (or higher) collectively.
- The facilitator says 1 to get the game started.
- Any student then says the next numerical number. If any of the numbers are repeated or said at the same time, then your group starts back at 1.
- Try to see how long it takes over a couple of days, weeks, or months. Give high fives around the group when finished.

Variations

Increase difficulty for older grades by counting higher. Perform a task (i.e. jumping jacks, push-ups etc.) if mistakes are made

Heads-Up, 7-Up

Group Size: 10-20

Grade: preK-6th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: self control, awareness

Set Up

Play in a classroom or cafeteria.

Before You Start

- Review rules and boundaries.

How to Play

- Seven students are taggers.
- They stand in front of the room and say, "Heads down, thumbs up!" and the rest of the class puts their heads down with their thumbs up.
- Every tagger goes around and taps one thumb.
- When they are done, the seven taggers say, "Heads-up, 7-up!" Then the tagged people stand up and try to guess who tagged them. If they guess correctly, they switch places.

Hi, My Name Is...

Group Size: 3-30

Grade: K-5th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: memorization, social comfort

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom.

Before You Start

- Gather the group in a contained area. If played outside, lay out clear boundaries.
- Demonstrate the greetings with a volunteer.
- Make sure all students can repeat back the demonstrated greetings.

How to Play

- At a given signal everyone goes around introducing themselves to one another.
- Students go up to each other and they shake hands. Four exchanges happen while shaking hands:
 - 1. The first person says, "Hi, my name is _____."
 - 2. The second person says, "Hi, my name is _____"
 - 3. The first person says, "Nice to meet you." The second person repeats this back to his/her partner.
 - 4. The first person says, "See you later." The second person says something similar in response, "See ya!" or "Bye!"
- Once that four-part exchange happens, the partners split up and find someone else to introduce themselves to. Players go around trying to meet as many other players as possible in one minute.

Variations

Students can use signals or sign language to develop nonverbal communication.

Hop and Freeze

Group Size: any size

Grades: PreK-2nd

Equipment Needed: no equipment

Skills Practiced: listening skills, balance, hopping, skipping, jumping

Set Up

Use boundaries to create an appropriate size play area.

Before You Start

- Demonstrate how to avoid contact with each other.
- Everyone should be able to repeat all rules and signals.
- Spread the group out to avoid contact and collisions.

How to Play

- Everyone must stay inside the boundaries
- On 1st signal: players begin hopping (skipping, jumping, etc)
- On 2nd signal: everyone must freeze in a balanced position (on one foot, one foot and one hand, or whichever position)
- Repeat several times; add new signals and action players must use (such as galloping).

Variations

Play the game while balancing a beanbag on the players' heads.

Have them go while holding hands with a partner and give added balancing challenges.

Hot Potato

Group Size: 10 and Up

Grades: 1st-2nd

Equipment Needed: ball or small object for the “potato”

Skills Practiced: hand eye coordination

Set Up

If playing in a classroom, push desks and chairs to make room to form a circle (if possible).

Before You Start

- Warm-up tossing the ball from player to player with safe throws (under-hand).
- Have players form a circle or stand next to their desks.
- Review rules and boundaries.

How to Play

- Pass the ball around the circle or class without dropping the ball.
- If someone drops it, they sit in the center (“hot potato soup” pot).
- After the end of each round, increase the speed that the ball is tossed around the circle.

Variations

Play with other objects, such as a bean bag or frisbee to change the challenge.

Play a short song while the object is being passed. Whoever has the object at the end of the song goes into the center of the circle.

With younger players K to first grade, sit in a circle; start out first handing, then rolling a ball, then transition into tossing.

If you do not have music... Players sit in a circle and pass a ball in one direction. Players should pass the ball as quickly as possible without throwing or dropping it. The whole group says the verse as the ball is passed. The player holding the ball when the verse ends must do 5 jumping jacks before returning to the game. Verse: “Pass the ball round and round. Pass is quickly or you’ll be found. If you’re the one to hold it last, you will owe 5 jumping jacks. You are it!”

Huckle Buckle Beanstalk

Group Size: 4-20

Grade : K-5th

Equipment Needed: small object to hide

Skills Practiced: self control, visual awareness, self management

Set Up

This game is best played in a classroom.

Before You Start

- Identify an object, such as a bean bag, small ball or cup, to the group.
- Share the special words huckle buckle beanstalk and have everyone repeat it back to you. Until the group can recall and say huckle buckle beanstalk.
- Demonstrate how to move around the room observing, but not touching.

How to Play

- Have all players sit in their seats with their heads down and eyes covered.
- Hide the object in plain sight.
- When you say so, players may open their eyes and quietly walk around the room looking for the object with their hands behind their back.
- When a player finds the object, they must sit back down and say huckle buckle beanstalk without letting others know where the object is.
- Continue playing until everyone has found the object.

Hint:

You may want to encourage players to continue looking for five to ten more seconds after they've found the object so that it's harder for others to know where the object was found.

Variations

If players are having a hard time finding the object, play hot and cold. Say hotter, hot and boiling hot as the player gets closer to the object and colder, cold and ice cold as the player gets further from the object.

Hula Ball

Group Size: small group (1-10)

Grades: K-6th

Equipment Needed: balls and hula hoops

Skills Practiced: communication, conflict resolution

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Set up the three hula hoops to look like Mickey Mouse's head in the play space. Make sure the hula hoops are touching each other. Put down cones or a marker to designate a place where the waiting students will line up.

Before You Start

- One player is behind each hula hoop and the rest of the players are waiting in the cheering line.
- Encourage students to use positive language (cheer on their classmates or say good job, nice try) and give high-fives as students go to the end of the line.

How to Play

- The concept of the game is to bounce the ball in another person's hula hoop.
- The ball can only bounce once in any hula hoop.
- Each player needs to hit the ball with any part of their hand into an opposing player's hula hoop after it has bounced only once in their hula hoop. If the ball lands on a hula hoop, or goes out of bounds before it bounces, the player who hit the ball needs to return to the waiting/cheering line for another try.
- If a player hits the ball and it bounces again in their hula hoop, they also need to return to the waiting line.
- If a player catches or holds the ball, that player needs to return to the waiting line.
- If the ball bounces more than one time before it is hit into another hula hoop, the player who let the ball bounce needs to return to the waiting line for another try.
- If the ball is returned before it is allowed to bounce, the player who returned the ball early needs to return to the waiting line.
- When a student returns to the waiting/cheering line, they will be replaced by the next student waiting in line.

Variations

Designating a serving hoop and having students rotate (similar to 4 Square)

Adding multiple hula hoops or additional balls

I Love My Neighbor

Group Size: any size

Grades: K and Up

Equipment: cones

Skills Practiced: self identification

Set Up

Position chairs/cones to form a circle. Make sure there is one less cone/chair than the number of players.

Before You Start

- Make sure everyone understands the rules.
- Cue players to think about what they will say if they get to be in the middle.
- Briefly discuss awareness and review how to play Ro Sham Bo in case there is a tie.

How to Play

- The person standing in the center of the circle begins the game by saying "I love my neighbor, especially my neighbor who..."
- They complete the sentence with a piece of information that is true for him/her.
 - Example: "I love my neighbor, especially my neighbor who was born outside of state, loves to play basketball, has a pet, is an only child, etc.").
- As soon as they are finished with the statement, everyone (including the person in the center) who this applies to moves from their cone to an empty cone that is not right next to them.
- The person who remains in the middle begins a second round of the game.

Variations

This game can also be called *Move Your Booty*. Players say *move your booty if.... Or Move If....*

Instead of running, this can be played in stadium seats with an audience as *Stand Up*. The leader says *stand up if*

I See, I See

Group Size: any size

Grade: PreK-3rd

Equipment Needed: no equipment needed

Skills Practiced: self confidence, awareness, creativity

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Get the students attention with attention getters. Again, demonstrate the boundaries of the space and their own physical boundaries.

Before You Start

- Make sure the students know to NOT make any body contact with each other (to prevent injury).
- Students need to also know where they can walk so that none of them are wondering off where they are not supposed to be.

How to Play

- Students begin walking around in the designated area. (Make the walk fun: have them do a cool walk, slow-mo walk, zombie walk, etc.)
- When Coach says the words "I See, I See," the students freeze.
- After the students freeze, they will ask Coach, "What do you see?"
- Coach will then say, "I See _____." The blank can be anything.
- Whatever Coach says, the students act it out in the designated area.
- An example dialogue for the game:
- COACH: "I See, I See!!"
- STUDENTS: "What do you see?"
- COACH: "I see a superhero flying in the sky!"
- [Students then act like superheroes flying in the sky.]
- After the students have successfully acted, Coach will then repeat the phrase, "I See, I See," and the game will continue in the same type of action/dialogue, but with a new action.

Indoor Marco Polo

Group Size: 10 and up

Grades: 3rd-5th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: cooperation, teamwork, verbal communication, listening and following directions

Set Up

Small area or classroom

Before You Start

- Choose one player to be 'it' and another player to be his/her guide.
- Have the rest of players spread out in the space and review that they are walking, not running.
- Review the boundaries with the players.

How to Play

- The player that is 'it' closes his/her eyes and calls out 'Marco' and all the other students respond 'Polo.'
- The player that is 'it' moves toward the rest of the students, trying to tag them, with help from the guide, who places their hands on the shoulders of the student that's 'it' and directs them away from objects throughout the room.
- When someone is tagged, the player who was 'it' becomes the new guide.

Variations

To increase difficulty, the guide can talk the person around obstacles instead of using his/her hands on shoulders.

Instant ID

Group Size: 5 and up

Grades: 1st-6th

Equipment Needed: a blanket or something that acts like a curtain

Skills Practiced: cooperation

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom.

Before You Start

- Divide into two teams.
- Have two people hold a large, thick blanket up like curtain

How to Play

- Have a person from each team stand facing each other with the blanket between, then quickly drop the blanket.
- First one to correctly say the other person's name earns a point for his team.

Variations

Have teams line up with their backs to each other, choose a person from each team to walk backwards until their backs are almost touching. Allow the other players to face each other. The team gives their player in the middle hints to who is standing behind them.

Jump the River

Group Size: any size

Grades: K-2nd

Equipment Needed: jump ropes

Skills Practiced: gross motor skills, coordination

Set Up

Place an object or two lines of tape or jump rope on the ground/floor for players to jump over.

Before You Start

- You can also use hula hoops or tape lines on the floor.
- To assist children in learning the fundamentals of jumping, have children practice by taking off on two feet and by swinging their arms forward when they jump.

How to Play

- Explain to the children that they are taking a walk in the woods and may need to cross a stream or river. Ask children to walk throughout the space and when they come to a river (rope, hoop, or tape line on floor) they need to jump over the river without getting their feet wet. Children should work independently of their classmates during this activity.
- When landing, children should land on two feet spreading their feet about shoulder width apart so they have a wide base of support when they land. After landing, children should proceed to and jump over the next river. Emphasis should be placed on landing on both feet at the same time without falling over.

Variations

Ask children to draw or paint their own rivers on large sheets of paper. Make sure they draw fish, trees, and other objects in and alongside their river. Tape children's drawings to the floor and pretend that the class is going on a trip. When children reach the different rivers scattered throughout the room they must swing their arms and jump over the river, landing on the other side without falling over.

Teachers may also want to integrate this idea with a book they read to children about rivers or ways people travel.

Teach and practice different jumping skills, such as jumping off of one foot. Or jumping and landing onto one foot or another.

Key Punch

Group Size: 10 and up

Grades: 2nd-5th

Equipment Needed: 25 sequentially numbered paper plates (or other number markers) and chalk or tape to mark off the playing area.

Skills Practiced: problem solving, teamwork, eye-foot coordination, communication

Set Up

Make a 4×6 (approx.) rectangle with tape or chalk. Place the 25 numbered plates randomly inside.

Before You Start

Allow teams a few minutes to strategize after the rules are explained.

How to Play

- Divide the group into teams (groups of 5-7 work best).
- Each group has to touch the plates in order from 1-25 as fast as they can. The coach will keep track of the total time of each attempt.
- Five second penalties are given each time two people are inside of the rectangle at the same time and when a plate is touched out of order.
- Have each team set a goal time. Time each attempt, alternating between teams, but allow time to give each team 2-3 attempts. Allow shorter times to strategize between each attempt.

Knots on a Rope

Group Size: any size

Grades: 3rd-5th

Equipment Needed: long Rope

Skills Practiced: problem solving, leadership, cooperation, teamwork, strategic thinking

Set Up

Open area

Before You Start

- Tie several evenly spaced knots into the rope(s).
- Have the players grasp the rope between knots with one hand, spacing themselves evenly.

How to Play

- The object of the game is to get the knots out of the rope, without ever moving or taking the one hand off of the rope.
- Players cannot switch hands.

Variations

After a group has succeeded at the activity, give them a time limit, increase the number of knots, or make the knots more complicated to untangle.

Blindfold a few members of the group (to enhance verbal communication and teamwork).

Land, Sea, Air

Group Size: any size

Grades: 1st-2nd

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: concentration, listening skills

Set Up

One line on the ground that can fit all players shoulder to shoulder with elbow room. (Use tape or chalk to create a line if necessary.)

Before You Start

- Have all players stand with both feet together and their toes behind the line.
- Explain and demonstrate the rules of play.
- Do a practice round so that all players understand the commands and where their feet must go.

How to Play

- One leader will call out commands—"land," "sea," or "air."
- Players' feet should always remain together.
- When the leader says, "air," players must jump into the air and land in the same place they started.
- When the leader says, "land," players must place their toes behind the line. If they are already behind the line, they must not move their feet. If they are in front of the line, they must jump backward with both feet landing behind the line.
- When the leader says, "sea," players must place their feet entirely in front of the line. If they are already in front of the line, they must not move their feet. If they are behind the line, they must jump forward with both feet landing entirely in front of the line.
- Players should always remain facing forward.
- If players make a mistake, they must run to a pre-identified location—such as another line—and touch it before returning to the game

Let's Go Fishing

Group Size: 10 and up

Grade : K-8th

Equipment: a small ball or bean bag

Skills Practiced: problem solving, leadership, cooperation, teamworks, verbal and non-verbal communication

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Determine clear boundaries.

Before You Start

- Players line up on a starting line.
- An object (such as a bean bag or rubber chicken) is placed a distance in front of the starting line.
- Explain that the object is an egg and as leader (parent fish), you are in charge of protecting that egg.
- Explain the object of the game: to get the egg from the leader and back across the starting line as a team.
- Tell players that while your back is turned and you are saying "Let's Go Fishing!," they may move, but once you finish and turn around they must stop. Practice this with the players.
- Check that everyone understands the rules.

Set Up

A visible starting line marked by cones, paint or surface differences. A rubber chicken, stuffed animal, cone or other small throw-able object.

How to Play

- The leader stands behind the object facing the players.
- The leader turns around with the players behind them and loudly says, "One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish"
- The players may only move while the leader is turned the other way and is speaking the phrase.
- When the leader finishes "blue fish", they turn around and all players must freeze.
- If anyone is moving after "blue fish," the whole group goes back to the starting line.
- If no players are caught moving, the leader turns around again and loudly says, "One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish" and the players get to move from their current spot.
- Once players get close enough to take the object from behind the leader, the players need to hide it behind their backs so the leader does not know which player has the object.
- Players still may only move during the phrase.

Level Up

Group Size: any size

Grades: K-3rd

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: self management, relationship skills

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Have the whole group gather in a contained area.
- Explain the evolution of all life in our group in this order: First the egg, then the chicken, the dinosaur, rock star, superhero.
- Each stage of evolution has a corresponding action – egg is low to the ground with hands over their head, chicken walks like a chicken and clucks, dinosaurs have arms outstretched like big jaws, etc.
- Demonstrate clearly the different steps and order of evolution, including what to do if you win or do not win Rock Paper Scissors (also called Ro Sham Bo).
- Make sure that everyone knows how to play Ro Sham Bo.
- Remind players that they can only do Rock Paper Scissors with someone who is at the same stage of evolution, this encourages players to interact with many different people, not just their friends.

How to Play

- Everyone begins as an egg.
- Players mix up, pair up and play Ro Sham Bo.
- The person who wins evolves to the next step, the person who did not win goes down a stage. If the player is already an egg they remain an egg.
- Players pair up again, only with someone who is in the same stage of evolution.
- When a player evolves all the way to a superhero, they are finished and can fly around the area.
- Game ends when all the players are also superheroes or when the time limit is up.

Variations

Allow players who lose Rock Paper Scissors to remain at their current stage of evolution. This makes the game go a little faster.

Line of Silence

Group size: any size

Grades: any grade

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: relationship building, teamworks, non verbal communication, following directions

Setup

Line students up against a wall or on a line on the floor.

Before You Start

- Explain that this is a silent challenge.
- Demonstrate or brainstorm other ways to communicate without talking.

How to Play

- Instruct students to line up in a particular order without speaking (for example, students may line up by birthday, the first letter of their first name, etc.).
- After the first round, have a discussion with the students about what was challenging, different ways they communicated with each other, and other creative ways they might do the next lineup.
- Give them a second category for lining up and start again!

Look Up

Group Size: 5 and Up

Grades: any grade

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: social comfort, following directions

Before You Start

- Begin with two circles of players
- Make sure players knows how to react to the commands

How to Play

- One person is chosen in each circle to be the caller who starts by saying, "Look down!"
- Everyone looks down at their feet
- When the caller says "Look up!" everyone looks up directly at someone else in that circle (no fair looking around).
- If two people are looking at each other, they both go to the other circle.
- If a caller leaves the circle, a new caller is chosen.

Magic Ball

Group Size: 4-25

Grade: PreK-3rd

Equipment: small ball (can be played with an imaginary ball)

Skills Practiced: creative thinking, cooperation, self control

Set Up

Have players sit in a circle.

Before You Start

- Talk about how to pass a ball, not throw it at the person next to them.

How to Play

- In the circle, have players think of three magic words.
- Repeat and practice the magic words in a particular order a few times.
- Come up with what the magic ball is going to turn into (ex. a sticky ball), say the magic words and all of a sudden the ordinary recess ball turns into a magic ball. Pick up the ball and pass it in a sticky motion... hands sticking to the sides of the ball.
- Have each player take a turn with the magic ball. Once the ball gets back to you, place it back in the center of the circle and come up with a new magic ball (ex. a heavy ball, an apple, a slippery ball, take student ideas).

Variations

Have players stand up in a circle, make the circle bigger or smaller. Use different types of passing (ex. bounce pass, chest pass, rolling).

Mouse Trap

Group Size: any size

Grades: 1st-2nd

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: cooperation, teamwork, strategic thinking

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Choose six people to make a “trap” by making a circle holding hands.
- Remind everyone to be aware of others around them.

How to Play

- One child is a “cat” with his or her back to the circle, but part of the circle.
- All others are mice going in and out of the “trap.”
- When the cat yells “snap!”, the arms of the trap go down to catch mice.
- The caught mice then become part of the “trap”.
- When only one player is left, the game ends and they become the cat for the next round.

Mystery Creature

Group Size: any size

Grades: 1st-2nd

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: verbal communication, strategic thinking, creative thinking

Set Up

Write the names of several different animals on the small sheets of paper.

Before You Start

- You will need small pieces of paper for every player, pen, and tape (optional).
- Review with players how to frame “yes or no” questions.
- Give players ideas for clue-finding questions, such as the animal’s environment/habitat, physical traits, etc.

How to Play

- Stick an animal to the forehead of one player, not allowing him/her to see what’s written.
- The player then asks yes or no questions to try and guess the animal that’s been assigned, such as “Am I big?”, “Do I have scales?”, “Am I a mammal?”
- This player continues until they answer correctly, then picks a new person to go.

Variations

Play in small groups or pairs.

Pass the animal card to all players except for one instead of sticking the name to the player’s forehead.

The opposite way. One person gets to look at the card, while everyone else asks yes or no questions, trying to determine what’s on the card.

Write cards with a different theme, such as Presidents of the United States or sports.

Movement Name Game

Group Size: any size

Grade : any grade

Equipment: no equipment

Skills Practiced: repetition, memorization

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Demonstrate how to speak loudly while doing a large movement.
- Have everyone repeat your name and movement.

How to Play

- The first person begins the circle rotation by loudly saying their name while at the same time doing a movement.
- The whole group repeats back the name and movement.
- The next student says their name and does a movement of their own.
- Again the whole group repeats their name and movement.
- This call and response continues around the circle until everyone has gotten a turn.

Variations

For a second rotation specify the kind of movement the students are to make- must leave the ground, must land on one foot, must spin around, etc.

Pre-K: Send students into the middle of the circle to do their movement so everyone can see.

Name Tag

Group Size: any size

Grades: 3rd and up

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: listening skills, memorization, learn everyone's name

Set Up

Pick a space where the entire group can stand comfortably in a circle.

Before You Start

- Go around and say everyone's name (if this is the first time playing, name tags help)
- Demonstrate safe tagging/high fives
 - Light touch, like butterfly wings
 - Unsafe tags/high fives: hard contact that might hurt the person being tagged
- Form a close circle with one player in the middle.
- Everyone except the player in the middle holds both hands out in front with their palms up.

How to Play

- The leader begins the game by loudly saying someone's name that is standing in the circle.
- The player in the middle then tries to tag that person whose name was called.
- The player whose name was called must say another player's name before s/he is tagged by the person in the middle.
- When a player gets tagged before s/he can say a name, s/he switches places and goes to the middle.
- The player who successfully tagged a person on the outside gets to call out a name to begin the next round.

Variations

- Have the players standing in the circle close their eyes so they cannot see the person in the middle coming towards them.
- Have the circle take a few steps back so the person in the middle has to run towards the players.
- Also called Name Tag.

Night at the Museum

Group Size: 5-30

Grade : K-5th

Equipment Needed: cone or object to be the "Flashlight"

Skills Practiced: self control, spatial awareness

Set Up

Make sure the space is clear of obstacles and there are boundaries for where you will be playing

Designate an area where students will go to do jumping jacks when they get caught moving

Equipment needed to play the game:

"Flashlight" for the janitor to hold (cone, marker, anything they can pretend is a flashlight)

Before You Start

- Talk to students about what statues do: Do they move? Do they touch each other? Do they make a lot of noise? But we all know they come alive and move around the museum at night, right?
- Remind students to be safe and be aware of where their friends are around them. We want to ensure students do not run into each other.
- Have students practice appropriate statue poses.

How to Play

- Everyone is going to be a statue, and they can't let the janitor catch them moving.
- The janitor will move slowly around the room, pointing their flashlight at the statues. If they shine the flashlight on a student and that student moves/laughs/etc., they will have to go to the designated area and do 5 jumping jacks (or consequence of your choice) to get back into the game.
- If playing this indoors/in a classroom, encourage students to be sneaky when they're moving around. You do not want the janitor to hear you moving!

Variations

For older students, this game can be combined with other games, such as silent ball, for an added challenge.

One Word

Group Size: 8-30

Grade: 3rd -6th

Equipment Needed: whiteboard/chalkboard, if possible.

Skills Practiced: listening, problem solving, verbal communication

Set Up

Indoor space with a white board, chalkboard, or notepad.

Before You Start

- Divide the group into two (or more) teams.
- Remind the students that no actions are allowed, only one word clues.

How to Play

- Select one volunteer from each team to come to the front of the room and face the class.
- Write down a word that can be easily seen by the rest of the class, but not the volunteers.
- Each team must brainstorm a one word clue to try to help their volunteer teammate guess the word. For example, if the word is "basketball", the team could give clues like "hoop" or "sport." They could not say something like "Boston Celtics" or "dribbling down the court." You cannot say any part of the word, like "ballin'."
- Alternate clues and guesses until one person guesses correctly. Take new volunteers and give the group a new clue.

Variations: If the group is very good at the game, offer up phrases as clues instead of single words.

Over Under

Group Size: 6-20

Grade: PreK-5th

Equipment: a small ball to pass

Skills Practiced: teamwork, cooperation, running, passing

Set Up

Designate a start and finish line. You will need one medium size ball (of any variety) per group of six to ten.

Before You Start

- Have everyone line up behind each other in groups of six to ten, spreading out one arm's length apart.
- Demonstrate how to pass the ball over someone's head then under someone's legs.
- Give the person in front of the line a ball.

How to Play

- Each line passes the ball back either over their head or under their legs, alternating methods with each person (first person passes over their head, second person passes under their legs, third person over their head and so on) as quickly as possible.

Variations

Have students shut their eyes while they are passing and receiving the ball.

Over Under Kickball in which the outfield must complete one over under instead of tagging the runner.

Over Under Relay in which teams attempt to move forward by running from the back of the line to the front each time.

Play with a basketball where the players must take (or make!) a shot at a basket before returning to the front of the line.

Add dribbling challenges such as left/right hand only or pivoting before passing the ball back.

Play with a soccer ball and add similar challenges.

Partner Introductions

Group Size: any size

Grades: 1st-2nd

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: listening, speaking, memorization

Before You Start

- Have the whole group gather in a contained area.
- Lead a discussion about attentive listening before beginning the activity. Help students define what “attentive listening” means and what it looks like. It is fully hearing what the other person is saying without interrupting and not thinking about another topic or how you want to respond while being spoken to. It includes facing the person who is speaking, making eye contact, nodding or other physical responses to what is being said, etc.

How to Play

- Group students into groups of two and decide who side A is and who is side B.
- Side A silently listens to side B for one minute (or shorter for younger groups) while side B introduces himself, sharing anything he wants to share about himself.
- Reverse roles so side A has introduced him/herself to side B.
- Gather the whole group in a circle.
- Everyone takes a turn introducing their partner, by name, to the group, sharing the information they have just collected about their partner.

Partner to Partner

Group Size: 10-20

Grade: preK-6th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: social comfort, listening skills

Set Up

Gym or classroom. If in a classroom, push tables and chairs back.

Before You Start:

- Warm-up with some basic stretches and a bit of cardio.
- Have students form a circle. Review rules and boundaries.
- Review different body parts. For instance: elbow, knee, toes, pinky, thumb, etc.

How to Play:

- One player is chosen to stand in the center; everybody else partners up and stands in the circle with their partners next to them.
- The player in the middle calls out commands such as "elbow to elbow," "back to back," "knee to knee." Players take these positions accordingly.
- When the person in the middle calls "partner to partner", all the players have to find a new partner while the person in the middle tries to get a partner.
- If they are successful the person left without a partner becomes the new person in the middle and starts to give commands.

Patintero

Group Size: any size

Grades: K and Up

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: gross motor skills, strategic thinking, hand eye coordination

Set Up

Create a court of grid lines on the floor in a rectangular shape about 5 to 6 meters divided into two columns with 2 to 3 rows.

Before You Start

- Review butterfly tags and respectful touching.
- Review proper methods of movement other than running such as shuffling, skipping, speed walking, etc.

How to Play

- Assign a student to the lateral line in the middle of the court and a student to each horizontal line in the middle and at the exit line (not the entrance line).
- Students assigned to the lines make up "defense." Defensive players may only move with their feet along the line they are assigned to and without stepping into the space.
- The rest of the students create a recycle line outside the court and are offensive players.
- The goal of the game is for the offensive players to get as many players through the court without being tagged by the defensive players.
- If an offensive player is tagged by a defensive player, he or she goes to the end of the recycle line to wait for his or her next turn.

Variations

Use a basketball to practice dribbling and defensive drills

The goal for offensive players is to make it in both directions without being tagged.

Create two teams and assign points for every offensive player that successfully crosses without being tagged.

Assign points for every tag. After three points defense and offense switch places.

Phrase Game

Group Size: 6-20

Grade: 3rd-6th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: following directions, memorization

Set Up

Can be played anywhere.

Before You Start:

- Each student selects a different phrase. (Have them make up their own, or have students pull phrases out of a hat.)

How to Play:

- All students say their phrases out loud one at a time.
- Leader chooses one student to begin the game.
- First student says their own phrase, then the phrase of another student.
- The student whose phrase was said, then says their own phrase and the phrase of another student. If a player hesitates or fails to recognize their phrase, they are out.
- For example: Will's phrase is "PLAYWORKS rocks!" Tamika's phrase is "There is no I in TEAM." James' phrase is "I like candy." Will begins the game saying, "PLAYWORKS rocks! There is no I in TEAM." It is then Tamika's turn to respond because her phrase was called out. Tamika says, "There is no I in TEAM. I like Candy." It would then be James' turn, and so on.

Pumpkin Face, Raisin Face

Group Size: any size

Grades: PreK/K

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: following directions, social comfort

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- A magic word can be used to get the students to stand up and move to the starting area after you explain the game to them.

How to Play

- Children and adults stand in a circle.
- Adult models what a 'Pumpkin Face' and a 'Raisin Face' look like.
- "Pumpkin Face" = open your body up. Stand on your tip-toes. Put your arms up and stretch. Stretch out your face by opening your mouth big, your eyes wide, and look like a scary Pumpkin Face.
- "Raisin Face" = Getting very low and stretching out your legs until you are sitting on the back of your legs (get very small). Close your face in by squinting your eyes, sucking in your lips, and tightening your cheeks.
- Have the children practice while also saying 'Pumpkin Face' or 'Raisin Face.'
- The adult leads the activity by going back and forth between calling out Pumpkin Face and Raisin Face. Children will then act out and stretch in character.

Push - Catch

Group Size: any size

Grades: 1st-2nd

Equipment: bouncy balls

Skills Practiced: listening, motor skills, throwing, catching

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Play starts in the middle with the ball.

How to Play

- Explain that the thrower in the middle will go around the circle tossing the ball to each person saying "Push" or "Catch"
- If the thrower says "Push" the person that the ball is thrown to needs to catch it.
- If the thrower says "Catch" the person that the ball is thrown to needs to push it back.
- If they do the correct motion to the command they remain in the game, if they do the wrong action they sit until the next round.
- Next round starts once there is one person left standing

Variations

The game can be played where the thrower can go in any order and can also incorporate snake eyes/faking out the students in the circle.

This game can be used for various league practices like volleyball but instead of saying "push" or "catch", you say "bump" or "volley".

Queens

Group Size: any size

Grades: K-3rd

Equipment: cones

Skills Practiced: listening, creativity, spatial awareness, following directions, balance

Set Up

In a classroom, students seated at their desk with cleared aisles or similar set up

Before You Start

- Divide the class into two teams using an inclusive grouping strategy of your choice.
- Identify one student from each team to begin the first round of the game.
- Review butterfly tags and respectful touching.
- Review proper methods of movement for indoor tag: speed and type of steps.
- Remind the students still seated that their job is to cheer for the classmate on their team.

How to Play

- Give each of the two students in the first round a cone to place on top of their heads.
- Tell the students how they should be moving during this game. For example: heel-toe walk, speed walk, tip toe walk, etc.
- Have each student review which color is represented by the cone on top of his or her head.
- The facilitator will give the two students a couple seconds to spread out from each other in the classroom.
- One student will be the tagger and the other student will be "it."
- The facilitator will announce which color will tag the other. For example: "Red tag yellow."
- The student with the red cone becomes the tagger and will move toward the student with the yellow cone. The student with the yellow cone becomes "it" and will move away from the tagger. Both students are balancing the cone on their heads.
- A point is earned for the red team if the student with the red cone tags the student with the yellow cone. A point is earned for the yellow team if the student with the red cone loses the cone from atop his or her head before tagging.
- Once the tagger tags "it" or the cone falls off the tagger's head, the round is over and the students or the facilitator pick two new students to start a new round.

Rhythm Detective

Group Size: 8-20

Grade : K-5th

Equipment: no equipment needed

Skills Practiced: cooperation, problem solving, creative thinking

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Players begin in a circle
- Explain and give a few examples of how to create a rhythm with hands and feet, such as using clapping, snapping and stomping.

How to Play

- A person is chosen to leave the room.
- A player in the circle is chosen to start a rhythm. Using their hands or feet, players clap, snap, stomp or otherwise develop a rhythm.
- Everyone in the circle copies the rhythm.
- The leader of the rhythm changes it every few seconds and the rest of the group must follow suit, also changing the rhythm.
- The person who has been out of the room returns and tries to notice who is leading the rhythm.
- They have three guesses.
- If they guess correctly, the leader of the rhythm becomes the detective and the previous detective chooses the next rhythm leader.
- If they can't guess in three guesses, they choose the next detective and someone else becomes the rhythm leader.

Ro Sham Bo Relay

Group Size: 10 and up

Grades: 1st-6th

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: listening skills

Set Up

Set out a semi circle (U shaped) path using cones or other markers. You can also use half of a basketball court.

Before You Start:

- Divide into two groups; each group in a single file line.
- Each line of players starts at the ends of the "U".
- Review how to Ro Sham Bo (also called Rock-Paper-Scissors).
- Make sure everyone knows where to go when they win and when they don't in Ro Sham Bo.

How To Play:

- The goal of the game is for a player from one line to make it to the start of the opposite team's line.
- The game begins on a signal from the leader.
- The first players in each line begin walking (or skipping, hopping or running) on the path towards each other.
- When the first two players from opposite teams encounter each other on the path, they stop and Ro Sham Bo until one player wins.
- The winner continues walking on the path in the same direction, while the other side allows their next player to start walking on the path.
- Again when the players encounter each other, they do Ro Sham Bo until one player wins.
- The game continues until one player makes it all the way to the other side. Then that player rejoins her/his line and two new players begin.

Variations:

Make the path longer or shorter.

Play in a straight line instead of a U shape.

Add obstacles to the path.

Tally scores by giving a point to the team whose player makes it from one side to the other.

Give players a category to name one thing from as they meet in the middle. For example, each side has to yell out the name of a fruit or a vegetable, a natural environment, a state, etc. before they Ro Sham Bo.

This variation is great for teachers who want to reinforce class learning in an active way.

Ro Sham Bo Rockstar

Group Size: 10 and up

Grades: 1st-6th

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: social comfort, verbal, nonverbal communication

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom.

Before You Start

- Review the rules of Rock Paper Scissors (also called Ro Sham Bo).
- Make sure everyone understands the rules and how they support the person who won Ro Sham Bo.

How to Play

- Group everyone into pairs.
- Have each partner group introduce themselves and play a round of Ro Sham Bo (or enough rounds to break a tie).
- Everyone who does not win becomes the winner's cheerleader, following them and shouting 'Go _____!'
- The winner moves on to play another winning student.
- Each round, the winner advances to play again and the non-winners and any previous cheerleaders are now all cheering for that winner.
- The game continues this way until it is down to two players and the whole group is cheering for one or the other.

Sequence Touch

Group Size: 10 and up

Grades: PreK-2nd

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: listening, memorization, sequencing skills

Set Up

Designate an area that has objects to run to and tag (i.e. basketball hoop, fence, grass and so on).

Before You Start

- Demonstrate how to avoid other people when running towards the object you are trying to tag.
- Always keep your head up.
- You do not have to always go straight, move side to side to avoid running into other people.
- Explain the importance of being aware of yourself and others around you.
- Show them where the return location is after they tag all of the objects.

How to Play

- The object of the game is to remember and tag all of the objects listed as quickly as you can and return to the designated area.
- For example, when you say the magic word “banana”, everyone must go tag a basketball hoop, a fence, and something green then return to where they are before you count down from 10.
- Have them repeat the instructions back to you before you say the magic word

Variations

Have them touch the objects with different parts of their bodies

Skip, hop, or act like an animal while tagging the objects

Silent Ball

Group Size: any size

Grades: K-6th

Equipment: bouncy balls

Skills Practiced: non verbal communication, hand-eye coordination

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have players spread out standing up in the available space.

Before You Start

- Explain the rules of play and check for understanding with yes or no questions.
- You will need one medium size ball, any that is appropriate for the players catching skill level.

How to Play

- Leader counts down, "3, 2, 1, silent" and passes the ball to another person in the play area.
- A player must sit down if:
 - They drop the ball.
 - They make a bad pass.
 - They talk or make noise.
- Play continues until only one person remains.
- Last player standing gets to be first to throw the ball in the next round.
- All players who were sitting may return to play at the start of a new round.
- If the game is progressing slowly, add a challenge by limiting time to throw, having all players spread out, asking everyone to keep one hand behind their back at all times and so on.

Variations

For young, beginning players: Have youth sit or stand in a circle. See if they can pass the ball around the circle without anyone laughing or talking. Add more balls for a challenge round.

Silent Trees! Start with players sitting on the ground, when a player makes a mistake, s/he stands up and becomes a tree. Trees must remain planted, i.e they cannot move his/her feet. The tree can re-enter the game by deflecting or intercepting a pass. The person who was unsuccessful at making a pass becomes a tree.

Shadow Shadow

Group Size: 2-100

Grade: preK-6th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: agility, body awareness, reflexes

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom.

Before You Start

- Demonstrate how to move and how to be a shadow.
- Choose a volunteer to help you. Exaggerate and make funny movements to add fun to the game.
- Designate a signal to begin moving and to stop moving.
- Emphasize the importance of awareness, to avoid contact with your partner and others.

How to Play

- The object is to continuously follow a partner without running into them.
- Identify what type of movement is possible (walking, fast walking, running, etc.).
- Designate signals for the pairs to: begin moving around the play area, stop moving. Change roles after one minute so both sides have the chance to lead.

Variations

Add various movements: skipping, hopping, leaping, crawling, etc.

Sleepy Bunny

Group Size: any size

Grade: preK-5th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: body awareness, following directions, gross muscle control

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Create boundaries for the play space.

Before You Start

- Remind students they need to find their own space- there is no touching in this game. Ask how a bunny hops and what a sleepy bunny might look and act like. Decide on a "magic word."

How to Play

- The leader of the game calls out the magic word.
- Once the magic word is called, the students can hop around like bunnies and make as much noise as they want (if you are playing in a classroom, have students hop quietly).
- When the leader says "Sleepy Bunny", all students must do their best impression of a sleepy bunny. Often, this involves lying down (and possibly even snoring).
- The leader walks among the bunnies, looking for movement.
- If a student moves, they must perform a task (i.e. jumping jacks, running in place for 10 seconds, etc...) to get back in.

Variation

Instead of looking for movement, the leader may look for the "best" sleepy bunny, who will then receive a high five— and/or can then choose the next animal. Changing the animal— sleepy cow/dog/cat/lion/monkey/etc... (students must act and sound like the animal)

Splat!

Group Size: any size

Grades: 2nd-6th

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: quick thinking, concentration

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Group forms a circle with one player in the middle
- Make sure everyone understands the importance of safety and control
- Check that all players know the rules and what happens if you are last to splat

How to Play

- The player standing in the middle of the circle is the “splatter”.
- The splatter randomly points to someone and shouts “SPLAT!”
- The player pointed to must duck down; then the two players on either side of the “ducker” must “splat” each other by pointing to the other and saying “SPLAT!”
- The last one to splat sits down, and the player ducking stands back up.
- The game continues until there are two players left, have them Rock Paper Scissors to determine who will be the new splatter in the middle.

Variations

Instead of sitting down when last to splat, have that player switch with the player in the middle.

Or have them perform a task to get back in the game.

Superstar

Group Size: 6-30

Grade: 2nd -6th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: listening, speaking

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Designate clear boundaries.

Before You Start

- Put students into pairs.
- Demonstrate with volunteers, examples of commonalities that meet the criteria. "I wouldn't tell my partner that I have brown hair because he/she can see that. I wouldn't say that I am in elementary school because my partner already knows that. I might say, my favorite food is pizza. What's yours? Or I might ask, 'What city were you born in?'"

How to Play

- Each group will have 1-2 minutes to find out how many things they have in common that they didn't already know, and are not visible.
- When the time is up, have youth get into a circle, standing next to their partner. One-by-one each pair will share one thing they have in common.
- After sharing their commonality, if others in the group also share that commonality they will put their hands in the air, lunge forward, and yell "SUPERSTAR!"
- The next pair then shares their commonality and the process continues until all pairs have shared.

Variations

Have youth switch partners and do a round where they have to find out what they have in common around a specific topic (sports, school and so on). Having youth do a round where they can't speak and can only act out ideas is not only fun, but helps them with their nonverbal skills.

The Bone

Group Size: any size

Grades: K-2nd

Equipment: something to act as a "bone" and a blindfold

Skills Practiced: strategic thinking, listening skills

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Form a circle players sitting down.
- Pick one child to be the dog. The dog sits in the center of the circle on a chair, blindfolded, guarding his or her "bone" (placed under the chair).
- The rest of the players are silent.

How to Play

- The leader chooses one student by silently pointing to them to try to steal the bone without getting caught.
- The dog has to bark and point in the direction from which they think the stealer is approaching.
- The dog only gets three chances to bark.
- If the stealer makes it back to his or her spot before the dog catches them, the stealer gets to be the dog.
- If the dog catches the stealer, the game continues with the same dog and the leader chooses a different stealer.

This is my Nose

Group Size: large group

Grades: 3rd-5th

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: problem solving, listening to directions

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- The group forms a circle, standing shoulder to shoulder.

How to Play

- The leader starts in the center, walks up to a player in the circle, points to his or her own elbow and says, "This is my nose."
- The player must point to his or her nose and say, "This is my elbow."
- The leader goes up to another player, points to another body part and misnames it.
- In order to move out of the middle, the center person must make a player in the circle mess up and say or point to the wrong body part.
- When this happens, they trade places.

Tic Tac Toe Trivia

Group Size: any size

Grades: K and Up

Equipment: tape, chalk, cones, or jump ropes to make a tic-tac-toe board

Skills Practiced: strategic thinking, memorization, teamwork

Set Up

Can be played inside or out. Make a tic-tac-toe board with tape, chalk, cones, or jump ropes.

Before You Start

- Remind the players about the importance of working together, but only answering when it is their turn.
- Show players how to represent "X" (Standing with both arms and legs extended wide) and "O" (arms raised above your head in a full circle).

How to Play

- Divide players into two teams, Team "X" and Team "O".
- Take one volunteer from each team and ask a question related to something they are learning in class (math problems, spelling words, etc.). Whichever student answers correctly first gets to choose a square to stand in for their team.
- Choose a new volunteer for each team and repeat until one team has three in a row.

Variations

One can also play this game with bean bags. If they get a question right, they win the chance to throw a bean bag into a square. (Adds an element of physicality with mental skills).

Tic Tac Toe Toss

Group Size: any size

Grades: 1st-4th

Equipment: bouncy balls

Skills Practiced: hand-eye coordination, spatial awareness

Set Up

Designate a large play area with clear boundaries that has room for students to be able to throw

Before You Start

- Make the tic tac toe court
- Split Teams Up
- Designate Colors
- Demonstrate what three in a row looks like

How to Play

- Each team will have a set of colored balls, spots, or Frisbees.
- A person from Team 1 will throw their object attempting to land the object in an open square on the game board. Then a person from Team 2 will do the same.
- The team to finish the tic tac toe first, either horizontally, vertically, or diagonally signals the start of a new game.

Tornado

Group Size: 5-15

Grade : 3rd-6th

Equipment: small ball

Skills Practiced: strategic thinking, social comfort, throwing, following directions

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Make sure the students understand the object of the game is to not have the ball
- Students understand that only the Tornado spins, and that they must pass the ball to the student next to them.

How to Play

- Students make one big circle.
- A single student begins in the middle as the Tornado.
- The class passes the ball around the circle while the Tornado in the middle spins around 10 times.
- When the Tornado stops, whoever has the ball becomes the next Tornado.

Variations

Allow students to alter the direction of the ball, have more than one ball going at the same time, or alter the number of spins.

May work with kindergarteners later in the year.

Tower of Power

Group Size: any size

Grades: K-6th

Equipment: tape, newspaper, paper plates, etc.

Skills Practiced: teamwork, communications, brainstorming

Set Up

Prepare a supply kit for each group of students that will be building a tower (5-6 students in each group).

Make sure each group has an equal number of supplies.

Equipment needed to play the game:

Tape

Newspapers

Paper plates

Balloons

Straws

Before You Start

- Let students know their goal for the day will be to work with their group to build the tallest freestanding tower possible. They are not allowed to lean it against anything or attach it to anything permanent in the room/on the playground.
- Tell students there will be two minutes for planning and then two rounds of building. In between rounds you'll have a chance to debrief together and share ideas with other groups.

How to Play

- First, groups will have 2 minutes to brainstorm how they will build the tower. During this time the supplies will be in front of them but they are not allowed to touch them – only talk and plan.
- When time begins, the group will have 10 minutes to build the tallest tower possible. Give students a 5 minute, 2 minute and 1 minute warning. When time is up, nobody is allowed to touch the tower.
- While debriefing, have someone go around and measure the towers, keeping track of how tall each one is.
- Debrief: What went well for your group in that round? What could you have done better? Is there anything you see that another group did that you're going to try? Do you have any questions for them?
- Share the height of each tower and the total tower height in the room.
- Have the group set a goal for the total height they want to reach for the next round.
- Give 6-10 more minutes for building, giving the same time warnings.
- Measure each tower's height and discuss what went better in the second round and what they learned about themselves or their teammates by doing this activity.

Traffic Jam

Group Size: any size

Grades: 3rd-5th

Equipment: cones

Skills Practiced: strategic thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, verbal communication

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Line up cones in a straight line with one more cone than people

Before You Start

- Line people up on every cone, except the one in the middle.
- All people on one side of the middle cone will turn right; the others will turn left (so that they are facing each other).
- After explaining the rules, allow the group time to strategize.

How to Play

- The object of the game is to get all players to the opposite side of the middle cone than they started on.
- Players can only move to an unoccupied space.
- Players can't move backwards or turn around.
- Players may move around one player to an open space.
- Players may not move around more than one person at a time.
- If a team reaches a point where they can no longer move, they must start over in their original positions.

Variations

If there are more than 10 people or so in the group, you can break up into two teams to see which can do it faster.

For older players, you could have them try to solve the algebraic equation of how many moves it would take.

Trash Can Basketball

Group Size: 2-20

Grade: K-6th grades

Equipment Needed: cones; an empty trash can or container; and a soft ball, beanbag, or wadded up piece of paper.

Skills Practiced: hand eye coordination, team work.

Set Up

Indoors. Set up one empty container, 2-3 cones to mark where students will stand in line, and three other markers of varying distances from the container.

Before You Start

- Separate students into teams of 6-8 and have them line up behind the cones.

How to Play

- Ask a question related to something the students are learning in class (math problem, spelling word, etc.). Only the students at the front of each line can answer.
- If someone from the back of the line answers, that line is disqualified for that round.
- Whoever answers the question first wins the right to shoot the "ball" into the container.
- They have three choices:
 - Shoot from the closest spot (slam dunk) for 1 point.
 - Shoot from the medium spot for 2 points.
 - Shoot from the farthest spot for 3 points. After each round, the contestants return to the end of the line.

Variations

If the shooter misses, the other students at the front of the line get a chance to shoot (greater involvement for everyone). Give the shooters only one designated spot to shoot from (speeds up the game). Let all students shoot (good for K-1 st).

Under the Sea

Group Size: 10-30

Grade : PreK- 4th

Equipment: no equipment needed

Skills Practiced: listening, following directions, spatial awareness

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Designate clear boundaries.

How to Play

- The leader explains that they are in a submarine under the sea, and are looking out the window at ocean creatures. The leader will be giving commands of the different things they want to see on their adventure.
- Commands
 - **Fishies:** the students put their hands together and wiggle them like a fish, swimming (walking) around saying “Blub, blub, blub, blub!”
 - **Seaweed:** Students stand with their legs shoulder width apart, arms above their head, swaying silently. Silent seaweed can be used throughout the game, and is also a great command to use as a cool down
 - **Rock:** Students crouch on the floor with their knees pulled to their chest.
 - **Sea Horse:** Students gallop, swinging an imaginary lasso saying “Yee-haw!”
 - **Pirate:** Students stop in one spot, make a hook with their hand and say “Arrrr!”
 - **Treasure Chest:** Students stop in one spot, pointing to their heart and sing “Ahhhhhhhh!” in a high-pitched voice.
 - **Starfish:** Students stop and stand with arms stretched like a starfish
 - **Shark:** Students make a shark fin on their head with their hands and stop around the room saying “BA DUM BA DUM!”

Up, Down, Stop, Go

Group Size: 5-20

Grade : PreK- 4th

Equipment: no equipment needed

Skills Practiced: concentration, listening skills

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom.

Before You Start

- Have players stand up either by their seats or spread around the room/play area.
- Demonstrate the appropriate actions for "up", "down", "stop", or "go".
 - On "Up", players should squat down.
 - On "Down", players should jump, or stretch up as high as they can.
 - On "Stop", players should move around the play area in a specific movement (such as walking, jogging, running, skipping, hopping, etc.) or, if players cannot move around the play area, they should run in place.
 - On "Go", players should freeze.
- Players not doing the correct movement can complete a task (such as jumping jacks, give the leader a high five, etc.) before returning to the game.
- Do a practice round first so that all players understand the commands and movements that go with them, and understand what to do if they get the movements mixed up.

How to Play

- Call out the commands "up", "down", "stop", or "go" one at a time.
- For the first few minutes, watch the group and stop when players do the wrong movement and prompt them to complete the designated task (jumping jacks, etc.)
- After the first few minutes, call out the commands without stopping for those who make a mistake. They can just quickly do the task and get back in the game.

What are you doing?

Group Size: any size

Grades: 3rd-5th

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: creative thinking, listening, following directions

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start

- Explain the rules of play.
- Demonstrate how to play.
- Have players explain the rules back to you or to someone next to them.
- Players get in line and the first two face each other.

How to Play

- Player A does a motion like in charades, and then player B asks "What are you doing?"
- Player A must name a motion that doesn't match the motion that they are doing.
- Player B must do the motion that player A named.
- Player A then asks, "What are you doing?"
- Game continues until someone makes a mistake. When a player messes up, they go to the end of the line and the next person steps up.

Variations

Having multiple lines is going to increase participation.

This game can also be played in pairs, eliminating the rotational style and shortening the time of play.

What Changed?

Group Size: any size

Grades: any grade

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: memorization, problem solving, creative thinking

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom.

Before You Start

- Pick four people to be up front.

How to Play

- They stand in front of the group in a frozen posture and the rest of the group memorizes how they are positioned.
- Then, the group turns around and the four up front choose one thing each to change about their stance or appearance.
- When ready, the group turns back around.
- If they notice something different about any of the four, they raise their hand to guess what is different about someone up front.
- If that person guesses right, they trade places with the person up front.
- After the group has guessed all four people upfront changes, a new round begins.

Who is in the Zoo?

Group Size: any size

Grades: K-5th

Equipment: a ruler or yardstick

Skills Practiced: listening, recall, awareness

Set Up

Designate a safe play area for the entire group to stand in a circle.

Before You Start

- Identify a long object that two people can hold, such as a yardstick.
- Have players stand in a large circle, allowing some space between each person.

How to Play

- One person in the middle will close his/her eyes and spin slowly with the yardstick. Everyone in the circle must move in a clockwise motion to a beat from one or more players.
- The player in the middle will gently tap the yardstick on the ground three times to let the circle know it's time to stop moving. The player in the middle will then, with her/his eyes still closed, extend the yardstick to someone in the circle.
- Whoever the yardstick points to must grab the end of the opposite. If two players are not sure who is closest to the yardstick, they will silently play rock paper scissors. The player in the middle asks to hear an animal. The player on the other side of the yardstick must, to the best of their ability, make the sound of the animal.
- The player in the middle gets one guess to name which player is making the animal sound.
- Players who make the sound become the new person in the middle.

Whoosh Ball

Group Size: 10 and up

Grades: 1st-6th

Equipment: none

Skills Practiced: concentration, following directions

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

How to Play

- Game facilitator begins with an imaginary ball - the "whoosh" ball
- motions in this game include: "whoosh", "whoah", "zap", "boing", and "freak out"
- The facilitator will introduce one motion at a time allowing all players an opportunity to practice the motion before introducing the next motion.
- Pass the ball around the circle in one direction with each player saying "whoosh" while passing the ball to the next player
- To stop the whoosh ball and change it's direction the player receiving the "whoosh" may choose to say "whoa" while placing an open palm to the whoosher. This stops the progression of the whoosh ball and the person who was whoa'd must turn and pass the whoosh to the player on their other side.
- If a player is whoa'd on both sides this is a "double-whoaed whoosh" and the whoosh ball must be passed all the way around the circle without interruption until it returns to the player where it began.
- To pass the whoosh ball across the circle the recipient of the whoosh ball may "zap" the ball to another player. To "zap" a player steps forward, clapping together both hands pointing them to one player while making eye contact. The recipient of the "zap" may "zap" the ball to another player or "whoosh" the ball to their left or right. You may not "whoa" a "zap". You may not "zap" the player to your immediate left or right.
- The recipient of the "whoosh" may also choose to say "boing" while squatting down and bouncing back up. All players in the circle must mimic the same sounds and actions. The person leading the "boing" may "boing" up to three times in a row then must pass the "whoosh" continuing in the same direction.
- The recipient of the "whoosh" may also choose to call a "freak out". In a "freak out" all players must leave their current place on the circle, yelling with their hands in the air, and find a new place on the circle. The person who called the "freak out" will pass the "whoosh" to the next player.

Variations

The game may be played with eliminations

"Super freak out" - caller must include a mode of transportation to use during the freak out.

Wright Family Vacation

Group Size: any size

Grades: K-6th

Equipment: balls

Skills Practiced: listening skills, patience, teamwork

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have an open space where all of the participants can stand or sit in a circle.

Before You Start

- Have the class stand in a circle (within arm's reach of the person next to them).
- Provide each participant with an object (tennis ball, etc).
- Stand on a chair, desk, and be loud

How to Play

- Instruct the players that you will read a story.
- Whenever they hear the word "left", everyone must pass their object left.
- Whenever they hear "right," pass their object to the person to their right.
- To see if they are alert you can start by saying something like "Let's get right down to it," or "Oops, I left my glasses at home." If the students do not pass their object when you say right and left, remind them they have to do it anytime they hear one of the words.
- The story goes:

One day the Wright family decided to take a vacation. The first thing they had to decide was who would be left at home since there was not enough room in the Wright family car for all of them. Mr. Wright decided Aunt Linda Wright would be the one left at home. Of, this made Aunt Linda Wright so mad that she left the house immediately yelling, "It will be a Wright cold day before I return."The Wright family now bundled up the children, Tommy Wright, Susan Wright, Timmy Wright and Shelly Wright and got into the car and left. Unfortunately, as they turned out of the driveway someone had left a trashcan in the street so they had to turn right around and stop the car. Hey told Tommy Wright to get out of the car and move the trash can so they could get going. Tommy took so long they almost left him in the street. Once the Wright family got on the road, Mother Wright wondered if she had left the stove on. Father Wright told her not to worry he had checked the stove and she had not left it on. As they turned right at the corner, everyone started to think about other things that they might have left undone.No need to worry now, they were off on a right fine vacation. When they arrived at the gas station, Father Wright put gas in the car and then discovered that he had left his wallet at home. So Timmy Wright ran home to get the money that was left behind. After Timmy had left, Susan Wright started to feel sick. She left the car saying she had to throw up. This of course got Mother Wrights attention and she left the car in a hurry. Shelly Wright wanted to watch Susan get sick, so she left the car too. Father Wright was left with Tommy Wright who was playing a game in the back seat.With all this going on Father Wright decided that this was not the right time to take a vacation, so he gathered up all of the family and left the gas station as quickly as he could. When he arrived home, he turned left into the driveway and said "I wish the Wright family had never left the house today!"(You can vary your speed with how fast you read it and it's a great way to get teachers involved and it really doesn't get old).

Where are You?

Group Size: 10-30

Grade: preK-5th

Equipment Needed: none

Skills Practiced: visualization, spatial awareness

Set Up

Have children seated in the play area/classroom.

Before You Start

- Review signals for closing and opening their eyes.
- Students should be able to repeat all rules and signals.
- Give an example of a question, have students practice with their eyes open.

How to Play

- Allow students 1 minute to observe/study their surroundings as if they were detectives.
- On your signal, have students close their eyes and imagine the room.
- Ask a variety of questions:
 - How many doors are there? Point to the door that takes you to the hallway. Point to the door that takes you to the playground. What colors are the walls, ceiling, and floor? What color is the rug? Point to the fire extinguisher. Students can point to, say or raise their hand to give the answer.

Variations

Allow students to take over the role of facilitation. Play in complete silence, so all students can experience success by allowing them to process at their own speed. For older students, ask more difficult and more detailed-oriented questions

Wink-Ums

Group Size: 10-30

Grade: 3rd -6th grades

Equipment Needed: Chairs (enough for 1/2 the number of players, plus one extra) **Set Up:** Make a circle with the chairs

Skills Practiced: awareness, strategic thinking

Set Up

Can be played outside, in a gym or in a classroom. Have students form a circle with a little bit of room between each one.

Before You Start:

- Demonstrate safe tagging:
 - Light touch, like butterfly wings on the shoulder.
- Unsafe Tags:
 - Hard contact that might cause the person being tagged to fall.
- Demonstrate how to stand behind the chair with your head down and hands behind your back.
- Demonstrate how to sit in the chair.

How to Play:

- Divide the group in half.
- Have one group sit in the chairs and the other group stand behind the chairs.
- There should be one chair with no one sitting in it but has a student standing behind it, they are the "winker".
- The students standing behind the chairs should have their head down and hands behind their back.
- The students sitting should look at the winker and sit all the way back in their chair. If the winker winks at a sitting student they need to try and sneak away from their chair and make it to the empty chair without being tagged by the student behind them.
- If tagged, students switch positions (sitting student stands behind their original chair and standing student takes a seat) and the same winker tries again. If not tagged, the student standing behind the new empty chair becomes the winker.

Zip Zap Pop

Group Size: any size

Grades: 3rd-5th

Equipment: None

Skills Practiced: listening, following directions, concentration, social comfort

Set Up

Designate playing space large enough for the group to form a circle (cafeteria, gym, classroom).

Before You Start

- Have the group stand in a circle. Explain the three different actions, 'Zip', 'Zap', and 'Pop':
- First pass a 'Zip' around the circle, accompanied by placing a hand on top of the head with the fingers pointing at the person on either side. Pass the word and movement around the circle in the same direction.
- Pass 'Zap' around, accompanied by putting the hand below the chin (at the player's shoulder).
- A 'Pop' is done by pointing with two hands palms together to anyone in the circle, who then passes a Zip to someone else around the circle. Make sure there is eye contact with the person receiving the 'Pop'.
- The actions must always come in the same order, Zip, Zap, then Pop.
- Once everyone is familiar with the words and movements, begin the game.

How to Play

- The leader starts with a 'Zip' and passes it to the person either to their left or right.
- It is up to the person who receives it which direction to pass it, and they do a 'Zap'.
- The next person must 'Pop' it, sending it to someone across the circle.
- 'Zip' and 'Zap' can be sent in either direction.
- If a person hesitates they are out and can go around the outside of the circle heckling the group, saying the words Zip, Zap, Pop in people's ears, trying to distract them.