

Play Activities for Children in Crisis



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Introduction

Young children are in their most important developmental stage of life. Childhood experiences influence their future ability to learn, interact with peers, and practice good health habits. This fact is very true for children who experience life-threatening or emergencies. Emergency situations are considered any event that disrupts the child's normal living situation and requires the assistance of an adult to ensure the child's survival or continued healthy development. Sample emergencies could include the on-going traumas of war, violence in schools, neighborhoods, or public places, lacking basic human needs, immigrating from countries where violence is prevalent, or having one's community undergo a natural disaster stemming from weather conditions.

In all emergency situations, trained adults and volunteers are needed to provide for the child's basic survival, such as food, shelter, clothing, and on-going education. UNICEF responds to the special needs of young children by assisting in developing Early Childhood Development (ECD) Centers and creating equivalent settings in temporary settlements. These centers and settings assist the child's recovery and rehabilitation. They also help mothers and caregivers to cope and overcome their feelings of stress and helplessness.

UNICEF also recognizes that specialized training is needed to provide for the child's *emotional needs* during times of crisis, instability, and violence. The Early Childhood Developmental Kit was created to assist adults in organizing learning and play activities for children who are exposed to emergencies. Caregivers can be older children, parents, teachers, and other trained individuals who can provide opportunities for young children to continue their learning, play, and ability to cope.

The American Association for the Child's Right to Play, IPA/USA (IPAUSA.org) is the national affiliate of the International Play Association (IPA) World: Promoting the Child's Right to Play. The purpose of this organization is to protect, preserve, and promote play as a fundamental right for all humans. Membership is open to any individual, group, or organization which endorses the child's right to play. This is stated in the United Nations' Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959), and highlighted in Article 7, paragraph 3, which states: "*The child shall have full opportunity for play and recreation which should be directed to the same purposes as education; society and the public authorities shall endeavor to promote the enjoyment of this right...*" and in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 31, which asserts:

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to rest and leisure, to engage in play and recreational activities appropriate to the age of the child and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.
2. States Parties shall respect and promote the right of the child to participate fully in cultural and artistic life and shall encourage the provision of appropriate and equal opportunities for cultural, artistic, recreational, and leisure activity.

WHAT IS PLAY and WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

CHILDREN are the foundation of the world's future.

CHILDREN have played at all times throughout history and in all cultures.

PLAY, along with the basic needs of nutrition, health, shelter, and education, is vital to

develop the potential of all children.

***PLAY** is communication and expression, combining thought and action; it gives satisfaction and a feeling of achievement.*

***PLAY** is instinctive, voluntary, and spontaneous.*

***PLAY** helps children develop physically, mentally, emotionally, and socially.*

***PLAY** is a means of learning to live, not a mere passing of time.*

www.ipaworld.org

Contents...

This handbook was created to compliment the contents of the Early Childhood developmental Kit. **Part One** identifies ways that the adult can comfort and increase communication between the caregiver and the child. It also identifies the healing use of storytelling, art, and play. **Part Two** summarizes some general points that caregivers should consider in organizing play activities with children. **Part Three** provides more than 100 play activities using little or no materials. Many of these activities can make use of the contents found in The Early Childhood Developmental Kit and can be played in a variety of settings. **Part Four** lists The Early Childhood Developmental Kit contents. Part Five includes several helpful websites and contact information for play organizations.

Part One

Communicating with Children in Emergency Situations

Task One: Be Aware of Your Body Language

Sitting, kneeling, or bending down to be closer to the physical level of the children is a good way to open or increase communication. The caregiver should speak to the children in a calm manner and use eye contact. While adults may want to hide their feelings of trauma, their true reactions are often visible through their body language. Since children tend to see themselves as being responsible for the negative or strong responses of adults; the caregiver should tell the children that they are not responsible for the caregiver's fear, anger, or other emotions that the children are sensing. Whenever possible, the caregiver should *smile* and display a genuine interest in caring for the young child.



Task Two: Develop a Relationship with Children Exposed to Trauma

Children need an explanation about past and present events. *Tell the children there is a reason for the emergency, chaos, or violence.* They could be told that sometimes people do things that harm other people, or that the weather can sometimes cause terrible

events. By giving children an awareness of what is happening and why it happened, young children feel more in control and gain a realistic understanding of the emergency.

Children rarely trust adults if they feel that the adult is keeping a secret or avoiding their questions. Honest information is needed to enhance trust between children and adults. Follow the child's lead or signals regarding the need for information. For young children, a small amount of information is sufficient. Use simple words that the child can understand, and in small amounts. *It is important to say the information as many times as the child wants to hear it.* The child is likely to want the story repeated several times to process and better understand the events. The overall goal is to help the children understand what has happened.



Task Three: Do Not Minimize the Child's Loss

When children experience loss, they sometimes display strong emotional reactions. They should be told that it is all right to display great sadness or other feelings. To trivialize or ignore the child's feelings is not appropriate, nor will it help lighten or relieve the trauma. Adults need to *be respectful* of the children's feelings and tell the children their reactions are normal. Caregivers should also tell the children that it is normal if images and fears continually return with intensity. Older children sometimes fear they are going crazy. It is important for adults to accept a child's feelings without judgment, impatience, ridicule, or teasing.



Task Four: Encourage Children to Express Their Feelings through Words

Young children experience a full range of emotions in emergency situations, and few young children can talk directly about their experiences or their feelings. More often, they

express their feelings through tears or outbursts. *Give children words to explain their feelings.* These words might include feeling troubled/concerned/worried, or scared/frightened/shocked, or mad/angry. Remember, young children have very limited vocabularies. The ability to use words to describe their feelings helps children work through their emotions. Children may feel comforted by being able to use words to describe emotions.



Part Two

Organizing Play Activities for Children

Play as a Foundation for Learning and a Tool for Healing

Play is a powerful element of childhood because it is linked to language development, problem-solving, creativity, and increased fitness. Play is a natural, universal experience that is grounded in everyday life processes. Throughout the world, children play alone, in groups, and explore the environment. Play also reflects one's culture and traditions and is central to children's learning. *The following identifies ten reasons why play is also an important tool for caregivers during times of emergencies:*

1. Play is an expression of a parent's or caregiver's love toward the child and provides comfort during emergency situations.
2. Play can bring pleasure to both the child and the parent or caregiver during extremely stressful times.
3. Play activities are meaningful to the child and supply a form of joy.
4. Children benefit from their parent's/caregiver's input during play experiences.
5. Play allows for natural and genuine praise.
6. Play is commonly used as a way to heal issues between parents and their children.
7. Cultural values are passed on through play activities.
8. Natural play materials are usually readily available in all parts of the world.
9. The act of constructing and creating play objects involves some concentration and thought and helps to focus the child during times of emergency situations.
10. Play offers opportunities for parents and caregivers to observe the child's coping behavior during stressful times.



Playing with Children Birth through Eight

Most *newborns* are eager to explore the world. Adults should look at the child, talk, sing, make facial expressions, and hold the child to stimulate their senses during their wakeful hours. The *first year* of life centers on play through movement. One-year-old children like to listen and make sounds, mimic the adults' facial expressions and gestures, and manipulate play objects. Caregivers and other adults should find safe items for the child to hold, touch, taste, and explore. *Two-year-old* children like to sort and dump objects in containers. They also like to play with caregivers and enjoy playing next to other children and imitating their actions. *Three and four-year-old* children have an active imagination, and they make up stories, act them out with other children and use simple props as part of their play. They also enjoy hearing stories told or read by an older child or adult. They draw, play with clay and other craft materials, sing simple songs, and like to move to the music. They are also fond of simple chase and flee activities. *Ages five through eight* children still like to play games, but the games are more organized and challenging in nature.

Creating a Safe Play Environment

Indoors: The adult must make a safe play area for the children. Remove any items made of glass, cover the hard edges and corners of furniture, cover or tape unused electrical outlets, clean the floor, and check for any small objects that the youngest child might place in the mouth and swallow. Move any cleaning fluids, medicines, or other toxic materials away from the children's reach.

Outdoors: Secure adequate space so that the children can move freely and without fear of running into each other, an obstacle, and being hurt. Provide adequate supervision in the outdoors, and check for rocks, stones, or tree branches that might cause the children to fall when running. If possible, find a play area that has shade and water for drinking. All children should be in clear view of the adult's on-going supervision.

If materials are available, create a dramatic play area, an art area, a construction (blocks) area, and an area for ball games for older children. The following chart shows some commercially purchased playthings for different age groups.

Sample Physical Play Objects from Stores

Six-Twelve Months	One-Two Years	Two-Three Years	Three & Four Years	Five Years
crib gyms	squeeze toys	pull toys-with strings	yarn balls	full-size rocking horse
mobiles	plastic bowling set	wagon	rhythm band instruments	climbing ropes
floor mirrors	beanbags	light wheelbarrow	wading pool	jump ropes
snap-lock beads	activity tables	hippity hops	tricycle-some low slung 10"-12" back wheel	low stilts
clakers	wagon-low and open	rocking horse-stout handles, waist height	lightweight hand paddles	kites
pat mat	tot tunnels-crawling	rhythm instruments	foam flying disks, whiffle balls	velcro catching mitts
3" chime balls	rides-propelled by feet; no pedals, four wheels	ride-on-motorcycles, tractors, sleds shorter than child=s height	bouncing tubes, 24" hoops, bowling set, targets	full-size scooter (standing), wagons
3" clutch balls	cymbals, drums, xylophones	spinning seat	stick pony	bicycle w/ training wheels
low climbing platforms	large, light balls	play barrels	double blade ice skates	junior size-soccerball, football, basketball, bats, batting tee
infant swings-restraining strap	small doll carriages		scooter boards-safety grip	8" foam balls

push & pull toys- simple cars, animals on wheels or rollers			push toys resembling adult tools- lawnmowers, shopping cart, doll strollers, vacuum	hand scoops
			pedal ride-ons, lightweight, soft baseball & bat	paddle racquets
			11" balloons, 24" beachballs	wands
			see-saw-low, 6' tunnel	Hopscotch mats
			potato sacks, ribbon wands, scarfs, 6', 12' parachute, 9" colored cones, 4' by 6' tumbling mats	Rubber Balls
			low balance beam or boards	Paddles and Balloons

Creating a Daily Play Program for Children in Times of Emergencies

Children feel more secure in times of emergencies when they are following a consistent routine. It helps children to know what activity comes next, followed by another familiar activity. This routine gives structure, predictability, and security to the child's life. It is helpful when the routine is flexible in timing and not a rigid schedule. Instead, the adults should follow the children's lead for when it is time to move onto the next activity. Be sure to include extensive time for free play. Less teacher-directed and more child-initiated opportunities are best. This gives children a needed sense of control and choice of what to do. Some teacher-initiated activities are fine, but children should be allowed to choose whether to participate. Adults should be with children, playing and actively engaging, but not being intrusive in the child's play.

Focusing on Fun and Good Play Behavior

The child's behavior while playing, will sometimes be inappropriate. Caregivers need to ensure the safety of the group, without eliminating the fun aspect that the child should experience. Adults can usually *eliminate the need to discipline* by using the following seven suggestions:

1. Create a signal (like the caregiver raising one hand high up in the air to indicate that all children must be quiet), so the adult can speak and be heard.
2. Explain what the child's role is or what he or she should be doing during the play activity.
3. Reinforce the need for *all* children to play together well.
4. Praise good behavior
5. Make sure that all children get a turn and have the chance to play.
6. Reinforce the rules for safe play (Example: Take turns, be kind, be gentle)
7. Teach conflict resolution skills (Example: What happened? How did it make you feel? What have you tried? What do you need to do? Is that a good choice or a bad choice? I am here if you need me.

These suggestions help older children learn to control by showing and telling the child what is expected. With older children, the caregivers can give the child more responsibility, praising their self-control, and listening ability. When bad behavior occurs, the child can be removed from the activity, so as not to decrease the fun for others. The child should be reminded of what went wrong and ask the child to suggest better behavior for the future. *Physical punishment of any kind should never be used.*

Sample Formations for Play

Behind Line: Ask the children to stand behind each other so that their eyes are looking at the back of the head of the child in front.

Side-by-Side Line: Children stand shoulder to shoulder. Caregiver specifies where children should stand, e.g., against the back wall. If pushing or crowding occurs, ask the children to stretch the line and make it longer.

Personal Space: Ask the children to find their own personal spot in the playing area. This is called the child's personal or self space where the child cannot touch someone else or an object.

Triangle: When forming a triangle, ask the children to form a group of three and face inward.

Circle with Caregiver: When the children are in a circle, the caregiver should become part of the circle. If the caregiver stands in the center of the circle, some children will only face the caregiver's back.

One Body Length Apart: When the need for spacing between partners arises in an activity, ask the children to space themselves "one body length apart."

Ways to Begin Play Activities with Older Children

There are many ways to begin a game or to decide who the "It" child will be at the beginning of a game. The following methods are just a few means to initiate a simple game for children ages 5-8.

Flipping a Coin Between Two-Child: The caregiver makes a fist and places a coin on the thumbnail. The coin is flipped with a sharp flick of the thumb. It will spin in the air and can be caught or allowed to hit the ground. If the coin is caught it should be caught with one hand and slapped on the back of the free hand. Before the coin is revealed,

the question, "Heads or Tails," is made to the players. If a player guesses correctly, he or she has the privilege of going first or becoming the "It" or passing to the other team.

Hiding the Pebble: The Caregiver holds a pebble in one hand and places both hands behind the back. He or she can change the hand that contains the pebble, or keep it in the same hand. He or she then brings the two clenched fists out in front and asks the children to guess which hand is holding the pebble. If the child guesses correctly, he or she can be the "It" or has the first move. If not, the choice belongs to a second child.

Picking Sticks or Straws: The Caregiver holds as many sticks or straws in his or her hand, as there are players in the game. One of the items should be shorter than the others, but all items should appear to be the same length when held in the hand. Children take turns drawing one item from the hand, and the player who picks the shortest item begins play or is the "It."

Hand on the Stick: Find a long stick. Starting at the bottom, each player wraps one hand around the stick. The two players continue to place one fist on top of the other. The sides of the fists must touch. This process continues until there is just enough room at the top for one full fist. The child who has this space begins the game or is the "It."

The Last Stick or Straw: A handful of sticks or straws are emptied on a table or on the floor. Children take turns picking up one at a time. The child who is left with the last straw or stick in the pile begins the activity, or is the "It."

Part 3

Suggested Play Activities Using Little or No Materials

The Healing Role of Storytelling, Art, and Play

Storytelling. The healing process for most children who have experienced stress and trauma depends on the strength of the adult-child relationships. Storytelling is a way for many children to tell their own stories on their own terms. Encourage the child to begin the story by talking about events that took place *before* the emergency situation, what happened *during* the event, and to create an *ending* of the story. The acceptance of the child's reality is the starting point for the process of healing.

Storytelling also can increase the child ability to develop language and expressive skills. This method relies on verbal, rather than visual images, as the child uses his or her imagination to re-create scenes. With young children, dolls can be used as characters to tell the story. Sentence completion activities such as, "I was at my (Home)," can be used with older children to start the story.

Drawing and Painting. Drawings and paintings represent the child's mental pictures of the world. Children draw real events and imaginary things. Drawings provide adults an opportunity to open discussions about their experiences. Talks based on the child's drawing or painting are useful when the child's language skills are limited. Children can also obtain a sense of relief from drawing their fears and wishes. Individual drawings can also be used to start group discussions.

Play. Young children's play in all cultures involves imitating similar family roles and relationships. As the child grows older, the play becomes more complex involving peers

of similar ages, or their siblings. Play also provides children opportunities to explore, invent, and use their imagination. A happy childhood contains opportunities for children to play, be joyful, and express themselves. This is one reason why play activities are essential to children who have experienced emergency situations and must deal with complex losses or difficulties. In short, planned play activities help to give some normalcy and joy to children whose lives may have been greatly changed.

Squeeze Toy

Using fabric cut out two identical shapes per toy. Toys can be in the form of familiar objects or shapes. Sew the edges of the two pieces together except for one small area. Stuff with soft material or paper. Now finish sewing the toy.

Box Blocks

Collect several empty milk and juice containers. Open the tops. Cut the edges and fill in with crumbled newspaper. Tape securely.

Picture Puzzle

On a piece of cardboard, paste or draw a picture. Varnish and allow to dry. The caregiver uses a sharp knife to cut the picture into pieces. Children put the pieces together to form a picture.

Hand Puppets

Use an old sock to take the place of a puppet. Draw a face with a marker or use buttons or seeds for eyes. Include a large smile on the sock. Give the puppet a name.

Natural or Ordinary Materials as Play Objects -Ordinary materials can become playthings or objects for the child's imagination. Below are just a few objects and suggestions of what they can be used for during play.

- **Planks of wood**- balance beam, place on log or rock to construct a seesaw, walk the plank of a pirate ship, train tracks, bridge, slide, paint it to become a mural, pretend house, fences
- **Tree stumps**- table, stage, jumping board, top of a tall building, crow's nest of a pirate ship, top of a rocket ship, lookout post of a fort, mountain top
- **Cardboard boxes**- car, boat, building, space ship, stack them to build towers, wear shoeboxes on each foot as ice skates, puppet show theatre, cut out two ends of a large box to create a puppet show or television where children are the performers, construct a city of buildings, dollhouse
- **Stones (rocks, pebbles)**- part of art projects, make pathways, collect them, paint rocks and hide for children to find, use as stepping stones, use them as game pieces, skip stones over water, throw in the water to see who can create the biggest splash, rock drawing by rubbing one rock onto a hard surface, create rock objects by gluing assorted small rocks, pebbles and stones to form a picture or object
- **Rope**- snake, fire hose, move it to create waves of water, tree vine, tight rope as used by a circus performer. Use ropes to form a variety of shapes, objects, numbers, and letters
- **Barrels**- roll them, sit on, balance, crawl through, place one next to another to create tunnels, upright barrel with closed-end on top becomes a drum, table,

vertical barrel with open end on top and an opening on the side allows child to enter a space ship or clubhouse, open barrel on its side can be a cave, children roll the barrel while another child is inside. **Note:** Check for sharp edges along openings of the barrel and barrels which contained chemicals, and other hazardous materials should not be used.

- **Tires-** swing, two stacked tires form a hiding place, one next to another becomes an obstacle course to step in and out of or to jump from one to another, young children can sit on the edge of a tire facing inward to share quiet games and talk, jump over, crawl through, roll them, an imaginary store with child in center and items for “sale” placed on the sidewalls of the tire for view, clubhouse, scatter several tires throughout the playing area and tell the children they are buildings.
- **Mud-** mud pies, draw, dig, create sculptures, use as paint, make footprints, make tracks for others to follow
- **Sand-** dig into, draw, build sandcastles, look for buried treasure, create roadways for toy cars and vehicles, fill containers, use sand in art, add water to sand to form structures, bury an imaginary treasure
- **Carpet Squares-** magic carpet, island, beach blanket, house, wagon, sled, iceberg with penguins (children) standing on top, car, boat, bus
- **Buckets-** wear as a hat, use as stilts, carry objects, seat, sand toy, space helmet, water toy, dirt or mud toy, musical instrument, use as a target to toss object in
- **Hay-** climb on bales of hay, scatter hay to roll in it, playfully throw hay in the air, build a scarecrow, make a cave, build a house, fort, make fences
- **Dirt-** be a bulldozer and push the dirt, dig, hunt for insects, build a mountain, make designs in it, make roadways for riding and hand toys, slide down a pile of dirt, carry dirt from one place to another, add water to make mud for mud play
- **Water-** dip in a leaf or paintbrush to paint, dig and create little rivers, splash and play, guess and test to see what objects float or sink, fill and refill containers, dig a hole and fill it with water to see if water stays or disappears, swim, add dirt to make mud, wash toys and objects
- **Ladders-** make a train by holding the ladder horizontally and having children stand one inside each rung, bridge, firefighter play, climbing up the ladder placed on a low slant, construction site play, carpenter play, balancing and walking along
- **Bricks-** stack them, stage for small toy figures, build a wall, becomes buildings when playing with miniature toy cars, make walkways, create designs

Imaginative Play Activities

Age: Birth to 3 Months

Equipment: Cardboard or paper plate, markers

Setting: Indoors/Outdoors

Name of Game: **My Face**

Draw facial features on a round piece of cardboard or a paper plate to show a variety of smiling, sad or confused faces (the size of a paper plate). Show the faces to the infant and encourage the child to bat, punch, point, pull, and coo at the variety of expressions on the paper plate. Encourage physical movement, and verbal grunts, and sounds.

Age: Birth to 3 months

Equipment: Mirror, or mirror substitute such as foil paper

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: **Look at Me**

Use a mirror to play peek a boo. Show the child his or her face in the mirror and then slowly remove the mirror, and then return the mirror in front of the child's face.

Age: 6 to 12 months

Equipment: Any toy or object with a face

Setting: Indoors/Outdoors

Name of Game: **I Gotcha!**

Find a toy that has a face. Using the toy, call out the name of the child and slowly move the toy closer and closer to the child, as you call out the name of the child. The caregiver can increase fun using a variety of different voices as they approach the child. When the toy finally reaches the child's hands, stomach, or foot...say gotcha. This playful action can be replicated a piece of yarn or string if no toy is available.

Age: 9 to 12 Months

Equipment: Cardboard, recycled paper, tag board, glue or tape

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: **Story Board**

Glue a variety of pictures on three or four different pieces of cardboard. Encourage the child to move the pictures in any order, one after the other. The caregiver should point to any cardboard page and ask the children to create and tell a story about that page.

Age: 9 to 12 Months

Equipment: Paper Bag, Box, or Pillowcase

Setting: Indoors/Outdoors

Name of Game: **What is in the Bag?**

Place an object such as a toy or plastic cup inside a paper bag, box, or pillowcase. Ask the child to "find out what is inside the bag" by shaking and manipulating the container. Encourage the child to focus on the sound/smell/ texture and then open to discover what the object is. Engage the child in talking and exploring in a fun way.

Age: 9 to 12 Months

Equipment: Discarded nylon stocking or balls

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: Balls: **Drop and Roll**

Use a purchased ball, or create a ball using clean nylon stockings stuffed with strips of cut nylons. Let the infant drop, roll, and throw the ball. Using a container, the infant can toss, roll, and cradle the balls. A variety of containers for the balls can be used to extend the game.

Age: 12 months to 2 Years

Equipment: A collection of objects that open and close

Setting: Indoors/Outdoors

Name of Game: Open and Close

Collect a variety of containers and objects that open and shut. Jewelry boxes, Kleenex box, toothbrush holders, shampoo bottles, and any other object that can open and close. Assist the toddler in opening and closing each item. Verbalize, "open," "close" each time an item is selected.

Age: 12 months to 2 Years

Equipment: Plates, and a small quantity of food (cheese, limes, fruit, bread)

Setting: Indoors/Outdoors

Name of Game: Tasting Fiesta

Secure a variety of small plates to organize a tasting party with small individual pieces of available foods. Use small quantities of the same type of food on separate serving dishes. Encourage a child or two to three children to select a piece of food from each plate. Ask the children to jump or clap their hands if they liked the food.

Age: 12 months to 2 Years

Equipment: A collection of small objects, egg carton, or 3-4 cups

Setting: Indoors/Outdoors

Name of Game: Playing and Sorting Objects

Provide each child with a bowl of objects that are readily sorted either by color, shape, or size. A recycled egg carton can be used or small cups. The game begins by asking the children to place the same type of object in a cup. Put one item in each cup first to assist the child's effort. Example: "Place all of the green leaves in this cup, and the sticks in this cup, and the pebbles in this cup."

Age: 12 months to 2 Years

Equipment: Spoons, buckets, bowls, or any plastic container

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Fill and Dump

Give each child a spoon, bucket, bowl, or any plastic container. Encourage the children to fill up the container with water, sand, dirt, mud, or other mixtures to the top. Once the children fill the container to the top, they are encouraged to dump the contents. Encourage the children to chant, "fill and dump."

Age: 12 months to 2 Years

Equipment: Two or three trucks or cars

Setting: Indoors/Outdoors

Name of Game: **Push the Trucks/ Cars**

Give the child a toy car or truck. Encourage the child to push the toy down a path of dirt, over a mound, and through a tunnel. The level of play can be enhanced using a variety of trucks/ cars, on diverse ground cover. This can be replicated in tents, inside buildings, under tables. Provide sound effects of the engine, brakes, or speed. Also, introduce the concept of fast and slow.

Age: 3-4

Equipment: None

Setting: Indoors or Outdoors

Name of Game: Pretending to be...

Ask the children to use their imaginations and pretend to be the following objects or things:

I can pretend to be a..?

A Tree	Stand tall and use your arms to make the leaves and branches on a tree move in the wind.
Playthings	Pretend to be spinning top.

	Move quickly like a race car
Superheros	Can you leap over a tall building?
	Change your superhero body into rubber and bounce like a ball?
	Who can grab a make-believe jungle vine and swing from tree to tree like a superhero?
Playing in the Park	Who can scamper like a squirrel?
	Is it possible to run quickly and make-believe you are flying a kite in the sky.
Cowboy or Cowgirl	Can you brush your horse's back? Now, toss on a saddle, hold onto the reins, and gallop along a long path.
	Can you swing a make-believe rope over your head and toss it forward to catch a wild horse?
Airplane	Place your arms out to your sides to make a small airplane, and fly through the clouds.
Ants	Who can move close to the ground like scurrying ants?
Camels	Can you plod along the desert like a camel?
Wild Animals	Swing your arms low to the ground and to the sides and walk like a gorilla. Beat on your chest.
	Can you shift your body from side to side to move like a large bear?
	Grasp your hands together and stretch them high over your head, like the long neck of a giraffe. Now gallop forward.
	Bend forward and use your arms to make an elephant's trunk that is low to the ground. Stomp and stamp like a heavy elephant.
Birds	Can you waddle like a penguin by keeping your arms to your sides, and shifting your weight from one side to the other? Keep your legs close together.
	Place your arms at your side and soar high in the sky like an eagle or a giant bird.
The Farm	Make-believe you are using a shovel to dig a hole. Now, plant a seed and cover it with dirt. Stretch your body upwards like the vegetables when they grow.
	Who can pump water from a deep well?
	Use a make-believe hammer to fix the barn.
Bees	Bees make bussing sounds by flapping their wings very quickly. Try to place two closed fists in front of your chest to form the wings of the bee. Who can make the movements and buzzing sound of the bee?

Butterfly	Move your wings to flutter and fly to colorful Make-believe flowers.
Sea Animals	Use your body to show how a clam would open and close its shell.
	Wiggle your body like an eel or water snake moving through the water.
	Show how a jellyfish floats in the water.
Mice	Can you move quickly like mice and scamper into a make-believe hole.
Trains	Use your arms to trudge along with a make- believe train track.
Transportation	Can you rock back and forth like a sail boat?
	Blast upward like a rocket ship to the moon.
	Sprint and turn quickly like a speedboat.
Police Officer	Hold the handles of a make-believe motorcycle and move very quickly.
	Make-believe you are climbing a tree to rescue a small cat.
Frogs	Stoop low to the ground and jump forward, using the muscles in your legs like a frog.
Building	Pretend you are a very tall building by stretching upward, to the side, and now make a wide shape.
Cleaning House	Shake make-believe rugs in the wind.
	Stretch and dust cobwebs from the ceiling.
Mountains	Use your arms to form a giant mountain peak. Stretch upward to the clouds.
Rain	Make raindrops by fluttering your fingers very quickly. Run quickly from the rain.
Duck	Show me how you can quack and waddle like a duck.
Artist	Mold and shape make-believe clay to make a statue.
	Bend strong metal to form a piece of art.
Orange or Apple	Create the shape of an orange or an apple with your body.
Tunnel	Build a tunnel with your legs.
Soap Bubble	Pretend you are a soap bubble floating high in the sky and then you pop!
Pencil	Imagine your foot is a pencil and you are drawing a picture on the floor.

Paint Brush	What if your hand was a paint brush? Make some long and squiggly shapes.
Kangaroo	Make-believe you are a kangaroo jumping along a path.
Balloon	Let's pretend to blow and inflate a giant balloon. How would you move if the air escaped?
Muscles	Try to stretch your arm muscles in all directions and make them long. Show me a strong shape.
Shapes	Who can show me a tall, narrow body shape? Now a twisted, knotted, pretzel shape.

Age: 3-4

Equipment: Two Rags or a Small Piece of Cloth

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: Chase

Organize the children either sitting or standing in circle formations. Each circle should contain eight to ten players. A rag, a ball, or a handkerchief (representing the rabbit) is started around the circle. The children pass it from hand to hand as rapidly as they can around the circle. After they have practiced, announce that the next time a hound will chase the rabbit. Start the rabbit and then start another rag (the hound) after it. The children pass the hound as fast as they can, trying to overtake the rabbit. At the same time, they try to keep the rabbit from getting caught. (The Rabbit and Hound can be substituted for a cat/mouse, or fox/chickens, or a lion/zebra or other native animals.)

Age: 3-4

Equipment: None

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Duck, Duck, Goose

Organize the children in groups of six to eight players. Each group sits in a circle facing inward with two to three feet separating each player. Provide ample space between the groups. Select one player from each circle to be the "It." This player walks around the outside of the circle while tapping the head or shoulder of individual circle players and chanting the word "Duck" with each tap. At some point, the "It" taps a player's shoulder and shouts "Goose." This action is followed by the two children running around the outside of the circle. That is, the Goose jumps upward and chases the "It" around the circle. If the Goose catches the "It" before he or she can complete the circle, the Goose becomes the new "It" and the first "It" sits in the circle. If the Goose fails to tag the "It," the Goose returns to the circle and the original "It" continues to tap another player. (*The Duck and Goose can be substituted for two other native birds or two native animals.*)

Age: 3-4

Equipment: None

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Creative Statues

Divide the children into groups of five. One child in each group is selected to be the "swinger" or "twirler." The "twirler" grasps the wrist of any one of the four other

children and whirls the player around several times gaining momentum. At some point, the "twirler" let's go, freeing the individual to spin into the air until he or she stops in a frozen statue position. The "twirler" continues to spin the remaining children until all have frozen in a creative statue. The "twirler" then selects the player that has made the *most* creative statue to be the new twirler.

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: None

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: A, B, C, Movement

Explain that each letter in the alphabet can be used to create a movement word. Challenge the children to use their imagination and perform the following stretching movements:

- "A is for the Air. Who can take three deep breaths of air?"
- "B is for Bouncing. Can you bounce like a rubber ball?"
- "C is for Curling. Who can curl your body into a round shape?"
- "D is for Dodging. Can you dodge to one side and then to the other side?"
- "E is for Exploring. Pretend to explore a long, dark cave."
- "F is for Fun. Show me how your body moves when it is having fun."
- "G is for Grip. Can you curl your fingers and make a tight grip?"
- "H is for Hug. Give yourself a great big hug."
- "I is for Inflate. Let's pretend to blow and inflate a giant balloon."
- "J is for Jump. Try to jump upward and touch the ceiling."
- "K is for Kick. Show me how you can kick a make-believe ball with your foot."
- "L is for Lower. How slowly can you lower your body to the floor?"
- "M is for Muscle. Try to stretch your arm muscles and make them long."
- "N is for Narrow. Show me a tall, narrow shape."
- "O is for Over. Pretend to step over a giant mud puddle."
- "P is for Plod. How would you walk while plodding through deep snow?"
- "Q is for Quick. Can you move your hands quickly at the sides of the body'?"
- "R is for Roll. Is it possible to make a long shape and roll along the floor'?"
- "S is for Swim. Show me how you can pretend to swim with your arms."
- "T is for Tip Toe. Stretch high into the sky on your tiptoes."
- "U is for Upward. Make-believe you are a kite soaring upward."
- "V is for Vibrate. Can you rock, shake, and vibrate like a giant machine?"
- "W is for Wiggle. What ways can you wiggle your fingers?"
- "X is for X-ray. Point to a bone in your hand."
- "Y is for Yank. Show me how you can yank a pretend rope."
- "Z is for Zig-Zag. Is it possible to move in a zig-zag pattern?"

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: None

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: Who Can Name that Animal?

Challenge the children to name animals that: growl, scratch, have long tails, have short tails, have fur or hair, do not have hair, make a noise like that animal and then move like that animal.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: A Chair or Other Large Object

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: Things and Parts

Organize the children into two or three groups. The caregiver brings any large object (a chair, a table) in front of the children for all the groups to see. Each group takes a turn naming different parts of the object or describing it in some way. The group that can no longer describe the object is "stumped." The winning group receives one point, and a new object or thing is viewed.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: Tell Me What You Can Do

Begin the game saying, "My name is ____ and I can sing/dance/ or some other activity." All children are challenged to take turns saying their names and telling the Caregiver what they can do.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: One large sheet of paper and a pencil or marker

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: What it is?

The caregiver draws a large picture of some object (example: an animal, a house) and asks the children to create a story about the drawing or to take turns and describe something about the drawing.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: Who can make a Creature List?

The caregiver challenges the children to identify as many animals as possible that swim, climb, fly, jump, or crawl on the ground.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: 4 to 6 Small Objects that Represent Vegetables

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Birds in the Garden

Select one child to be the "Farmer." Give the "Farmer" four to six small objects that represent vegetables such as sticks or small rocks. The "Farmer" and the vegetables are positioned within a ten-foot circle in the middle of the playing area. All other players scatter throughout the playing area pretending to be "birds" by hopping on one-foot forward, repeating the hop, and then landing on two feet. The arms are used at the sides of the body to maintain balance during the hop-hop-jump movement. At some point, the Caregiver touches one or two "birds" who try to enter the ten-foot garden to secure a vegetable without being tagged by the farmer. If successful, the "bird" keeps the vegetable. If tagged, the vegetable is returned to the farmer. Other birds are challenged to enter the garden. Play continues until all vegetables have been secured.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Wizards, Giants & Elves

Organize the children into two groups, with a leader in each group. Each group decides whether they will be *wizards* (pointing a magic wand), *giants* (stretching upwards with both arms), or *elves* (tiny small shapes). The groups then face each other, approximately 20 paces apart. The two groups count out five steps towards each other and shout out, “Up down, Up down, Up down,” then perform their selected action. The children know that “Wizards beat Giants,” “Giants beat Elves” and “Elves beat Wizards.” Whichever side wins chases the other group and tags as many children as possible before the latter children reach a home base (i.e., some tree or object agreed upon in the playing area).

Age: 5-8

Equipment: Sheets of Paper for the Children

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: Who Can Make a Shape?

Give each child a sheet of paper and challenge the child to fold the paper so that they create a box, boat, hat, basket, house, or an animal.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: A Storybook, Paper, and Pencils for Each Child

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: Who Can Draw Me a Picture?

Read or tell a story to the children and ask them to draw a picture related to the story.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: A sheet of Paper and a Pencil for Each Child

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: What Can You Do with a Circle?

Give each child a sheet of paper that has a circle drawn on it in the middle of the sheet. Challenge the children to draw a picture using the circle in the picture.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: Sheets of Newspaper, A Pail, and Water

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Homemade Paper Mache for Modeling

Paper Mache can be easily made for the children to mold into objects by tearing newspaper into small pieces. Put the tiny pieces in the bucket and cover with water. Allow it to stand for 4 to 5 hours. Pour off the water and use a large spoon, or stick and stir, stir, stir until the substance is easy to mold. Challenge the children to make objects and then let their items dry outside.

Nature Play Activities

Age: 3-4

Equipment: Sticks and Dirt

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Sand or Dirt Art

Clear space where children can create a picture on the ground using a stick as a pencil and dirt or soil in place of paper to draw a picture. Other natural items can be added to the picture, such as leaves, feathers, stones, or sticks.

Age: 3-4

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Outdoors

Name of Game: Animal Packs

Each child selects one animal to be, and the remainder of the children follow the child by imitating the movements and actions of the animal named.

Age: 3-4

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Outdoors

Name of Game: Animal Sounds

Caregiver selects two animals that children are familiar with, e.g., dog (barks) and cat (meows). Children choose which animal to be and do not tell anyone. They then scatter throughout the playing area and make the sound of the animal they each chose. As they find others from their group, they gather together until all children find their groups.

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: One Stick for Each Group

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Kick the Stick Race

Organize the children in three or four groups standing behind a starting line. The first child in each group is given a stick that is 5 to 6 inches long. Small blocks of wood also work well. On the Caregiver's signal, the first child in each line kicks the stick to a goal and kicks it back to his or her line of players. The next child repeats the action. All players in each group must complete the race.

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Outdoors

Name of Game: Cloud Gazing

Ask children to lie down on a soft area and close their eyes. Let them open their eyes slowly, looking at the clouds. Have them try to identify shapes, objects, and colors. Children should find a favorite cloud and see how it changes shape right before their eyes. Later, they can draw pictures of their favorite clouds on paper or making drawings in dirt or sand.

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Outdoors

Name of Game: Nature's Sounds

Ask children to lie down on a soft area and listen. Tell them to raise their hand each time they hear a sound such as a bird singing, leaves rustling in the wind, leaf falling, footsteps, insect buzzing, and animal noise. The Caregiver can also suggest one specific sound at a time that the children listen for, and then raise their hands.

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: Rocks of different sizes

Playing Area: Outdoors

Name of Game: The Great Rock Hunt

Challenge the children to collect different size rocks and line them up to compare sizes from the smallest to the largest. After a large number of rocks are collected, the children can use the rocks to create an object.

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Outdoors

Name of Game: Special Animal Sounds

Caregiver selects *two* animals that children are familiar with, such as a moo (cow) and a meow (cat). Ask the children to silently choose to be one of the animals selected. Children then close their eyes, spin around three times, and make the sound of their animal as they walk throughout the playing area with their hands outstretched and palms facing outward. Once they find others in their animal group, they hold hands and continue to find other members with the same sound. Tell the children not to open their eyes until everyone is in two groups. Play again with different animal sounds such as barking, chirping, roaring, or growling.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Outdoors

Name of Game: Nature's Colors

Ask children to stay in one location and identify the colors they see. How many shades of a particular color can be seen? Encourage children to find different objects with the same shade of color.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Outdoors

Name of Game: Nature Shape Hunt

Invite the children to find items that have different shapes such as round, box, square, triangle, and or rectangle shapes.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: One 8 to 12-inch stick, and a Small Pile of Dirt or Sand.

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Ready

Place a stick standing up in a pile of sand so that four or five inches of the stick are showing. Children sit in a circle around the stick. Each child takes a turn scooping a hand full of sand until the stick falls over. When the stick falls over, that player jumps up and runs away. All children in the circle chase the child. When the child is tagged, he or she gets a point. The stick is placed back in the sand, and the game begins again. When a child earns three points, the child leaves the circle. (The game can be changed by choosing a tree or large rock for the child to run to and touch. If the child reaches the tree before being tagged, he or she does not get a point.)

Age: 5-8

Equipment: Five Small Stones for Each child

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Five Stones

Ask each child to collect five small round stones. Ask them to hold the stones in their hands and then toss the stones to the ground in front of their bodies. Children take turns performing the following actions:

Ones - tossing one stone in the air and picking up 1 stone

Twos – tossing one stone in the air picking up 2 stones

Threes – tossing one stone in the air picking up 3 stones

Fours – tossing one stone in the air picking up 4 stones

Creeps - one stone was placed on the back of the hand, the others picked up between the fingers and then the 1 stone tossed in the air, caught in the palm of the hand and then the remaining 4 gathered into the palm - not as easy as it sounds)

Age: 5-8

Equipment: Trees and plastic cups

Playing Area: Outdoors

Name of Game: Find the Heartbeat

Select a tree at least 6 inches in diameter with thin bark. Place a plastic cup on the bark of the tree and listen to the tree's "heartbeat." Ask children to compare the sound heard from the tree to their own personal heartbeat. Children may need to try listening at several spots on the tree and stay quiet and motionless to hear something.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Outdoors

Name of Game: Bird Calls

Encourage the children to create make-believe sounds of a bird. After practicing, ask the children to scatter throughout the playing area and to make their sound. Have children stay somewhat out of sight such as near a rock or bush. Listen to other birds and try to repeat their sounds.

Rhythmic Play Activities

Age: 3-4

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Outdoors

Name of Game: I See You Move

The children are standing and scattered throughout the playing area. The caregiver sings or creates rhythmic sounds. The children dance and move while the music or song is being sung until the music stops, and they must freeze in a funny pose. The Caregiver moves throughout the area observing the children to see if they move. The Caregiver can also try to make children laugh. Any child that moves assists the Caregiver in creating music and observing others when the music stops.

Age: 3-4

Equipment: 2 lightweight objects per child (e.g., paper, leaves, fabric)

Playing Area: Indoors, Outdoors

Name of Game: Wind Moves

Each child is given two small objects such as a sheet of paper, leaves, or a strip of cloth and is asked to scatter throughout the playing area. A slow, steady song is sung, or music is played while the children are asked to move their arms and bodies to the music. Ask the children to move their bodies and arms at high, medium, and then low level, to

draw pictures or write letters and numbers in the air moving their arms and swaying to the music. The arms can be moved in circular motions, and the children can be encouraged to create their own movements. Choose a child to lead while others follow that child's movements.

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Outdoors

Name of Game: Follow the Leader

Children are divided into small groups. Each group of children forms a line with one child standing in back of the other. The first child in line is the leader and acts out various movements as the others imitate the movements. The caregiver then asks the leader to go in the back of the line, as the next child in line becomes the new leader. The children are encouraged to use a variety of body movements such as jumping, hopping, clapping, and to explore various ways of moving.

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Indoors, Outdoors

Name of Game: Name my Moves

Organize the children in circles with one child in the center of each circle. That child shares his or her name with the group and then performs a dance move (e.g., a wiggle, or shake). When the child finishes the personal dance, all the children in the circle can repeat the movements taught by the child. Another child is selected to perform a new personal dance. The game continues until each child has a turn to be in the center of the circle.

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Indoors, Outdoors

Name of Game: Sing-A-Long

The Caregiver sings the first line of any favorite song, and the children repeat the line. The caregiver continues with each successive line having the children repeating that line until the song is completed.

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Indoors, Outdoors

Name of Game: Happy Clappy

The Caregiver will start with a simple hand-clapping pattern, stop and allow the children to repeat the pattern. Patterns can become progressively more complex. Children can be invited to invent new hand-clapping patterns and lead the group with their new creations.

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Indoors

Name of Game: The Body Band

The children are seated and asked to use their bodies to create sounds by using their hands to clap or cupping their hands together or snapping or tapping fingers together or slapping their thighs, chest, or the head. The child can also use the mouth and explore

sounds such as humming, singing, click the tongue, and whistling. Ask the children to stomp their feet to make a special sound. Now divide the children into sections to create a band, assigning each section a specific particular body part to use to make a sound. Point to groups to make their sounds as the body band invents a song.

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: Small containers for each child

Playing Area: Indoors

Name of Game: Shaker Maker

Challenge the children to make music shakers by using empty containers such as small cereal boxes, plastic bottles, milk or juice cartons, or aluminum cans. Each container can be decorated. Place a small object inside the container. Objects can include pebbles, dirt, seeds, sand, shells, keys, coins, paper clips, beads, buttons, and bottle caps. Use these shakers as musical instruments.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: Discarded items to use as musical instruments

Playing Area: Outdoors

Name of Game: Let's Make Music

The children are divided into four groups. The children are given any item such as sticks, rocks, or metal cans that can be used to bang together. A child can create different sounds by tapping one stick on cement, dirt, a rock, wood, or metal object. The Caregiver is the conductor of the music band and uses a stick as a conductor's baton. Raising the arms high in the air signals the children to play louder. Arms lower to the ground signal the children to make quieter sounds. The child only plays his or her instrument when the conductor is pointing at them.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Playing Area: Indoors

Name of Game: Super Sing-Down

The children are divided into group and are challenged to make up a song using the topic selected by the Caregiver. Sample topics may include boy's names, girl's names, animals, foods, locations, transportations, colors, and numbers. When the topic is selected, each group takes a turn in singing one or two made up lines of a song that contain that topic.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: Any object found that can create sounds such as sticks or cans

Playing Area: Outdoors

Name of Game: Marching Band

The children are divided into groups. Within their groups, the children explore how to create sounds with the available materials. Each group is challenged to create a group song. After some practice, each group becomes a marching band marching around the playing area and performing.

Physical Play Activities

Age: 3-4

Equipment: None

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Close the Door

Organize the children in a circle with 7 to 8 children. Leave space between each child's body. All other children pretend to be animals and run in and out of the circle. At some point, the Caregiver yells out, "Close the Door." This signals the circle children to grasp hands and close the circle. All animals that are trapped inside change places with the children in the circle. *Use the name of native animals that are familiar to the children.*

Age: 3-4**Equipment: None****Setting: Indoors****Name of Game: Squeezy Hands**

Children sit in a circle holding hands. The leader squeezes the hand of a child on their left. The object of the game is to pass the squeeze round the circle in the quickest time possible. The leader counts out loud to determine how long it took for the squeeze to be passed from player to player around the circle.

Age: 3-4**Equipment: None****Setting: Outdoors****Name of Game: Mr. Moon**

One player is selected to be "Mr. Moon." Mr. Moon stands facing away from the other children. The children are at the other end of the playing area. The children quietly move closer to Mr. Moon when he or she is not facing them. At some point, Mr. Moon turns around quickly. If Mr. Moon sees anyone moving, he or she points to the child (or to more than one child, and that player goes back to the beginning. The goal of the game is to reach Mr. Moon and to tap him on the shoulder without being caught.

Age: 3-4**Equipment: None****Setting: Outdoors****Name of Game: How Far?**

One player is the "Giant," and all other children stand side by side at the other end of the playing area. On the Caregiver's signal, the children call out, "How Far?" The giant turns to face the others and shouts out any number from one to five steps. The children then take *that number of steps* closer to the giant. When the children get close to the giant, the next time the children shout out, "How Far?" the giant says, "Stop" and runs after the children who run back to the start line. The first child tagged by the giant is the new giant.

Age: 3-4, 5-8**Equipment: None****Setting: Outdoors****Name of Game: Tall Tunnels**

Select one or two children to be "It." All other children run throughout the playing area to avoid being tagged by the "It." When a player is tagged he or she immediately freezes and stretches his or her arms high into the air. When a second child is tagged, that child joins the first and holds hands to make a tall tunnel. The two children are free to continue running when any third player runs through the tall tunnel made by the two children.

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: One Rag, Cloth, or Handkerchief for Every 8 Children

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Drop the Handkerchief

Organize the children in circle formations containing seven to eight players. All players face inward. One player from each circle is the "It" and is given a handkerchief. He or she runs, skips, or jumps on two feet around outside the circle and drops the handkerchief. When the circle player realizes that the cloth has been dropped behind his or her back, he or she turns and chases the "It." If the "It" is tagged before he or she can return to the vacant spot, a second try is given. If the "It" reaches the vacant spot without being tagged, the other child must drop the handkerchief.

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: None

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Freeze Tag

Select one child to be the "It." All other children run freely throughout the play area, trying to avoid being touched or tagged by the "It". Upon being tagged, the child stops immediately and remains motionless and is frozen until all other players are tagged. The last child to be tagged becomes the new "It."

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: One Small Ball

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Hot Ball

Organize the children in a circle of seven to eight players. There should be a space between each circle player. Select one player to be the "It" who enters the circle. On the Caregiver's signal, one circle player, is given a ball and rolls the ball at the feet of the "It." The "It" player can dodge from side to side, or jumps upward to avoid being contacted by the "hot" ball. The "It" remains in the circle until contacted by the ball, at which time he or she exchanges places with the child who rolled the ball.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Footraces

Children of all cultures enjoy footraces. All races begin by scratching a line in the dirt. Lines of children stand at the line made in the dirt. They close their hands (make a fist) and place them in front of the body. On the Caregiver's signal, the first child in each line runs to a tall tree, or large rock called the *turning line*, and return to their line to tag the next runner

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Two and Two

Select two children to be the "It" who hold hands and chase all the other children. The goal is to tag two more players to equal four players holding hands. When this happens, the four players split apart, and they run away to tag two more players. The game continues until all of the children have been tagged.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: Electric Shock

The children are sitting or standing in a large circle of 8 or more children. Select one child to be the "It" who stands inside the circle. All players hold hands and the caregiver, asks the "It" to close his or her eyes, while one child is selected to start the *shock* by squeezing a player's hand on the left or right. The shock may move in any direction and at any time a player may send it back the other way. "It" tries to guess the position of the shock. The caught player becomes the next "It."

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Crocodile, Crocodile

Select a child to be the crocodile. The remainder of the children stand in a side-by-side line at the other end of the playing area. The children shout, "Crocodile, Crocodile, may we cross the water?" The crocodile replies, "Yes, only if you are wearing red" (or some other item as decided by the crocodile such as hair color, eye color, or name). In this example, the children wearing red are free to cross the playing area without being chased. When these children have crossed, the crocodile shouts, "Go!" and the remainder of the children try to get to the other side without being tagged by the crocodile. Those children who are tagged become crocodiles. (*Substitute Crocodile with other Native Reptiles*)

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Setting: Indoors

Name of Game: Rock, Paper, Scissors

Played with two children. Rock = Fist, Paper = Hand outstretched flat, Scissors = Two fingers making a cutting motion. Each child makes a fist with one hand. They move their fist up and down three times counting as they go. After a count of three, each child makes the action of a rock, or paper or scissors. The winner is determined by the following: Rock dulls scissors, Scissors cut paper, and Paper covers rock. The first child to win 5 times is the grand winner.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: Small Sticks or Rocks to Represent Treasures

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Rush for the Treasure

Organize the children in three or four groups of "treasure hunters." Each group of treasure hunters are given 8 to 10 sticks or rocks to represent treasure, and place their treasure in the corner of the playing area. At some point, the Caregiver shouts, "Treasure Hunt," which signals all children to try to secure one piece of treasure from a any other group's pile and run back to their pile and place it on the ground. Players can only take one piece of a treasure at a time. All players continue to snatch the other groups treasure pieces until the Caregiver shouts, "Stop." Each group counts the number of treasure pieces they have collected. The object is to capture the greatest number of treasure pieces (make-believe gold, diamonds, silver coins).

Age: 5-8

Equipment: 4 sticks (3 to 4 feet long) and 4 objects that can be pushed by the sticks such as empty cans.

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Driving Piggy to Market

Organize the players in four lines. Give the first player in each line a stick, a cane, an umbrella, or wooden dowel. The first player is also given a small ball or empty tin can to represent the "pig." When the caregiver shouts "go" the first child in each line pushes the pig toward a goal. Each child is only allowed to use one hand on the stick while holding the other hand behind the back. After each player gets the pig to market and returns home, the next child in line drives the pig to market until all players have had a turn. (*Substitute the pig for cattle, or other native animals.*)

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Leap Frog

Divide the children into groups of four to five players. Each group creates a "behind the line" Leaving at least three feet between each child's body. All players bend downward (i.e. squat) and place both hands on the ground or on the knees to create the "frogs." The last player in line stands and places both hands on the shoulders of the first frog. He or she springs over the first frog's head and continues onward to the front of the line. Upon reaching the front of the line, the child takes three large steps forward and reassumes the frog's position. The next child at the end of the line repeats the action until all players have had a turn. (Boys can jump over boys and girls can jump over girls when skirts are worn.)

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Stoop Tag

Organize the children in groups of six or seven players. Select an "It" for each group. Upon the caregiver's signal, the "It" player tries to tag all of his or her group members. A child can avoid being tagged when stooping to a low level. After the third stoop, the player must run and dash within the area of his or her group's playing area. The action continues until all players have been tagged. The first child tagged is the "It" in the next game.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: a Stick, Small Rocks

Setting:

Name of Game: Easy Hopscotch

Use a stick to scratch a diagram into soft dirt. Ideally, there should be one diagram for every five children. Give each child a flat rock known as a "potsie." Play begins with each child tossing his or her potsie in an attempt to land in the farthest box. The first successful child goes first, followed by the next successful player, and so on. When the order of players has been determined; the first player tosses his or her potsie in box one. The potsie must fall inside the box.

Player One then hops on one foot over box one and continues to hop into box two, three,

four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, and ten. The child then hops back through the boxes until returning to box one, where he or she leans over and picks up the potsie. On that player's next turn, the potsie will be tossed to Box Two. If that player misses Box Two, another player takes a turn. The game continues until all children have had a turn, and someone makes it through all of the boxes.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: One Small Ball

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Circle Toss Ball

Organize the children in groups of five or six players. Each group is given one ball. One child is selected to be the "It" who stands inside the circle made by the other children's bodies. One circle player is given the ball and begins to toss, bounce or roll the ball to another circle group member. The "It" tries to catch and get the ball as it is being passed. When the "It" secures the ball, he or she exchanges places with the player who last tossed the ball. (Substitute a rag ball if no other ball is available.)

Age: 5-8

Equipment: None

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Wheelbarrow Race

All children select a partner of similar height. Boys should select boys and girls should select girls. Create a starting and a turning line 20 to 30 feet apart. One child assumes the role of the "wheelbarrow" by placing the body in a push-up position. The second partner grasps the ankles of the wheelbarrow and lifts the body so that the wheelbarrow is only supported by the arms. On the caregiver's signal, all wheelbarrows race to the turning line and run back. The first wheelbarrow to return to the starting line is the champion.

Simple Games Using a Jump Rope

Age: 5-8

Equipment: One Rope 6 to 8 feet Long, a stick or shoe

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Jump the Old Shoe

Secure a clothesline rope or similar rope to create strips of rope measuring six to eight feet in length. Tie an old shoe (or some other object of similar size and weight) to the end of each rope. Divide the children into groups of five or six players. Each group forms a circle with adequate space between players. One child is chosen to be the "twirler" and stands in the center of the circle and swings the "shoe," as the object passes under the feet of the children. Individuals attempt to "jump the shoe" as the object is continually twirled under their feet. Any player is stepping on the shoe switches places with the twirler.

Age: 5-8

Equipment: Jump ropes

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Jump Rope (Single)

Organize the children into groups of 6 to 8 and supply each group with a jump rope. The ropes should be five to six feet long. Encourage the children to determine if the rope they have been given is the appropriate length by having each child stand in the middle of the rope and raise the handles upward. An appropriate fit is determined if the handles

touch under the child's arm pit. Encourage each child to try the following basic jump rope skills:

- Double Jumps (jumping twice with every turn of the rope).
- Single Jumps (one jump with every turn of the rope).
- Backward Jumps (the rope is started in front of the body and passes behind the back while the child is performing double or single jumps).
- Hopping on Alternate Legs (the oldest form of "skipping rope" by hopping on one foot and then hopping on the other foot).
- Side Bumps (twirling the rope to one side between jumps).
- Pepper (a series of single jumps performed as quickly as possible).

Age: 3-4, 5-8

Equipment: A 16-foot length of rope

Setting: Outdoors

Name of Game: Jump Rope Group Games

The two children from each group who turn the rope are called "turners." Tell the children that the action needed to twirl the rope comes from the wrist, not the arm. The goal is to turn the rope so that it just touches the ground in the middle. Play the following games:

Slithering Snake (Ages 3-4, 5-8): One turner holds the rope still while the other turner wiggles the rope on the ground like a snake. The children take turns jumping over the make-believe snake.

Waves (3-4, 5-8): One turner holds the rope still while the other turner flicks their wrist upward to make a "wave" that passes to the opposite side. The children take turns jumping over the make-believe waves.

High Water, Low Water (5-8): The turners move the rope back and forth so that it is swaying upward after it touches the ground in the middle. The children take turns jumping over the make-believe water.

Visiting (5-8): The rope is turned for one jumper to enter and begin jumping until a second child jumps in. This signals the first child to jump out.

Speed Jumping (5-8): Greater speeds increase the challenge and excitement for many players. "Salt" is jumping at a slow speed. "Mustard" is jumping slightly faster. "Vinegar" challenges the jumper to jump at top speed.

When a jumper stumbles and makes contact to stop the action, he or she exchanges places with a turner. This action is commonly known as "taking an end."

Modifying Activities for Successful Play Experiences

Caregivers can CHANGE...

The name of the game

The formation- e.g., play in a square instead of a circle shape

The number of groups of children

The number of children in each group

The equipment- such as a larger ball

Caregivers can ADD...

A time element
Safety rules
A theme and start the game with a story
Props or materials
Academic concepts, e.g., math, history as a theme

Caregivers can FOCUS ON...

Watching the activity
FUN! If you had fun, you won.
Child comments for improving play activities
Cooperative play
Utilizing a variety of movements, e.g. run, hop, skip, jump, gallop, leap

Caregivers can PROVIDE...

Enthusiasm
Smiles
Encouragement
Safer play environment
Security

Additional Ideas for Individuals, Partners, or Small Group Play

- ___ Action Rhymes
- ___ Hiking
- ___ Simon Says
- ___ Hopping Games
- ___ Jumping Games
- ___ Creating maps
- ___ Hill Play
- ___ Four Square
- ___ Box Ball
- ___ Handball
- ___ Galloping Games
- ___ Monkey in the Middle
- ___ Sand Play
- ___ Kite Flying
- ___ Bean Bags
- ___ String Games
- ___ Homemade Frisbee
- ___ King of the Hill
- ___ Balloon Play
- ___ Guessing Games
- ___ London Bridge
- ___ Hide and Seek
- ___ Playing House
- ___ Homemade Tops
- ___ Dress Up Play

- _____ Skipping Games
- _____ Building Blocks
- _____ Homemade Cards
- _____ Target Games
- _____ Homemade Puzzles
- _____ Tic-Tac-Toe
- _____ Connect the Dots
- _____ Simple Art Projects
- _____ Collecting Objects
- _____ Building Models
- _____ Sock/Hand Puppets
- _____ Puppetry
- _____ Toy Vehicles/
building roads
- _____ Cardboard Boxes
- _____ Hunting for Bugs
- _____ Newspaper Crafts
- _____ Bubble Play
- _____ Molding Clay
- _____ Homemade Boats
- _____ Climbing Games
- _____ Modified Soccer
- _____ Paper Bag Play
- _____ Homemade Paddles
- _____ Acting Out Scenarios
- _____ Makeshift Basketball
- _____ Tin Can Bowling
- _____ Shadow Games
- _____ Toss & Catch
- _____ Homemade Dolls &
Action Figures

Part Five: Helpful Websites

www.ipausa.org

American Association for the Child's Right to Play (IPA/USA)- United States affiliate to IPA. Promotes, preserves, and protects each child's right to play. Advocates and resource for recess, after school play, community playdays, special needs population, obesity, playwork, playground design, and more.

www.bubbles.org

The Bubblesphere- Everything you want to know about bubbles, including games, and bubble solution recipes.

www.gameskidsplay.net

Games Kids Play- Playground games, jump rope rhymes, international games, historic implications.

www.ipaworld.org

International Play Association (IPA) - Parent organization with over 40 national affiliates supporting Article 31 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Play is promoted as a fundamental human right.

www.playgroundsafety.org

National Association for Playground Safety (NPPS)- Public resource for the latest information on playground safety and injury prevention and provides on-line training.

www.nwf.org/natureactivities

National Wildlife Foundation- Outdoor activities, classroom ideas, nature magazines starting at age one.

<https://www.fantasticfunandlearning.com/loose-parts-play-kids.html>

Loose Parts Play

http://www.funsci.com/fun3_en/toys/toys.htm

Fun Science Gallery- Historic games, toys, how to make your own, drawings, play. Includes other countries.

<http://www.freechild.org>

The Freechild Project- Resource and advocacy group promoting young people and social change. Educator link with downloadable cooperative games booklet.

<http://www.worldplay.org>

World Play- Educating children about worldwide cultures, traditions, lifestyles through handmade toys created by children.

<http://www.123child.com>

The Activity Place- Over 2,000 activity ideas for those who work with young children.

www.birthdaypartyideas.com

BirthdayPartyIdeas.com- Themed party ideas, props, and activities for all ages.

<http://www.familytlc.net>

Family TLC- Comprehensive listing of activities, games, sports, crafts, science and articles geared toward infants through teens.

<http://www.funattic.com>

Fun-Attic, Inc.- Extensive game list including products and adaptations for special need population.

<http://www.funandgames.org>

Fun and Games.org- A UK based site providing resources, games, activities, and ideas for all age levels.

<http://legendsandlore.com/puppet-resource.html>

Legends & Lore, Inc.- Puppet resource center for props and play. Shares puppet tips, tricks, and stories.

<http://www.streetplay.com>

Streetplay.com- Games, photos, stories of street play throughout the world.

<http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/pe/contents.htm>

Teaching Ideas for Primary Teachers- Great games for those who want to integrate physical education with other subject areas.
