

OUTDOOR SUMMER GAMES

When I think of summer, I think of long, lazy days spent with my friends in the neighborhood, playing games outside until the fireflies came out and it was time to go to bed. Nowadays we tend to overschedule, trying to keep up with everyone else. Try to spend at least some days this summer like those lazy days of your youth. I'll bet it's what your kids will remember most.

Here are some neat group games for your kids to try out this summer.

Baby in the Air -

This game is played with a large ball. Each kid picks a number in the beginning of the game. The oldest child takes the ball and throws it in the air, crying "baby in the air number...<whatever>" then runs away. The child whose number is called grabs the ball and yells "freeze" (he must have the ball to yell that). Then the child with the ball takes three steps toward any other child and throws the ball at that child. If he hits him, the child gets a B, if he misses, the thrower gets a B. When a child gets hit four times getting a letter each time to make "BABY" he or she is out and so on till there is one child who is left.

Human Knot -

Players form a close circle. Then everybody reaches out and holds two other people's hands. Now, they must try to untangle the "knot" without letting go. They may have to climb over arms or crawl under arms.

Red Rover -

In this game, the kids form two opposing lines and attempt to "break through" the opposing team's line. At first, two teams are chosen of equal size, and they form two lines, facing each other and holding hands. One side starts by picking a person on the opposing team and saying "Red Rover, Red Rover, send <Jason> right over." Jason then lets go of his teammates and begins a headlong rush for the other line. His goal is to break through the line by overpowering the kids' hold on each other. If Jason breaks through, he chooses one person for the opposing team to join his team, and they both go back and join in their line. If he fails to break through, Jason becomes part of the other team. Each team alternates calling people over until one team has all the people and is declared the winner. Note that since all the players are on the winning team at the end, there really are no losers in this game.

Sardines -

The whole group hides their eyes and counts out loud together to 50, while one person hides. Then everyone begins to look for the sardine. When you spot the sardine, you don't tell anyone, then when no one is looking, you slip in and hide with the sardine. Eventually everyone starts to disappear, and the one left notices he's all alone, and rather embarrassed to be the last one left. The first one to find the sardine, gets to hide as the sardine in the next round. Imagine 5 or 10 kids all huddled together in a tight spot trying to keep from laughing and being seen. Great fun!

Blindman's Bluff -

Blindfold one player and spin them around 3 times. The blindfolded player tries to tag one of the other players, who may crouch low, sneak up behind the "blindman" and yell "Boo", or stand still and keep very quiet. Eventually though, someone will get careless and be tagged. That player is then blindfolded for the next game.

Ducks that Fly -

When the leader says, "Ducks fly", and flaps his/her arms, all the players must flap their arms. The leader goes on to say, "Cats meow", with appropriate sounds or gestures, which must be imitated as above. He/she may continue, "hens cluck", "horses trot", and so on with appropriate gestures and sounds. When he/she chooses, he/she may substitute a false statement and motion, such as, "cows bark", "elephants fly", and so on. If the player imitates the false motion, he/she is penalized. If any player makes a false motion or sound at any time, he/she's out (can be given three chances).

Flying Dutchman -

The players stand in a circle with their hands joined. The player who is IT runs around the outside of the circle and slaps any two joining hands, the owners of which become flying dutchmen. They run in opposite directions around the outside of the circle. The player who was IT steps into the circle. The last player back to the place

in the circle is IT for the next round.

Good Morning Captain -

The captain sits slightly apart from the group and is blindfolded. The leader indicates a player who says "Good Morning Captain!" The captain tries to name the speaker. If he responds "I said good morning captain!" If the captain correctly identifies the speaker he retains his position. If not the player becomes the new captain. Players should try to disguise their voices.

Mouse Trap -

The group needs to be split into 2 groups. One group is the trap and the other are mice. The trap stands in a circle holding hands in the air. The leader should not be facing the group. The mice have to run through the trap. When the leader yells, "MOUSE TRAP", the trap lowers their arms.

Whoever is inside the trap at this point is caught and becomes a part of the trap. The last mouse left is the winner. At this point the 2 groups should switch roles.

Quaker Meeting -

Nobody can keep a straight face in this game! Players sit in a circle, fairly close together. The leader solemnly taps the knee of the person to his right, and each player in turn does the same. When that action gets back around to the leader, he then taps the cheek of the player to his right. And so on, with the nose, ear, eye, mouth, or until a player dissolves into laughter.

RACES

Cartwheel races - self explanatory

Consecutive Jumps - everyone jumps in predetermined fashion.

Newspaper Race - Two newspaper sheets required per player. Each player must race to the turning point and back, stepping only on his newspapers. He steps on one, lays the other in front of him steps on it, moves the first forward, and steps on it and so on.

No hand get up - Players run to turning point, stop, lie down on their backs, fold hands across chest and get up without moving their arms, and run back to finish line.

Skip and Through - Children stand in partners in a double circle. The partners skip around the circle. On signal, inside person stops, folds arms and puts legs apart. The outside person runs around the circle, goes through partner's tunnel and sits cross-legged on the inside of the circle.

Spider Race - Team formation, Players #1 stand facing the goal. Player #2 stands beside him, with his back to the goal. The two players link elbows and on the signal, the pair run to the goal and back. One person runs backward each time. The rest of the players repeat the same action until every person has a turn.

Toe and heel (circle) - Runner advances by placing one foot in front of the other so that the heel of the advancing foot touches the toes of the hind foot. Great for small places.

Wheel Barrow Race - Partners assume the Wheel barrow and pusher position and on the signal advance to the turning point where they change positions and return to the starting line.

TAG

Reverse Tag

First you choose who is IT. Then the people that are NOT IT count to five while the the person that is IT runs away. Then you go after "IT". Then when you tag him you become IT then you have to run from everyone. (it is the same thing as regular tag but backwards!!)

Broom Tag

All you need is a broom and 4 or more people. The person who is IT tries to tag people with the end of the broom. If they are tagged, then they are on IT'S team. They have to grab someone and yell "Broom Chaser!" Then the person who's IT comes and tags the person that's being held. Everyone one that's tagged is on IT's team. When everyone is tagged except one person, then the game is over and the person that is left is IT. The person who is IT is called the BROOM CHASER.

TV Tag

In this variation, when the person who is IT tags someone, they are frozen in place. To be unfrozen, someone must touch them and must yell out the name of a TV show. A TV show name can only be used once. Play continues until all are frozen. The last person to be tagged is IT for the next game. Can also be played using any other category, i.e. Movie Tag, Football Team Tag, etc.

Hospital Tag

The basic rules are the same as tag. One person is "Mr. Yuck" and the others run. When you get tagged you may cover your "wound" with one of your hands. When you get tagged a second time, you may cover your "wound" with your other hand. The third time you get tagged, you are out.

Amoeba Tag

Two people are it. They hold hands and chase people, the person they catch joins the chain by linking hands. When another person is caught they can stay together or split 2 and 2. They must split even numbers and can link together at will. This game is played until nobody is left.

Catch One...Catch All

The game is generally played in a large field with at least 10 participants. One person in the group is IT. The first person s/he tags is also IT. Now, the two chase the others, and so on, until the last person is caught. The last person caught is IT for the subsequent round of play. There is no real winner, per se, but there are bragging rights for the last caught.

Kick the Can

This is an exciting combination of hide and seek and tag. One person closes their eyes and counts to some high number, while everyone else hides. Then, the person who counted (who has incidentally been guarding "the can") has to run around the neighborhood and find everybody. The tricky part is that once a person is found, they have a race, where the person who has just been found has to try to kick the can over before the counter tags them.

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