

Games ala Kids & Company - October 2000

----- in alphabetical order -----

A What? : Players sit in a circle. One player will begin by taking any small object and passing it to the right. As it is passed, the player says: "This is a (example: cucumber, light bulb, fish)". The person it was handed to responds by saying: "A what?". The original person will repeat: "A fish". The second player will now pass the object to the third player and say: "This is a fish". The third player says: "A what?". The second player looks back to the first player and says: "A what?". The first player will then repeat: "A fish". The second player will look to the third player and say: "A fish". This process continues until the object gets all the way around the circle. To add a twist to the game, start a second object going the opposite way.

Ball Race Track (K - 1st) : A circle of players pass a ball around their circle (the track) as fast as they can go. Leader can time the children to see how long it takes to get the ball around the circle a certain number of times. Leader will also call out different ways to pass the ball, e.g. bounce, toss, roll, hand off, bend over and roll through their legs, etc.

Bean Bag Tag (All Ages) : All players balance a beanbag on their own head. If you get tagged by "it" or your beanbag falls off, you are frozen until someone else puts it back on your head or until "it" drops his/her beanbag, then everyone is unfrozen. Move around the playing area without touching your bean bag, if you do touch it, put it onto the floor - you're frozen!

Beehive : Play area is divided into two parts. Set up two small mats on each side of the play area. Divide children into two teams. The goal is to try to knock down the mats with koosh balls. You could have 2-5 balls per side depending on the number of children playing the game.

Big Base : Put four mats down to use as bases. Divide group into two teams. Play just like kick ball. When the team has three outs or the whole team has kicked, the other team is up. Rules can change with each game. Outs can be if you catch a kick, if you touch the person with the ball, if the kick hits the ceiling, etc.....

Bongo Ball : Players form two teams. A large ball is placed in the middle of the gym. Establish boundaries on all four sides, also establish a midpoint line which players can not cross. The object is to move the large ball past the opponents end line by throwing small balls at it. If a team is successful they they gain a point. If the larger ball crosses one of the sidelines both teams lose one point. **Players must remain on the outside of the end lines and side lines at all times.**

Broken Spoke : Arrange people like a spoke sitting cross legged, one behind the other in five lines of app. six people. Pick one person to walk around the outside of the wheel - this is the caller. The caller breaks the spoke by tapping the last player in one of the rows. As the caller does this they say " come with me" or "Go away". The players in that row must get up and run in the same direction as the caller or run in the opposite direction of the caller. The last person that gets around the circle and back sitting in line is the caller for the next round. **All runners must around the spokes that are sitting - Think safety!**

Capture the Flag : Divide into two teams. Choose a middle line as your territory divide. Establish your team "base" in the back of your playing area. Also put a ball/flag in the back of your playing area. Designate a person(s) to be the flag/ball guard . Other members of the team will venture out to try to capture the opponents flag/ball. When they capture it, they can either run it back to their territory or throw it to another team member in their home territory. If you are tagged in the other teams territory then you must go to their "base" area. To be rescued, a fellow team member must successfully reach you. You both can get "free back" to your own side as long as you remain connected.

Caterpillar : Everyone stands in a single file line - Two feet between players. Each person reaches down and puts their right hand out in front of them and through the legs of the person in front of them. Take their left hand and reach through their own legs towards the person behind them. When everyone has grabbed hands, a team leader will call out. (i.e.: One two three right leg, One two three left leg). The caterpillar then walks through the play area. Younger kids could lay on their stomachs and inch forward by hanging onto the feet in front of them.

Circle Keep-Away (K - 4th) : A circle of players pass a ball around their circle, trying to keep it away from "it" who is in the center. When "it" gets it by catching or knocking the ball to the floor, the person who last had the ball is the next one in the middle. If "it" makes contact with someone while getting the ball, they stay in the middle.

Circle Tag : Create two equal circles of players - one inside the other. All players face the center of the circle. One player "the chaser" stands in the center of the circle. Another player "the it" stands outside both circles. Player on the outside runs around the circles (weaving in and out). The player from the center tries to tag the player that is running around. If the outside player stops and stands in front of a player in the inner circle, the person in the outer circle (behind them) must now become the "it" and must try to stay away from the center "chaser". Switch "chasers" and "it" throughout the game as players become tired.

Club Guard : All players form single circle around a pin in the middle. One person is chosen to guard the pin. The people in the circle try to knock over the pin with a ball. The guard must prevent the ball from knocking over the pin by blocking the ball with their hands, legs, body. The people in the circle try to pass the ball around the circle to try to catch the guard off guard. Who ever knocks down the pin becomes the new guard. If the guard knocks it over, whoever has the ball at that time becomes the new guard.

Cooperative Musical Chairs (K-3 rd): This is like regular Musical Chairs except that there are only winners and no losers. When someone finds themselves without a chair to sit on, find a lap to sit on instead. By the end of the game, there will be one chair and everyone sitting on someone's lap. To keep this from being too much weight on each other, teach players to sit with their legs together so people can sit with their weight on their knees. **Game works best when all players are of approximately the same size.**

Dho Dho Dho : Create two teams. Players line up 10-15 feet behind center line. First team picks a Dho Dho and sends the player out to the other team. The Dho Dho must hold their breath while saying "Dho Dho Dho" and trying to tag as many players from the other team as possible (all at the same time). The other team tries to capture and hold onto the Dho Dho. *The only players allowed to touch the Dho Dho are the players the Dho Dho has tagged.* If the Dho Dho tags people and makes it safely back across the center line, all tagged players join the Dho Dho's team. If the other team holds onto the Dho Dho until the Dho Dho is out of breath, the Dho Dho stays with that team.

Do You Love Your Neighbor? : The game starts with chairs arranged in a circle, one less than the amount of people in the group. The person without a chair is the caller for the first round. This person stands in the middle of the circle. The people sitting down ask: "Do you love your neighbor?" The person in the middle has 2 options for their answer. It can be: "Yes! I love all my neighbors that.... (example: are wearing shoes with velcro)." or "No! I don't love my neighbor!" If the caller says "Yes", then all the people which are sitting and have velcro shoes must get up and move to another chair, at least 2 chairs away from theirs. The caller also tries to sit down in any open chair. The person who does not have a chair is the next caller. If the caller says "No", then every person must get up and move to another chair, at least 2 chairs away.

Elbow Tag : this is a variation of Circle tag. Players form a couple by finding a partner to hook elbows together with. Hand of unhooked arm goes on your waist so your elbow sticks out - ready to be hooked onto. Spread couples around the space. One person is “chased”, another person is the “chaser”. If the “chased” person locks elbows with anyone, they are safe and the partner on the other side of the couple is now the “chased”. Change "chasers" anytime in the same fashion.

Fireman's Ball (K - 1st): Create a circle of mats to form a wall around a group of 10 to 15 firefighters who will sit on the floor with their backs to the mats. Each firefighter will have a lightweight plastic bowling pin in their hand and there will be one or two whiffle balls on the floor for them to slap around. The pins and the ball(s) are to stay in contact with the floor.

Explain that they are all firefighters and that their job is to protect the walls of their house from the ball of fire by using the bowling pin to zoom it away from the wall that they are sitting in front of. If a firefighter hits the ball into the air or gets up off of their bottom (in an effort to hog the ball) ask them to stop and count to ten. Or an alternative is to have them help put walls back up, retrieve balls that get out of the circle or pretend to squirt water on the walls where the fire has touched them.

Ghost in the Graveyard (All Ages) : One person is chosen as the "Grave Keeper". All other players are ghosts. The ghosts scatter while the grave keeper counts down (you choose the number) and has to freeze when the grave keeper gets to zero. The ghosts then try to sneak up on the grave keeper without being seen. If the ghosts are seen moving by the grave keeper they are "out" and watch the remainder of the game (or they are out for a predetermined amount of time). If a ghost tags the grave keeper on the back without being seen, they are the new grave keeper and the game resumes.

Giants, Wizards, Elves : Create two teams. Teams huddle together and decide on their character (Giant, Wizard or Elf). The whole team becomes the same character. Players walk up to center line and chant “Giants Wizards, Elves” (three times). Each team then shows the character they have decided to portray. Giants chase Wizards, Wizards chase Elves, and Elves chase Giants. While one team runs away, the other team tries to tag them. If you are being chased and you make it past your “safety line” (15-20 feet back from the center line) without being tagged you stay on your team. If you are tagged by someone from the other team, before you cross your safety line, you become a member of the other team. Continue play.

Group Juggling (ALL AGES): Eight to fifteen players stand in a circle. A leader will toss a catchable object (shoe, beanbag, whatever) to someone across the circle. That player will then toss the object to someone else. Keep doing this and remember who you tossed to and who you are catching from as you create the group's juggling pattern. Call out the name of the person to whom you are tossing the object to. Once everyone has become a part of the pattern, the leader will keep the object going in the same pattern and gradually add in more objects. Soon the air will be full of flying objects and laughter.

Happy Birthday : All players go to one end of the gym. One player remains in the middle - Middle players yells out month or Happy Birthday. If your birthday is in the month that the middle player calls out - you need to try to run across the play area. Watch the out of bounds lines! If you are caught - you must sit on your bottom and try to tag a person running across in the next rounds. If you catch someone you get to join the running game again (with free backs). If caller yells Happy Birthday - everyone must run across the gym.

High Ball (ALL AGES): Players stand around center player who tosses ball straight up high into the air. Whoever catches it runs towards the goal line, if tagged, ball goes to tagger for another toss into the air. Or runner can toss ball to new runner. (from: World's Best Outdoor Games of Native American Ancestry, pg. 57)

Alternative : When ball is tossed and caught, the catcher is "it" and tries to tag as many other players as possible before they run past the goal line.

Hot Box : Place two bases at opposite ends of the gym - base must be 20 feet away from the wall. For example place bases at each free throw line- app 60 feet across. Game consists of two catchers and up to 15 runners. Object of the game is to try to steal bases - If you steal 10 bases you become a catcher - all runners start in the middle of the bases. The ball is thrown high in the air and runners run to either base - they must count out loud as they get to each base. The first runner to get to ten is the new catcher. Each time a runner is tagged by a catcher with a ball in their hand they earn an out - If they get two outs they must erase all the runs they have earned and start over at zero.

How Do You Do ? : Begin the game by sitting in a circle. Have one person stand outside the circle. This person is the "host" of the party. The host walks around the circle, then taps someone on the shoulder. That person then stands up and faces the host. They shake hands. The host says: "Hello, how do you do?" The "Guest" replies: "Fine, thank-you". They repeat this sequence three times. After the third time, they each run around the circle in opposite directions. When they meet on the other side of the circle, they must stop, shake hands and repeat the sequence three more times. After the third sequence is said, they continue running until they get back to the spot where the guest was seated in the circle. The host should then take the vacant spot and the guest now becomes the new host. Variations: hop, skip, walk backwards, around the circle.

Human Mix master : The game starts with the group standing in a circle. The object of the game is for all players to simultaneously walk across the circle and reform the circle in the same order. After crossing the circle, players should turn back towards the center of the circle. Practice walking across the circle with your hands at your sides.....avoid bumping into each other. If players accidentally bump into each other they must say " BEEP ! " . Variation : Close your eyes and try it.

Island : Spread out a table cloth or twister mat. Have a group of 10-20 stand on the mat. Have the leader then say: Everyone jump in the ocean ! " At this time everyone moves off the mat and swims around the area. The leader then folds the mat (or island) in half. The leader now yells:"Shark !" and everyone needs to get out of the water and find safety on the mat. Continue the game making the mat smaller and smaller. See how small the leader can make the island !!

Kick Ball : line up version : Just like kick ball but when the ball is kicked, the first person in contact with the ball grabs it and everyone lines up behind this person. The ball is passed over the head to the end of the line. If the player who kicked the ball makes it around the bases before the ball gets to the end of the line the runner scores a point for their team. Everyone gets one lineup and then teams switch ups.

Kick Ball: pass version : Just like kick ball, but when the ball is kicked, the ball is passed from home to 1st, 2nd,3rd base and back to home without dropping. If the runner makes it to all bases before the ball makes it back to home , the runner scores a point for their team. All players have a turn to kick and then teams switch ups.

Knock Your Socks Off (ALL AGES): All players are to have only socks on. Object of the game is to get the socks off of each other without having yours taken off.

For safety - anyone who stands up or kicks violently is out of the game for a count of thirty or so.

Knots : Divide into small groups (5 children per group). Have each group stand in a circle. Each person then reaches out with both hands and grabs the hand of someone across from them. Make sure that you do not take the hands of the same person. Each player should have the hand of two different players. After all players have grasped a hold of the other players hands, they have now become a "human knot". The idea is for each group to try to cooperatively untangle themselves by weaving and crawling through each others arms and legs. The result should be a circle of untangled arms. Players may end up facing the wrong direction when your done, but that's ok.

Lapkta (Russian Baseball) (2-6 th): This game is played on a field, or in a gym, with a rectangular shape and a goal line at one end and a batter's line at the other end. Two teams, one lines up at one end of the field on the batter's line, other team spreads out to field the ball. Pitcher from fielding team tosses one pitch to each batter - every batter gets only one chance to hit the ball during their team's turn at bat. Let the pitcher know that everyone will have a lot more fun if pitches are made easy to hit.

When a batter hits the ball, all of his/her team tries to run to the other end of the field to the goal line without getting caught. Fielding team scrambles to get the ball and use it to tag as many of the batting team runners as they can before they reach the goal line.

After each member of batting team has had their one chance to get a hit, the next team is up to bat. Play this game for fun, scoring is not necessary.

Lightning : Players line up on free throw line with two basketballs. Object is to stay in the game! Your first shot must be from the free throw line. Next shots can be from anywhere. You are out when the player in line behind you makes a basket before you.

Loose Caboose : Create trains of three or four players. Players put their hands on the hips of the player in front of them to create the train. Also need a player to be the switcher and the loose caboose. The object of the game is for the switcher to tag the loose caboose before the loose caboose can hook onto the back of any train. If the caboose hooks onto a train, the engine of the train needs to break away and become the new loose caboose. If the switcher tags the caboose, the caboose becomes the switcher. The old switcher hooks onto the back of any train and releases the engine as the new loose caboose. Trains need to try to avoid the loose caboose as they play.

NO! NO! NO! : Players sit in a circle on the floor. The object of the game is to pass a sentence from person to person changing one word each time. The first person starts with a simple sentence. For example: "I went to the zoo." The next person responds by saying: "NO! NO! NO! I went to the moon." The next player might say: "NO! NO! NO! Cookie Monster went to the moon." If someone gets stuck, go on to the next person. Encourage unusual word combinations, it's okay if it doesn't make sense.

Octopus : An octopus needs an ocean - The ocean is your playing field - One player goes to the middle of the ocean and sings to all players at the end of the ocean. "Fishy Fishy swim across my ocean". All players then run from one end of the ocean to the other end. If they are caught - the player must freeze in place and face the direction players are swimming. These players become the octopus tentacles and aid the octopus in catching the rest of the fish in the ocean. When the octopus invites the fish to swim again - the can now be tagged by the roaming octopus as well the frozen tentacles. The game is over when everyone is a part of the octopus tentacles.

Pac Man : One person is it. All kids must run on the lines in the gym. The Pac Man must stay on the lines too. When you are touched by Pac Man you need to sit on the line and try to touch a runner. If you touch someone you get to rejoin the game and move along the lines again.

People To People : Everyone finds a partner and stands facing them. The leader will start by saying: " Back to back." or "Head to foot."The players will then do whatever is called until the leader calls: "People to People." At that point, everyone, including the leader, runs to find a new partner. The last person without a partner is the new leader.

Pin Guard : Divide into two teams - Divide play area in half. Place three pins in the trench area (goal area) of each territory. Players cannot go into the trench. The object of the game is to knock all three pins down before the other team does. Players are given up to 5 Koosh balls per team . If a player catches another players ball before it bounces, the thrower is out of the game and a team mate needs to either catch a ball or knock a pin down in order to bring that player back in. When all three pins are down on one side, the game is over!

Pin Thief : This game is the same as capture the flag - but, you place three pins in the back of each territory. At the opposite back corner of the play area is your teams 'home base'. All captured opposing team members are placed into the home base. The goal is to capture one pin at a time and bring it to your territory - you can run the pin to your territory or throw it to a team member - it must be caught without dropping it if it is thrown. To rescue team mates, the players in the opposing team home base can create a body link to stretch across enemy territory. Team members who are still free in their own territory can connect to the body link (which must remain connected) and bring it back across the middle line to safety. The goal is to get all three pins from the opposing side.

Rain : Group should sit in a circle and then close their eyes. The leader starts the rainstorm by rubbing her hands together. The group starts the motion one at a time (clockwise). When a player hears the sound next to them they should change what they are doing and copy the sound. The storm continues to grow around the circle. When the hand rubbing reaches the leader, the leader changes the motion and begins to snap her fingers, then after this motion goes around the circle, the leader intensifies the storm by clapping her hands, then slapping her thighs, then stomping her feet.... When everyone is stomping their feet the storm begins to subside. Slowly, the leader reverses the motions until everyone is rubbing their hands together again. When the rubbing motion gets back to the leader, the leader stops and takes the hand of the person next to her. The game ends with everyone holding hands. During the game, players can quietly nudge the person next to them if they need help hearing the sound changes.

Red Handed (ALL AGES) : Circle of players sit on the floor (or stands) around someone who is "it". A 'red' penny is secretly passed around the circle while "it" tries to guess who has the penny. If you're caught red-handed, you become the next "it".

To start the game, "it" counts to ten with eyes closed while the penny starts to get passed around the circle. To fool "it", everyone is to pretend that they are passing the penny even when they don't have it. To spice up the game, the leader can secretly add another penny to the game.

Ships Across the Ocean : All players start at one end of the gym with a player in the middle. All players sing "Ships across the ocean Ships across the sea Captain Captain you can't catch me". The Player in the middle calls out a color if a player is wearing that color they run across the ocean. If caught, person sits on their bottom where they are caught and tries to tag someone running in the next rounds. If the person tags someone they get back in the game (free backs).

Slap Happy (ALL AGES) : Circle of players stands with one hand held out, around the "happy slapper", ready to have their hands slapped. Someone calls out the name of a player who is a part of the circle. Slapper will then try to slap that person's hand . If your name was called, you try call out the name of someone else in the circle before you get your hand slapped. Slapper will then try to get that person's hand instead of yours. If you get your hand slapped, pull your hand away, or call a wrong name, you become the next "Happy slapper".

Smaug's Jewels (ALL AGES) : Smaug is the dragon in the Tolkein (Hobbit) Trilogy who guarded the treasure.

One person stands over (no kneeling) a bean bag or tennis ball. This is his/her treasure to protect. Circle of hobbits stand around Smaug and try to snatch the treasure without being tagged by Smaug. If tagged, they're out. If a hobbit grabs the treasure without dropping it, grabber is next Smaug.

Sock Soccer : Divide into two teams. All players need to take shoes off and be wearing socks. Stress that youth must remain in control of their bodies at all times. Use koosh balls to play.

Speed : Players sit in a circle. Announce that this is a timed event. Say your name and start the clock. The person next to you then says their name. Continue around the circle until it comes back to you. Stop the clock. It's amazing how much faster a group can say their names when they are being timed. This is NOT a good game for learning names. Players tend to slur their name in order to be as fast as possible. Variation: start the name sequence simultaneously to your left and right.

Spider Web : Youth divide evenly into small groups with two extras being the fly's. Each small group is a spider web. Spider Webs join hands and try to tag the fly's. When a fly is captured they become part of the web, and the player at the opposite end of the web now breaks off and becomes a fly.

Stand Up : The game starts with everyone having a partner of equal size. Sitting back to back with your arms wrapped around each other at the elbows. Together as a team, try to stand up. You cannot use your elbows as an aid to help push yourself up from the floor. Press your backs together as you try to push upward. After this accomplishment, add two more people to the team. Then add more and more.... There is more laughter during this game than anything !!

Stuck in the Mud : Players can run anywhere in this game. One person is it. If you are tagged by the person who is it - you must freeze standing up with your legs apart and hands on your head. You are now stuck in the mud. You can become unstuck, if a player crawls between your legs from the front to the back. The leader can switch the "it" anytime during play.

Super Silent Speed ball : A group of players spread out across the play area - Ball is thrown from one player to another. If a person talks they must sit down. If a person throws a bad throw and receiver does not touch ball, thrower sits down., If person throws ball below knees and receiver does not catch it - it is out - in other words it needs to be a fair throw, The person throwing the ball can move one foot to pivot. The last person standing wins. Good room/gym wind down/ transition game.

Taffy Pull : Create an inner and outer circle of players. Inner circle becomes the "taffy". Inner circle huddles together - wind and knot legs, arms, and hands together to create a tight ball of taffy. Players hold on to each other as tight as they can. When the inner circle is ready, the outer circle tries to pull the taffy apart! (carefully)

Team Handball : Divide playing area in half. Divide kids into two teams. Each team has a goal area that all players cannot go into. This area is the free throw area. The goal is for the teams to pass the object from one member to another and try to score by hitting the back wall behind the goalie. Players cannot run with the object. Each time the goalie touches the object they must switch the object with one of the other five objects available. Game ends when time is called and the team with the most pints wins. Soft Frisbee, koosh football, koosh kick ball are all possible objects.

Toss out the Trash : Players divide into two teams. The gym is divided in half with a middle line established. Balls are spread around the gym. The object is to clear your side completely of all balls. Game can be varied(i.e. players may only use feet, one hand, or throw between their legs).

Transformations : Divide the group into two or more smaller groups. The object of the game is for each group to form a human representation of whatever the group leader has called out. The leader calls out the name of an object (i.e.: school bus, helicopter, skyscraper..) Players must then decide how they are going to make this item . Give a person in each group a chance to be the leader. It is funny to see the wild concoctions of people wrapped together to create an idea.

Triangle Tag : You must have at least four people to play. Three out of the four create a triangle.. The fourth person stands outside the triangle. One person in the triangle becomes the target - the other two people protect the target person. The fourth person is the chaser. The chaser tries to tag the target while the protectors move around to protect the target. The chaser tags the target's hands or arms by going on the outside of the triangle. When the chaser tags the target - players switch places and a new target is designated. You cannot reach through the triangle.

Ultimate Frisbee : Divide into two teams. Play on large field area with end zone on each end of play area. The object is for one team member to catch the frisbee in their designated end zone in order to earn points. When holding the frisbee, player may only take three steps and have only 10 seconds to pass the frisbee. No guarding allowed on the player with frisbee. When frisbee touches the ground, the last team who touched the frisbee loses control of the frisbee.

Vortex : Have group hold hands in a large circle. The leader then drops the hand of the player on the left (or right). The leader then guides the chain of hand holding players around the inside of the circle. The last person in the chain should remain stationary until the human spiral winds itself tightly towards the center. When the leader has taken enough turns through the center so that it is tight, the leader switches direction and begins to lead the group in the opposite way. The leader can then make several different types of route changes as the human chain is moved along. This is a nice quiet game to help settle a group before moving from an active area to an inactive area. You can sing a song as you do this game if you wish.

Wall Ball : No teams for this game! The object of the game is to remain in the game. Using one tennis ball , a person tries to catch and throw the ball at the wall. If you don't catch the ball, or you bobble the ball, you need to run and touch the wall before another person gets the ball and throws it at the wall. If you don't make it to the wall before another person throws the ball against the wall, you earn an "out" . If you get three outs you are "eliminated" from the game. Elimination can mean whatever the group decides i.e.: you are out and you count to 50 then return to play.

Wink : Create inner and outer circle of players. Inner circle sits cross legged and the outer circles kneels. The extra person "the winker" joins the outer circle while a marker (frisbee) is placed in front of the winker. To start: the "winker" gives a wink to someone in the inner circle. Person in the inner circle tries to tag the frisbee while the partner behind tries to stop this from happening. The person tries to tag the frisbee before the rest of the group counts to six. If the person gets to the frisbee in time, he/she joins behind the original "winker", and the partner becomes the new "winker". If the player is unable to tag the frisbee, the partners switch spots. Players need to be considerate of others as play. This game can sometimes be rough. The trick is to use tactics and be quick!

Another version of WINK : Create a large circle. 1-2 players leave the area. Group chooses a "winker". Players that left now return and try to figure out who the "winker" is (5 guesses). The "winker" tries to be secretive, but has to wink at people. As players are winked at, they must faint.

Yurt Circle : Form a circle with an even number of players facing the center- shoulder to shoulder- holding hands. Players sound off by saying "in" "out" around the circle. Team leader counts to three and the ins lean in - at the same time the outs lean back. All bodies need to remain stiff as a board.

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Kids & Company, Hopkins School District #270, Minnesota Oct. '99
with a few from Rick Gravrok Sept. 2000
(send your best game ideas in to be added to the list)