



Cooperative Games for Recess

Cooperative Games

1. Work towards a common goal
2. No “winners”
3. Teams/Groups are created in ways that promote inclusion
4. Encourage team work
5. Encourage creative thinking
6. Encourage problem solving
7. Are fun

Freeze Frame

Equipment: None

Everyone moves around in the playing area. Students could be moving to music, counting or in silence as long as they are mixing around.

The leader then shouts, “Freeze Frame.” When everyone is frozen, the leader calls out a number and an object. Participants must quickly form groups of that number and then use their bodies to make the object. For example, “3, toaster oven!” and groups of 3 form themselves into toaster ovens.

Some object suggestions: washing machine; rocking chair; car; bus; piano; waterfall; tree; bird; horse; elephant; house; TV; computer; bicycle; iPod etc...

The leader “inspects” and “congratulates” each group and then picks a new leader. You may want to encourage students to number off for the role of leader to further discourage competition and exclusion. You may also want to encourage players to always form group with new people.

Everyone Kicks Kickball

Equipment: Kickball and bases

In Everyone Kicks Kickball, students rotate through every position. Every position is numbered as well as “kickers.” After a participant’s turn at bat is over, everyone rotates one position.

Catcher → Pitcher → First → Second → Third → Left Field → Center Field
→ Right Field → End of Batter line → Batter finishes turn → Catcher

Explain to the students that the object of the game is to see how many times they can get through the rotation.



Untying Knots

Equipment: 1(or more) long rope(s)

1. Take a long rope and tie one knot about every three feet. There should be one knot for each person. If you have more than six in the group, you might want to have two ropes.
2. Lay the rope on the ground or a table in a straight line.
3. Have each player stand by a knot on the rope.
4. Have the players pick up the rope making sure each player has one hand on either side of the rope.
5. They have to untie the knots without letting go of the rope.

Usually it will take some time to figure out how to untie the knots. Some groups end up with more knots before they figure it out! Give them time to solve the challenge.

Tied in Knots

Equipment: None

1. Have everyone stand in a circle.
2. Reach out with their left hand, and grasp someone's hand.
3. Reach out with the right hand, and grasp someone else's hand. Each player must be holding hands with two different people.
4. Challenge them to undo themselves into a circle.

It can work with any size group, but small to medium size groups work best. Once you get over 8 people, split them into two groups.

The groups must always have an even number so the leader may have to get involved too.

Color Scavenger Hunt

Equipment: Different colored yarn, cut into short pieces. Cut enough pieces so that each player can have one of each color.

Each bundle of colored lengths is hidden separately in the playing area and participants have to find one of each color to collect the whole "set."

Variations

- One person takes each bundle of colored yarn and hides with it so they can distribute the pieces of yarn one by one when they are found.
- Have the people hiding give each child a word. They can hand out slips of paper, or just tell the kids the word and they have to remember it. Once the kids have all the words, they have to put it together to create a sentence. The sentences could be anything, but the kids will be more engaged if it tells them something they would want to know.

Some suggestions: Tomorrow's lunch is pizza. We are going on a field trip Friday. There are cookies for snack.



Tag

Equipment: None

Tag is a game of endless variations. Kids can just create their own game at any time. Variations often go by different names depending on where you learned the game.

Some suggestions:

- Freeze Tag - if you're tagged by 'it' you freeze until you are rescued. Use creativity for rescuing techniques: you have to duck under an arm; the frozen person makes a shape that you have to go through or under; you have to give the frozen person a hi-5; both of the frozen person's hands have to be tapped before they are unfrozen, etc.
- Safety Tag - There are numerous ways for players to be safe: they have to touch a certain color, they have to link arms with another person, lay on their back, sing a particular song, touch a tree, touch a bench, etc...
- Chain Tag – “it” is now a group of two, holding hands, when someone else is caught, they join the chain, when the chain has four people in it, it breaks to make two groups of two and so on until everyone is part of a chain
- Blob Tag - if you get tagged, you hold hands and join the “blob” which keeps growing until everyone is part of the blob.
- Sitting Tag - if you get tagged by 'it', then you sit in one place. If you are able to touch someone who has not yet been tagged, then they sit and you are back in the game.
- Wave Tag – “it” counts to 20 or so while other players run and hide. When the person who is “it” finishes counting, he or she will start looking for the other players. When someone is found, “it” calls out "1-2-3 on " and the player's name (e.g. "1-2-3 on David").

The player who was found has to go to the 'jail'. Any high visibility place will do as the jail. It could be a swing set, large rock, tree etc. They have to stay in jail until they see one of the free players in their hiding spot who is waving at them. Once they have been waved at, they are free to go and hide again. If “it” sees them as they sneak away, “it” can call 1-2-3 on them again.

The game ends when “it” has all the players in jail. A new “it” is chosen and the whole thing starts all over again.



Changing the Leader

Equipment: None

Students gather in a circle and the leader begins a repetitive action that everyone then performs (i.e. clapping). The leader can change the activity any time he or she wants. Everyone in the group has to watch the leader to see what to do next. Without saying anything, the leader lets someone else in the circle know that that person is now the leader. It could be a wink, slight nod, or even just a smile with direct eye contact. The new leader can change the action any time until passing the leader role to a new person. The kids have to be paying attention to figure out who is the new leader and what action they should be doing.

Keep 'Em Up!

Equipment :1-3 Balls (Beach Balls)

Players scatter over the playing area and a ball is tossed into the air. The objective is to keep the ball in the air using any part of the body.

Once one ball is up, get two or three balls going at the same time.

Keep count of the number of times the ball (or balls) is kept up in the air before it hits the ground.

Kids try and better the number next time around.

Tag the Leader

Equipment: 1 ball

A student in the middle of the circle (the leader) throws up a ball, and the other children run in to try to tag the leader. If the leader catches the ball before anyone tags him or her, the other students have to freeze and start over. Whoever manages to tag the leader before the ball is caught becomes the leader.

Blanket Ball

Equipment: 2 sturdy blankets or sheets, 2 balls

Divide the class into two teams (numbering off is a good way create diverse groups and to minimize exclusion). Each team spreads out around its own blanket or sheet. Team members hold the edges of the blanket and a ball is placed in the middle of the cloth. Each group practices tossing the ball into the air and catching it with the cloth. Teams then pass one ball back and forth. Alternatively, one team can toss a ball straight up, quickly get out of the way, and let the other team rush in to catch the ball with their blanket.