

Gross Motor Games that build Protective Factors; Initiative, Self-control and Attachment

SIMON SAYS – One person is chosen to be “Simon” the others stand in a straight line across. The Simon then calls out an action for the children to follow. It can be anything for example... touch your toes or jump ten times. The Simon when giving an action can simply state the action by itself ...“touch your toes” and whoever does it is out and has to sit down. Or the Simon can say “Simon says, touch your toes” and then everyone must follow the instructions. You can vary to actions according to the age group of children you are playing with. The last person who is standing can then be “Simon”.

CHICKEN AND THE EGG – For this games you will need a beanbag or other small object children can hide behind their back. Have the children form a circle. On player is the “chicken”. The chicken hides his eyes and a player is quietly picked to take the chicken’s “egg” (the beanbag). When the chicken opens his eyes, he has three guesses to decide which player has his “egg”. This game can be changed easily to accommodate themes or animals that the children may be interested in. It can be kittens and balls or yarn, mice and cheese or dog and bone.

DUCK, DUCK, GOOSE – In this game, children sit down in a circle facing each other. One person is “it” and walks around the circle. As they walk around, they tap people’s heads and say whether they are a “duck” or a “goose”. Once someone is the “goose” they must get up and try to tap “it” as they run around the circle. The goal is to catch “it” before they are able to sit down in the “goose’s” spot. If the goose is not able to do this, they become “it” for the next round and play continues. If they do tap the “it”, the person tagged has to sit in the center of the circle. The person in the middle can’t leave until another person is tagged and they are replaced.

FREEZE DANCE – Put on a lively record for the children to march and dance to. After they have marched around the room once, turn the record off and tell the children to stop where they are. Tell them they should march when they hear the music, but when it stops, they must stop too. It may take a little time for some children to learn to stop and start with the music, so make a game of it and laugh with them as they practice. Instead of marching and dancing you could also stop and start some of these actions to music as well: clapping, jumping and stomping .

WALKING ON A TIGHTROPE – Use wide masking tape (or thin masking tape if you have an older group of children) to make a long path on the floor for the children to follow. Put in turns, corners, curves and loops. Have the path end up in a “special area” such as the art area, or the sand table where there may be great new toys hiding in the sand. Some of the children may step off the line now and then. It may be hard for some of them to keep their balance. Allow the children to have fun learning what it takes to stay on the line.

HOT POTATO – You will need a beanbag for this game. Have the children stand in a circle. The beanbag is passed from person to person as a fun and lively song is played in the background. When the music stops, the person holding the beanbag is out of the game. During this game, players should pretend that the beanbag is a very hot potato!! Play continues until there is only one player remaining.

MUM BALL – Have the children form a circle. Players roll a ball back and forth to one another without making a single sound. Anyone who speaks or makes a noise is out. Play continues until there is only one player remaining. This game is designed to be changed. It can be great as a transition activity, quiet time, or circle time activity. Feel free to try other variations such as “Smile Ball” where everyone passes the ball – but you cannot smile or laugh.

RED LIGHT/GREEN LIGHT – In this game, one person plays the “stoplight” and the rest try to touch him/her. At the start, all the children form a line (across) about 15 feet away from the stoplight. The stoplight faces away from the line of children and says “green light”. At this point the children are allowed to move toward the stoplight. At any point, the stoplight may say “red light” and turn around. If any of the children are caught moving after this has occurred, they must go back to the starting line (or you can elect to have these children to be out). Play resumes when the stoplight turns back around and says “green light”. The first player to touch the stoplight wins the game and earns the right to be the stoplight for the next game.

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POPCORN – A parachute (with no strings and a hole in the middle) and 1 small bouncing ball for each player will be needed for this game. Number the balls and assign one to each player. Every player places their ball on the parachute and everyone grabs and lifts the parachute with two hands. After the teacher says “GO”, everyone starts “pumping” the parachute up and down. The object of the game is to remove the balls. The player with their ball on the parachute last, wins.

SHARK ATTACK – 1 hula-hoop for every 3 or 4 children are needed for this game. Scatter the hula-hoops throughout the play area. Pick one child to be the “look out”. The other children have to pretend to be shipwreck victims. The shipwreck victims should pretend to be swimming around looking for land. They cannot swim in or near the hula-hoops however. When the “lookout” yells “SHARK ATTACK” the victims must “swim” to a hula-hoop as fast as they can. There is no limit to the number of children per hoop, but everyone must have both feet completely inside of the hula-hoop. The last shipwreck victim to reach a hula-hoop safely is captured by the imaginary shark.

RED ROVER – Have the children stand on one side of the room or play yard. One person is chosen to be the “caller” (this can be an adult caregiver or teacher). The caller then calls to children from the other side by saying: “RED ROVER, RED ROVER, everybody run over!” Once everyone has reached the caller the caller should go to the other side of the room/play yard and call out to the children with another command such as: jump over, crawl over, roll over, twirl over, boys walk over, girls march over. Have fun with the children as you change the direction each time.

MOTHER MAY I? – One person is chosen to be the “Mother” (or “Father” if a boy is chosen). The remaining players form a line shoulder to shoulder (with space in between each player). The Mother/Father stands in front of their “children” approximately 15 feet away. She then chooses a child (at random or in order) and announces a command. This command follows a pattern such as, “Brian you may take “X” number of giant/regular/baby/bunny steps forward. The child responds with “Mother May I?” Mom then says “yes” or “no” depending purely on how they choose to decide. The child is to do what the mother says. If the child forgets to ask, “Mother May I?” he/she goes back to the starting line. The first one to touch Mother wins.

Musical Names – Arrange the chairs in a circle. When the music stops, the child who cannot find a chair stands behind someone seated in the circle. Once everyone is positioned, the standing child names his/her seated partner. In each successive round, remove a chair. After the halfway point, two or more children will be standing behind each seated child. Each of the standing children should say the name of each child standing in his/her line starting with the child sitting. At the end of the game, the one child seated names each child standing behind him/her.