

Warm Ups and Energizing Activities

Mingle Mingle Mingle

Supplies - None

Area - Inside or outside, enough space for entire group to move about

Facilitator needed - To provide directions and to call out numbers

Participants - 20 or more

Directions - Facilitator directs group members to form smaller groups of a specified number such as 3. The facilitator provides an additional direction for participants to follow when in the smaller groups, e.g., 'everyone needs to tell everyone else his/her name,' 'everyone needs to find out where everyone else in the group lives,' etc. After allowing time to follow the initial direction, facilitator provides a new direction. It is best not to use multiples (e.g., going from 3 to 6) so that participants must mix up rather than combining two existing groups.

Potential Outcome Targets - Cognitive/counting; social skills

Group Juggle (multiple sources)

Supplies - 1 or more 'koosh' or soft balls

Area - Inside or outside, enough space for group to form a circle

Facilitator needed - To provide directions and timing (facilitator can participate if activity is not timed)

Participants - 6 or more

Directions - Form a circle with group. One participant is given a ball and directed to throw the ball to anyone else in the circle other than those immediately adjacent. The person selected is given the same direction, and this continues until everyone in the group has had the ball. The last person throws the ball back to the originator. Facilitator challenges group to repeat the activity.

Variations/challenges - Group can keep repeating the sequence, trying to gain speed (facilitator needs a stopwatch).

-Facilitator can add an additional ball after the first few tosses (and keep adding more balls).

-Tosses can be accompanied by calling out the receiver's name.

Potential outcome targets - Cognitive/memory; verbal (if names are used); motor skills

Rock/Paper/Scissors (New Games)

Supplies - None

Area - Large space inside or outside. Boundary/safe lines marked

Facilitator needed - To provide directions and to initiate challenges

Participants - 8 or more (large groups best); subdivide group into two halves

Directions - Demonstrate the hand signals for "Rock/paper/scissors." The two halves of the group huddle and decide which they will choose. At facilitator's signal, the halves face each other and call out "Rock/paper/scissors" two times, then make the chosen hand signal. The 'winning' group then chases the losing group, tagging as many members as possible before they reach the boundary line. Tagged members join the winning group. Repeat as desired. If both groups chose the same thing, both groups huddle again.

Rock/Scissors - Rock smashes scissors, rock wins

Rock/Paper - Paper covers rock, paper wins

Paper/Scissors - Scissors cut paper, scissors win

Variations/challenges - Cranes and Crows uses just the final part of this game. One group is identified as "Cranes" and the other as "Crows." The facilitator calls out either "Cranes" or

“Crows,” and the selected group chases the other group, tagging as many members as possible before they reach the boundary line. Tagged members join the winning group. The facilitator should draw out the “Crrrrrrrr” for as long as possible.

Potential outcome targets - Social/communication skills; physical activity; motor skills; cognitive/memory

Chase the Dragon’s Tail (Movement Games)

Supplies - None or bandana/scarf

Area - Inside or outside (outside preferred), enough space for group to move about freely

Facilitator needed - To provide directions (facilitator can participate)

Participants - 8 or more (large groups best)

Directions - Participants form a line by holding onto the waist, shoulders or hips of the person in front. The first participant is the head of the dragon and the last is the tail. The object of the game is for the head to tag the tail. When the head tags the tail, the head moves to the end of the line and becomes the new tail. If participants lose contact at any time, the dragon ‘dies,’ and a new dragon must be formed.

Variation - The tail tucks a bandana/scarf into his/her belt or pants and the head has captured the tail when the bandana/scarf is grabbed.

Potential outcome targets - Physical activity; motor skills

Big Ball Games (using the largest balls)

Planet Pass (New Games)

Supplies - One very large beach ball, etc. (min 1 yd in diameter)

Area - Inside or outside, 2-3 times the length of the group members when lined up. Indicate a goal or finish line that is a significant distance from the starting point.

Facilitator needed - To provide directions and start the process

Participants - 10 or more

Directions - Participants form two lines, lie down on backs with heads toward the center. Participants raise arms. The facilitator starts the ball at one end of the line and the participants pass the ball down using arms. As soon as the ball has passed a participant, he/she should run down to the end of the line and lie down so the progress of the ball can continue toward the goal/finish line.

Variations/Challenges - The group can reverse and return the ball to the starting point after making the goal.

-Two groups can line up in adjacent lines, participants switch to the other line after the ball has passed. This creates a ‘race,’ although team members are constantly changing.

Potential outcome targets - Physical activity; balance; coordination; cognitive/memory

Atlas Game (from Movement Games)

Supplies - One very large beach ball, etc. (min 1 yd in diameter)

Area - Inside or outside, enough space for group to form a circle

Facilitator needed - To provide initial and ongoing directions (facilitator can participate)

Participants - 8 - 20 (or however many can jointly hold the ball)

Directions - Participants form a circle as closely around the ball as possible. The players extend hands and attempt to life the ball together, eventually holding the ball above their heads. The facilitator then challenges the group to try the following while supporting the ball:

-Spin the ball in each direction

- Stand on tiptoes, then squat to the ground
 - Lie down together without letting the ball drop (participants must first turn their hands around while supporting the ball)
 - Move while carrying the ball
- Potential outcome targets* - Physical activity; motor skills; balance; coordination; social/communication

Big Ball Games (using smaller balls)

Football (“Globe Ball Circle” from Movement Games)

Supplies - 1 standard (14”) or larger beach ball or fitness ball

Area - Inside or outside, enough space for group to form a seated circle

Facilitator needed - To provide directions (facilitator can participate)

Participants - 8 or more

Directions - Participants sit in a large circle on the floor/ground with hands behind and legs stretched out in front. Facilitator places the ball on the legs of a participant (between feet and knees) tells the players to move the ball around the circle using only their feet.

Variations/Challenges - Play like “Group Juggle,” use same variations.

Potential outcome targets - Coordination; motor skills; memory

Moon Ball (from multiple sources)

Supplies - 1 medium to large beach ball

Area - Inside or outside, enough space for group members to move about freely. If outside, be aware of obstacles, roof tops, etc.

Facilitator needed - To provide directions and count hits

Participants - 6 or more

Directions - Facilitator challenges group to see how many times they can hit the ball without letting it drop to the ground. No participant may hit the ball more than one consecutive time. The facilitator may provide the group with a target (“The world record is x hits,” “The largest number of hits I have ever seen is x”)

Variations/Challenges - Facilitator can require that each member of the group must hit the ball one time before a participant can hit the ball a second time

-Facilitator can call out a body part (“elbow”) and all participants must hit the ball with that body part until the facilitator calls out a new part

Potential outcome targets - Coordination; physical activity; motor skills; memory; cognitive/counting

Over Under (original and variations in multiple sources)

Supplies - 1 medium to large beach ball or fitness ball

Area - Inside or outside, at least 2-3 times the length of the lined up group

Facilitator needed - To provide directions

Participants - 10 or more (good for large groups)

Directions - Participants line up facing the same direction, one behind the other. Facilitator gives the ball to the first participant who passes it over his/her head to the next player who must pass the ball under his/her legs. Participants continue to pass in this way until reaching the end of the line. Facilitator can challenge the participants to continue to improve the time it takes to get the ball down the line.

Variations/Challenges - The first participant runs to the end of the line immediately after passing the ball, as does each following participant. The object is to transport the ball to a point identified by the facilitator (ideally 2-3 line lengths away). This can be repeated and timed.
-Two lines can be formed to 'race' each other. However, participants, after passing the ball, move to the end of the other line. Both lines are trying to reach the designated point.
Potential outcome targets - Coordination; motor skills; physical activity

Cross Over Dodgeball (Cooperative Sports and Games)

Supplies - Several non-hurting balls such as foam balls, small beach balls, etc.

Area - Inside or outside, enough space for participants to spread out around a central dividing line

Facilitator needed - To provide directions and referee

Participants - 8 or more

Directions - Divide the balls and the participants evenly. Establish a central dividing line and place one half on each side. Participants try to hit each other with the balls. When a participant is struck, he/she moves to the other team. Play until all players are on one team or until everyone is tired of the game.

Potential outcome targets - Physical activity; motor skills

Blanketball (Cooperative Sports and Games)

Supplies - 1 volley ball, beach ball, etc.; net; 1 blanket or towel for every two players

Area - Inside or outside, enough space for two teams to spread out around a net

Facilitator needed - To provide directions and referee

Participants - 8 - 30

Directions - Teams should be in even numbers if possible. (If there is one extra player, have him/her join one pair. The game is similar to volley ball except that players move the ball using the blanket or towel. Once a pair hits the ball, they go under the net to the other side so that players are constantly moving from one team to the other.

Variations/challenges - Use the blankets/towels to play "Moonball"

-Play volleyball without the blankets, but have players move to the other team as soon as they hit the ball

-Players do not move and the score is kept collectively (scores of both teams count, add up to a predetermined total). This variation can be played with or without blankets

-Challenge each team to hit the ball multiple times before hitting it over the net

-Play using a large heavy ball that may require 2 or more players to hit the ball over the net.

Score collectively.

Potential outcome targets - Physical activity; coordination; motor skills; cognition

Miss your Legs (Cooperative Sports and Games)

Supplies - 1 medium sized beach ball

Area - Inside or outside, at least 2-3 times the length of the lined up group

Facilitator needed - To provide directions, time the activity, keep score

Participants - 10 or more

Directions - Participants line up facing the same direction with several feet between (adjust for ability level of participants). The first participant in the line 'hikes' the ball under his/her legs to the next participant, then runs to the end of the line, keeping the same distance behind the last person in line. Each successful 'hike' counts as one point. Goal is either to reach a

predetermined number of points or see how many points can be scored in a predetermined amount of time.

Variations/challenges - Divide into two teams and score collectively.

-After participants complete one timed cycle, challenge them to top the score

Potential outcome targets - Physical activity; motor skills

Playing Like a Kid (at any age)

Ooh/Ah (from New Games)

Supplies - None

Area - Inside or outside, enough space for group to form a circle

Facilitator needed - To provide directions (facilitator can participate)

Participants - 8 or more

Directions - Everyone stands in a circle holding hands. One person starts the activity by squeezing the hand of the person on his/her right. That person 'passes' the squeeze on around the circle. For the second time around, the initiating person squeezes the hand and says "Ooh." The "Ooh" and the squeeze are passed around. After the "Ooh" and the squeeze are traveling around, the initiating person squeezes the hand of the person on his/her LEFT and says "Ah." Now the "Ooh" and the "Ah" are traveling around the circle in opposite directions.

Variations/Challenges - After the "Ooh" and "Ah" have been introduced, participants can be given the option to change directions as they wish. For example, a participant can receive the "Ooh" from the right side, then pass it right back to that person. Other participants can also change directions at will.

-Participants can add other sounds or movements to be passed around

-Participants can, with verbal and/or physical signals, toss an "Ooh" or "Ah" across the circle.

"Pass the Mask" - Participants sit in a circle. Facilitator or participant turns to an adjacent participant on either side, looks him or her in the eyes and makes a funny face. The receiving participant 'passes' this 'mask' around the circle. The initial participant then turns to the adjacent participant on his or her other side and makes a different funny face, which is then 'passed' around the circle.

Potential outcome targets - Fine motor skills; emotional/humor; facial muscles ("Mask" variation)

Bug Tug (from New Games)

Supplies - Rope or something to identify a dividing line

Area - Inside or outside, large enough for participants to line up

Facilitator needed - To provide directions and troubleshoot

Participants - 8 or more (large groups OK)

Directions - To demonstrate the game, facilitator should get a partner or identify two participants who are similar in size. The two participants stand back to back on either side of a point or line on the ground, then bend forward, reaching between their legs and grabbing each other by the wrist. Object is for one person to pull the other over the line. After demonstrating, the facilitator lines the participants up back to back on either side of the line. Participants bend over and CROSS THEIR ARMS. One line is moved slightly so that participants are grasping the wrists of two different participants. If one line is able to pull the other line, have the participants try again but stagger the line in the other direction.

Variations/Challenges - Have participants line up as for Bug Tug, then move as a line to a designated point. Time progress and have participants try again.

Potential outcome targets - Physical activity; strength; balance; motor skills

Balloon Round Up (Movement Games)

Supplies - One balloon participant (plus spares); rope or ribbon

Area - Inside or outside, ample room to spread out balloons and participants (do not try outside in high wind)

Facilitator needed - To provide directions and distribute spare balloons if needed

Participants - 8 or more

Directions - Form a large circle with the rope or ribbon in the center of the room. Give each participant a balloon and have him/her blow it up. Participants spread the balloons around, then sit around the perimeter of the circle. Direct participants to gather ("round up" the balloons) and get them inside the circle. Participants may not stand and may only use feet and/or legs to move the balloons. Time activity if desired. Facilitator should be prepared to provide a replace for any balloon that pops (facilitator or participants can blow up replacements)

Variations/Challenges - Use play balls rather than balloons if outdoor conditions require.

-Allow participants to stand still requiring that legs or feet must be used to move the balloons

-Choose an alternative body part (right elbow, etc.) that is the only thing that may be used to move the balloons

Potential outcome targets - Physical activity; balance; coordination; lung capacity; motor skills

"Haggoo" "Muk" / Smiling game (New Games and Everybody Wins)

Supplies - None

Area - Inside or outside, large enough for participants to move around easily

Facilitator needed - To provide directions

Participants - 8 or more

Directions - Divide participants into two groups and select an individual from each group (take volunteers or facilitator can select). Remainder of participants stand facing each other in lines approx 1 yard apart. The two chosen individuals stand at opposite ends of the line. The two individuals face each other, bow and say "Hagoo" (or "Muk," or some other word chosen by the facilitator). The individuals begin to walk toward each other, maintaining eye contact but resisting the urge to smile, laugh, etc. It is the task of the individuals in the line to make the challengers laugh. If either successfully passes down the gauntlet without cracking a smile, he/she rejoins his/her team. Any participant that cannot resist the temptation to smile joins the other team/line. Two more participants volunteer or are chosen.

Potential outcome targets - Emotional/humor; non-verbal communication skills

Mirror/Scarves (Hello Toes)

Supplies - None, or one scarf or piece of fabric per participant

Area - Inside or outside, enough area for participants to group in pairs with ample movement space between pairs

Facilitator needed - To provide directions and initiate/end activity

Participants - 4 or more

Directions - Pair up participants so they are facing each other. Have one participant initiate movement with other participant 'mirroring' the movement. Scarves may be used (each participant holds a scarf in one hand) and may make the mirroring process easier.

Variations/Challenges - Put participants in groups or 3 or 4

-After a specified time, shuffle the pairs so participants are working with someone else
-Play music and encourage participants to time movements to the music
Potential outcome targets - Cognitive/observation; hand-eye coordination; social skills; non-verbal communication skills

Collective Organized Jump

Supplies - Tape measure, pencil/paper

Area - Inside or outside, a long space is needed although it can be narrow

Facilitator needed - To provide directions and to measure/keep track

Participants - 4 or more

Directions - Each participant in turn starts at a designated point and jumps. Facilitator measure the distance and adds up the total. Challenge participants to increase the total distance jumped.

Variations/Challenges - Have participants run a specified distance and add up the times (object is to decrease the collective total time)

-Have participants move in a different way (crab walk, two person wheelbarrows, etc.) a specified distance, add up the times (object is to keep decreasing the collective time)

-Time individuals going through an obstacle course (goal is to decrease the collective time)

-Compute average times rather than total

Potential outcome targets - Physical activity; cognitive/mathematics (encourage participants to take part in measuring and adding totals); coordination; balance

Pick Up Games - No Equipment Necessary

Zen Clapping (Everybody wins)

Supplies - None

Area - Inside or outside, large enough for the group to form a seated/standing circle

Facilitator needed - To provide directions (facilitator may participate)

Participants - 8 or more

Directions - Participants sit/stand in a circle. Facilitator chooses one participant to initiate the game (or does so himself/herself). The first participant places a hand flat on the top of his or her head so that it is pointing to the left or to the right and says "yin." The participant on the left/right side (where ever the hand is pointing) places a hand under his/her chin and points toward another participant (not necessarily adjacent) and says "yang." The third participant extends a single hand into the center of the circle and points toward another participant, saying nothing (the sound of one hand clapping). The person who was pointed to initiates the next sequence.

Potential outcome targets - Cognition/attentiveness; motor skills

Blob Tag

Supplies - None

Area - Inside or outside, with ample room for participants to move about. If a very large area is used, boundaries should be established.

Facilitator needed - To provide directions and to choose initial 'it' (facilitator can participate)

Participants - 8 or more (large groups are good)

Directions - One participant is chosen 'it.' The game proceeds like "tag" although participants who are tagged join 'it,' rather than replacing the initial 'it.' Participants join hands and attempt to tag the remaining participants, forming a larger and larger 'it' (the "Blob") as more participants are tagged. Last participant to tag becomes the initial 'it' of the next game

Variations/Challenges - Participants link arms back to back, forming an enlarging blob circle. This means that not all participants will be facing forward as they move.
Potential outcome targets - Physical activity; cooperation; motor skills; communication (especially for circle variation)

Beep Beep /“Do you hear a noise?” (Everybody wins)

Supplies - None

Area - Inside or outside, large enough for participants to sit in a circle

Facilitator needed - To provide directions (facilitator can participate but may need to initiate the sequence each time)

Participants - 8 or more

Directions - Participants sit in a circle. One individual volunteers or is chosen to sit in the center and closes his/her eyes. Beginning with a participant or the facilitator, each participant in turn says “Beep Beep” or some other words chosen by the facilitator (for instance, something using sounds that participants need to work on). Participants should try to pitch their voices so they sound similar. At some point, the sound stops (whenever a given participant decides to do so, or the facilitator can provide a cue). After it is obvious that the sound has stopped ‘traveling,’ the individual in the center opens his/her eyes and tries to identify where the sound stopped. If the individual guesses correctly, the person who made the noise replaces him/her in the center. If the individual is incorrect, he/she has the option to try again or to be replaced (facilitator can chose a replacement).

Variations/Challenges - Use a noisemaker like a bell or horn. After the last participant uses the noisemaker, all participants hide hands behind their backs so the participant in the center cannot see who has the noisemaker.

-Have each participant chose a unique sound. Go around the circle one time and demonstrate each sound. The challenge now becomes one of memory for the person in the center. Have participants change sounds with each new round of the game.

Potential outcome targets - Sensory/hearing; cognitive/attentiveness; verbal/vocal skills (participants try to make all of the “beep beeps” sound similar)

Snake in the Grass (New Games)

Supplies - None

Area - Inside or outside, with ample room for group to move about (outside is preferred as long as the area is mown and relatively clean). Communicate established boundaries to group.

Facilitator needed - To provide directions and initiate action

Participants - 8 or more (large groups are good)

Directions - Once the initial snake is chosen (can select at random; solicit a volunteer; select via a race {appoint the winner, not the loser, as first snake}, he/she lays down on the grass. Facilitator calls out “Snake in the Grass” and the other participants try to avoid the snake who pursues while on his/her belly. Any tagged participants also become snakes. Last person tagged becomes the first snake in the next game. The atmosphere is improved if the snakes all hiss.

Variations/Challenges - Replace snakes with frogs - who must move by hopping in a kneeled position

-Replace snakes with four-footed animals (dogs, Alligators, etc.) who must move about on hands and knees

Potential outcome targets - Physical activity; coordination; motor skills

References

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