Playground Games Guide

Option 1: Introduction to Playground Games

1. Follow the Leader

- One child is the "leader," and the rest line up behind them.
- The leader moves around, doing different motions (e.g., hopping, spinning, clapping).
- The group follows the leader's actions exactly.
- Every few minutes, a new leader is chosen.

2. Freeze Dance

- Play music and have kids dance freely.
- When the music stops, everyone must freeze in place immediately.
- Anyone who moves after the music stops is out or must do a fun action (like a silly dance) before rejoining.
- Last one dancing wins!

3. What's Your Name? Relay

- Divide the group into two teams.
- The first player from each team runs to a cone, says their name aloud, and runs back.
- The next person in line repeats.
- The first team to have everyone complete the relay wins.

Option 2: Classic Tag Games

1. Freeze Tag

- One player is "It" and tries to tag others.
- If tagged, a player must freeze in place.
- Other players can unfreeze frozen friends by tagging them.
- The game ends when all players are frozen or after a set time.

2. Sharks and Minnows

- One or two players are "sharks" in the middle of the field.
- The other players ("minnows") stand on one side and try to run to the other side without getting tagged.
- Tagged players become sharks for the next round.
- The last remaining minnow wins.

3. Blob Tag

- One player starts as "It" and tags others.
- Tagged players hold hands and continue tagging more players, forming a growing "blob."
- The game continues until all players are part of the blob.

Option 3: Parachute Play & Cooperation Games

1. Parachute Popcorn

- Place small balls on the parachute.
- Players shake the parachute up and down to bounce the balls like popcorn.
- Try to keep them bouncing without letting them fall off.

2. Mushroom Tent

- Players lift the parachute high into the air.
- On the count of three, they run underneath and sit on the edges, creating a tent.

3. Cat and Mouse

- One player (mouse) crawls under the parachute while another (cat) moves on top.
- The rest of the players shake the parachute to make movement harder.
- The cat tries to tag the mouse before the leader calls time.

Option 4: Throwing & Catching Games

1. Clean Your Yard

- Divide the area into two sides.
- Each team starts with an equal number of beanbags or small balls.
- Players throw them onto the other team's side as quickly as possible.
- The team with the fewest items on their side when time runs out wins.

2. Target Toss

- Set up targets (hula hoops, cones, buckets).
- Players take turns throwing bean bags or small balls into the targets.
- Different targets have different point values.
- The highest scorer wins.

3. Hot Potato

- Players sit in a circle and pass a beanbag (the "hot potato").
- Music plays, and when it stops, the person holding the beanbag is out.
- The last person remaining wins.

Option 5: Relay Races & Obstacle Courses

1. Hopping Relays

- Players race to a designated point and back while hopping.
- Variations: one-foot hop, bunny hop, crab walk.

2. Balancing Bean Bag Relay

- Players run while balancing a beanbag on their head.
- If it falls, they must stop and replace it before continuing.

3. Obstacle Course Challenge

- Set up stations with cones, tunnels, jump ropes, and obstacles.
- Players complete the course as fast as possible.

Option 6: Playground Ball Games

1. Four Square

- Mark a large square divided into four equal sections.
- Players hit the ball into another player's square.
- If a player misses, they rotate out.

2. Kickball Basics

- Played like baseball, but with a bouncy ball.
- The pitcher rolls the ball, and the kicker kicks it before running the bases.

3. Keep It Up

- Players work together to keep a ball in the air using only their hands.

Option 7: Cooperative & Non-Competitive Games

1. Human Knot

- Players stand in a circle, grab two random hands, and try to untangle.

2. Pass the Clap

- Players pass a clap around the circle as fast as possible.

3. Building Block Tower Tag

- After each round of tag, tagged players add a block to a tower before rejoining.

Option 8: Creative Movement & Balance Challenges

1. Balancing Act

- Setup: Players each receive a beanbag.
- How to Play:
    - Players walk from a starting point to a finish line while balancing the beanbag on their head.
    - If it falls, they must stop, reset it, and continue.
    - The goal is to reach the finish line as fast as possible without dropping the beanbag.
- Variation: Add obstacles like cones to weave around.

2. Jump and Land

- Setup: Players stand in a designated area.
- How to Play:
    - The leader calls out a type of jump (two feet together, one foot, spin jump, etc.).
    - Players must jump and land safely with good balance.
    - Encourage soft landings to prevent injuries.
- Variation: Add a "reaction" element—players jump when they hear a specific word.

3. Tightrope Walk

- Setup: Draw a straight line with chalk or use a rope placed on the floor.
- How to Play:
    - Players must walk heel-to-toe along the line, pretending they are on a tightrope.
    - They must keep their arms out for balance.
- Variation: Carry a small beanbag on their head for an extra challenge.

Option 9: Partner & Small Group Games

1. Mirror Movements

- Setup: Players pair up and face each other.
- How to Play:
    - One player moves while the other copies their movement exactly, as if they are a mirror.
    - Switch roles after 30-60 seconds.
- Variation: Play in a small group with a leader calling movements.

2. Hand Clap Challenges

- Setup: Players pair up.
- How to Play:
    - Teach basic clapping patterns (e.g., clap-own hands-clap partner's hands).
    - Try faster speeds or more complex sequences.
- Variation: Play with music and clap to the rhythm.

3. Buddy Balance

- Setup: Players pair up and stand side by side.
- How to Play:
    - Partners must balance on one foot for as long as possible.
    - Try linking arms or standing back-to-back for added fun.
- Variation: Balance while hopping!

Option 10: Stealth & Strategy Games

1. Red Light, Green Light

- Setup: One player is the "traffic light" at the front, and others line up behind.
- How to Play:
    - When the traffic light says "Green Light," players run forward.
    - When they say "Red Light," everyone must stop immediately.
    - If a player moves after "Red Light," they must go back to the start.
    - First player to reach the traffic light wins and becomes the next leader.

2. Statue Garden

- Setup: One player is the "museum guard," and others are statues.
- How to Play:
    - The guard walks around and tries to catch statues moving.
    - If a player is caught moving, they switch roles with the guard.
- Variation: Players make silly poses when frozen.

3. Capture the Flag (Modified)

- Setup: Two teams, each with a "flag" (beanbag or small item) placed in their territory.
- How to Play:
    - Teams try to steal the opponent's flag and bring it back to their side without being tagged.
    - If tagged, they must freeze or return to their home base before trying again.
- Variation: Play with safe zones where players can't be tagged.

Option 11: Jump Rope Fun

1. Jump Rope Challenges

- Setup: Each player has a jump rope.
- How to Play:
    - Players try different jumps, such as:
        - Regular jumps
        - Crisscross jumps
        - Double-unders (if advanced)
    - Count how many successful jumps they can do in a row.

2. Snake Rope

- Setup: A long jump rope is placed on the ground.
- How to Play:
    - One person wobbles the rope side to side like a snake.
    - Other players must jump over without touching the rope.
- Variation: Increase speed or make players jump on one foot.

3. Jump Rope Relay

- Setup: Divide players into two teams.
- How to Play:
    - One player from each team must do 10 jumps before handing the rope to the next person.
    - First team to finish wins.

Option 12: Creative Movement & Dance Games

1. Animal Walk Races

- Setup: Mark a start and finish line.
- How to Play:
    - Players must move like animals to the finish line:
        - Crab walk
        - Bear crawl
        - Frog jumps
    - First to finish wins!

2. Musical Statues

- Setup: Play music for dancing.
- How to Play:
    - When the music stops, players must freeze like a statue.
    - Anyone who moves is out.
- Variation: Choose silly statue themes (e.g., "Superhero Statue").

3. Move Like a...

- Setup: Players spread out in an open space.
- How to Play:
    - The leader calls out different movements: “Move like a monkey!”, “Stomp like a dinosaur!”
    - Players act out the movement until a new one is called.

Option 13: Indoor Game Day (Rainy Day Plan)

1. Silent Ball

- Players toss a small ball around without speaking.
- Dropping the ball eliminates a player.

2. Simon Says

- Players follow commands only if "Simon Says" is included.
- If they move when Simon *doesn't* say, they are out.

3. Balloon Keep-Up

- Players work together to keep balloons from touching the ground.
- Try adding more balloons over time!

Option 14: Team-Building Challenges

1. Build a Tower

- Teams use building blocks to build the tallest tower.

2. Cross the River

- Players must use stepping stones (poly spots) to cross without touching the floor.

3. Blindfold Walk

- One player is blindfolded and must be guided by a partner’s voice.

Option 15: End-of-Program Celebration & Favorite Games Day

- Players vote on their favorite games from the program or play a big obstacle course challenge. End with a recognition circle, where kids receive certificates and high-fives!

Minute-to-Win-It Indoor Game Instructions

These five fast-paced indoor games use materials already found in the program and are great for rainy days or indoor sessions. Each game lasts one minute per round, encouraging quick action, skill-building, and fun competition.

1. Stack Attack (Building Blocks Challenge)

Objective:

Players race to build the tallest tower possible in one minute without it falling.

Materials Needed:

- Regular building blocks (from *Option 7: Cooperative & Non-Competitive Games*).

Setup:

- Each player (or small team) gets an equal number of blocks.
- They start with blocks on the ground or a table.

How to Play:

- On "GO," players begin stacking their blocks into a tower.
- If the tower falls, they can rebuild but must keep going.
- When the timer stops, the tallest standing tower wins.

Variations:

- One-Handed Challenge: Players can only use one hand.
- Team Challenge: One player builds while the other passes the blocks.

---

2. Keep It Up (Balloon Challenge)

Objective:

Keep the balloon in the air using only one hand for an entire minute.

Materials Needed:

- Balloons (from *Option 13: Indoor Game Day*).

Setup:

- Give each player a balloon.
- Players stand in an open space.

How to Play:

- When the timer starts, players hit the balloon into the air using only one hand.
- The goal is to keep it from touching the ground.
- If a balloon falls, the player is out or must do a quick action (e.g., 5 jumping jacks) before continuing.

Variations:

- Two-Balloon Challenge: Players must keep two balloons in the air at once.
- No-Hand Challenge: Players use only their head, elbows, or feet.

---

3. Cup Toss Relay (Target Toss Challenge)

Objective:

Toss as many bean bags or small balls into a target cup as possible within one minute.

Materials Needed:

- Beanbags or small balls (from *Option 4: Throwing & Catching Games*).
- Plastic cups or small buckets as targets.

Setup:

- Place a target cup 3 to 5 feet away from the throwing line.
- Give each player several bean bags or balls.

How to Play:

- On “GO,” players toss their bean bags into the cup as many times as possible.
- Each successful toss earns 1 point.
- The player or team with the most points when time runs out wins.

Variations:

- Move Back Challenge: Start closer and move the target further each round.
- Partner Toss: One player tosses, the other catches in a bucket.

---

4. Balance Walk (Beanbag Challenge)

Objective:

Walk across a designated path while balancing a beanbag on your head as many times as possible in one minute.

Materials Needed:

- Beanbags (from *Option 8: Creative Movement & Balance Challenges*).
- Tape or cones to mark a path.

Setup:

- Mark a straight walking path (10-15 feet long).
- Each player places a beanbag on their head.

How to Play:

- Players must walk from start to finish without touching or dropping the beanbag.
- If the beanbag falls, they must freeze, pick it up, and restart from the last checkpoint.
- Players count how many times they successfully cross the path before time runs out.

Variations:

- Obstacle Balance: Add small cones or obstacles to step over.
- Speed Challenge: Who can cross the most times without dropping the beanbag?

---

5. Jump Rope Sprint (Speed Challenge)

Objective:

Complete as many jump rope rotations as possible in one minute.

Materials Needed:

- Jump ropes (from *Option 11: Jump Rope Fun*).

Setup:

- Each player gets a jump rope.
- Players stand in a clear area.

How to Play:

- On “GO,” players start jumping rope as fast as possible.
- Each successful jump counts as one point.
- The player with the most jumps in one minute wins.

Variations:

- Backward Jumps: Players jump rope backward instead of forward.
- Crisscross Jumps: Players cross their arms while jumping.
- Partner Challenge: Two players hold one jump rope and jump together.