

# Outdoor Play

Playing games of any kind has a genuine reward. Some children prefer to observe the game from a distance before joining in. Not only does the child learn the game, but there are other important lessons inherent in the act of playing. Never make a child play. Let them choose to play. However, if they choose to not play, do not reward them with special privileges. Have a watching station for those children, who choose to not join in.

As a child I remember the older kids teaching us games. We played outside in the back yards and on the streets. We also played in farmers fields and playgrounds. Everywhere and anywhere were places to play some kind of game. Some games used balls, other games used ropes or string. Most games did not use an equipment at all.

The importance of a games leader today can not be understated. A, "Big Kid", or parent or even a teacher, taking on the role, can not be understated. Children are playing video games, computer games and outside play is being neglected. Medical statistics show fewer broken arms as kids are not riding bikes or climbing trees as much as they used to do. So once again the responsibility of teaching play falls on the shoulders of teachers and child care workers. Parents too are picking up on this.

Children reaction to playing games in different ways.. Some will just watch from a distance trying to figure out how they fit into the game. Others will join in. Some will play for a minute, and then stop playing right in the middle of the game. They are seeking a comfort zone. The type of game and level of difficulty makes a big difference. Games for certain ages won't work and must be adapted. Once again the teacher or parent has to use trial and error to determine, what will work for the age of the children.

# Essential Learning Outcomes

- 1 to get along with others
- 2 to think on their feet spontaneously!
- 3 to work cooperatively for common goals
- 4 relieving tensions, and gaining self confidence
- 5 coordination
- 6 exercise judgement

## Different Types of Games

### Chasing Games

It is a lot of fun for the teacher or parent to pretend that they are a giant. Walking slowly with arms outstretched, verbally telling the children I am going to catch you. The children will run and try to get away from the giant. If the giant catches a child, they soon learn that it's a pretend game. The giant doesn't do anything except let the child go and chase after someone else. Children need to know that a large adult is capable of playing without hurting the child.

**Team Games** These games require that the game leader somehow divide the group into two distinct groups. This can be done easily, by having the girls be one team and the boys the other. It can also be done, by having some arm bands or handkerchiefs tied onto one team.

### Who is IT? Tag and Chasing Games

Tag has been played forever. There are many different tag games. How do you determine who is going to be IT? There are some great rhymes that have been used for many years. I am sure you have some of your own,

# Rhymes for Determining Who is It!

**Potato Doers** Children make a circle of 4-6 children. Each child holds hands up around their chest in a fist with the thumb side of the hand up. The potato doer then uses one hand and gently taps onto the the other children's hands one at a time saying the rhyme. When the potato doer comes to their own hands, the chin is substituted for the second hand. The sort version is the first one whose hand is tapped on the or is IT. The long version is the last child to have both hands eliminated is IT

Here's the rhyme One potato two potato three potato four, five potato six potato seven potato or

**Rhymes for Feet** The children stand in a circle and one touches each foot reciting the rhyme. The short version, the first one out is IT! The long version is the last one out is IT.

Eeenmy Meeny Eeeny meeny miny moe, catch a tiger by the toe, if he holers let him go Eeeny Meeny Miny Moe

Micky Mouse built a house, how many bricks did he use?  
The child last touched gets to answer. i.e. 4

Then the counter counts 1 ,2, 3, 4, touching one foot at a time.  
Repeat till there is only one left. That person is IT.

Engine engine number 9 going down the chicago line, if the train falls off the track, do you want your money back. Each syllable is one count, as the counter goes from foot to foot. The last child touched gets to answer.

# **The Games**

## **Freeze Tag**

One person is IT. They tag any child and call out freeze! That child is now frozen and must stand with feet apart. Any other child can crawl under their legs and out the other side, saying unfreeze! The last one tagged is then IT.

## **Kick the Can**

One person is IT. They guard a can. If IT tags you then you are frozen or have to go to a designated place and wait till someone kicks the can. When someone kicks the can, all the children run away. If IT catches all the children, then a new IT must be chosen.

## **What time is it Mr Fox**

One child is Mr or Mrs Fox. The fox sits on a stump or rock. The other children stand about 10-15 feet, or 3-5 meters away. The group calls out, "What time is it Mr. Fox?" The fox replies, It's time to take 2 bunny hops forward. All the children hop a little closer. Then the children say again, "What time is it Mr. Fox?" The fox replies, take 4 baby steps forward, The children move forward. When they get close the fox replies "Lunch Time!" and begins chasing someone. Whomever they catch is the next fox.

## **The Foxes Den**

This is a silent version of the Mr Fox game. The fox sits in a den. This can be under a tree, or behind a rock etc. The children creep closer and closer. Suddenly the fox chases without warning. First one to be caught is the next IT.

## **Cat and Mice Tag**

The cat hides behind a tree. The mice come closer and scratch on the tree. Then the cat chases. First mouse to be caught is the new cat. This could also be called Fox and Rabbit.

## **Red Light Green Light**

It stands in a designated place. The rest of the children stand about 15 or 20 feet away. It says green light with hands covering their eyes. They can also turn around facing away from the other children. Then It opens eyes or turns around saying Red Light! The children must freeze! If they keep moving, It sends them back. The first child to touch IT, is the next IT.

## **Mother May I**

This game is like What Time Is It Mr Fox? It tells the children to take a certain number of steps in a certain style, I.e. take 3 baby steps, take 4 bunny hops, take 2 scissor steps etc. Before the children can take the steps, they must say, "Mother may I?". It then can say, yes you may or no you may not! The children get closer and the first one to reach It is the next It.

## **Japanese Tag**

Players run around. IT chases and tags 1 player, Now they are it too and, they must put one hand wherever they were tagged. Play continues till everyone is tagged.

**One Two Three Get Off My Apple Tree** This is a basic tag game with a base. The base is a place a child can not be caught. If the children stay on the base too long, IT calls out, One Two Three Get Off My Apple Tree! Then everybody must get off. It's fun to have two bases in this game. They run back and forth. If IT catches a child, then that child is now IT.

**Two Line Tag** This is another version of the game above. The children stand on a line. This can be a rope or chalk line. When it says, One Two Three Get Off My Apple Tree, the children must go to the other line.

## **Nose and Toes Tag**

Players run and get away from IT. They are safe, if they hold their own nose with one hand, and their toes with the other.

### **Touch Wood Tag**

Touch wood tag Players are safe from it if they are touching wood

**Hopper Tag** This game is from the tribes of the Sahara in Africa. All players stand in a line. IT pretends to be a lame animal and hops on one foot. The other players run up and gently touch him, trying not to be tagged. The player tagged is the new hopper.

**Turtle on his Back Tag** IT chases everyone around. Players are safe, when they lay on the ground with all four limbs up in the air.

### **Frog Tag**

Players run around it trying to catch anyone. If a player squats they are safe from being tagged.

**Bear in the Pit** Children hold hands in a circle. One child is chosen to be a bear. The children chant, Bear in the pit, bear in the pit, bear can't get out of it. When the bear gets out, everyone chases the bear. Whomever catches bear is the next bear. More than one bear is OK too!

### **Frog and Dragonflies**

Here's a little chant the children can sing. "Frog in the sea can't catch me can't catch me." Frog sits on a lilly pad in the middle of the circle. Use a mat for the lilly pad. The dragonfly's fly closer and closer. Whomever frog tags in the next frog

### **Cat and Mouse or Fox and Rabbit**

A circle is formed with the children looking outward. A mouse or rabbit is inside. The cat or fox is outside. The circle tries to keep the predator from catching the prey. Don't let them in.

**Lion and Goat** African game same as above game. If the lion get's in the circle the children let the goat out. If the lion catches the goat they switch places.

**Catch the Dragon's Tail** This is almost a circle game. The children hold hands in a line. One end is the dragon's head, the other end is the dragon's tail. The children must work together to catch the tail. The head pulls the line around and the tail does the same.

### **Catch the Snake.**

IT has a rope about 6 feet long. IT runs around, and the other players try to catch the rope. Whomever catches it first becomes the snake keeper.

### **Cat and Dog Tag**

The children are divided into two groups. They make two lines. The teacher points to each line back and forth. The children do not know if they are cats or dogs. The teacher keeps pointing back and forth and then while pointing to one line says "Dogs!" The dogs then chase the cats catching them and bringing them back to the starting place.

### **Spring**

In this game two teams are chosen. One team runs and hides. The other team attempts to find and catch the other team's members. Then they bring them back to a designated place. If a child runs up and touched the designated place, they call out "Spring!" Everyone runs away.

### **Switcheroo**

Two groups separated by a short distance try to switch places. When IT calls out Switcheroo IT tries to tag someone, whomever gets tagged is the new IT.

### **Jump Across the Creek**

Two lines are drawn about 2 feet apart. The children attempt to jump across the creek. If they land in the creek they must pretend to take their shoes and socks off and put on dry ones before trying again. Then the teacher makes the creek a little wider. The teacher can show two different kinds of jumps, 1 standing broad jump, 2 running jump.