

Play With Your Brain:

Physical activities for cognitive development

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Curt Hinson, Ph.D.

PlayFit Education Inc.
1945 Melson Way
Hockessin DE 19707
Phone: 302-438-3257
drcurthinson@comcast.net
www.playfiteducation.com

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Play With Your Brain: Physical Activities for Cognitive Development

Cross-Lateral Learning

Hand & Elbow; Elbow to knee; Nose & Ear; 1 & 2; 2 & 5; Finger & Thumb; Arm Up, Out & Down

Cooperative Shapes

Objective: Problem-solving; cooperation; creativity.

Equipment: Chinese jump ropes.

How to play: The players form groups of four or five. Each group receives a Chinese jump rope and stands inside of it with the rope pulled up around their waists. The teacher calls out different shapes (e.g., boat; tree; star; the letter R; circle; square; shark; the state of Texas; etc.) and the players attempt to turn their rope into the shape of the object called out.

Crazy Cones/Cards

Objective: Spatial awareness; self-awareness; cooperation; teamwork; color recognition; aerobic endurance; flexibility.

Equipment: Different colored cones (preferably 3 or 4 different colors); music; Index cards with contrasting subjects written on them (e.g., cities/states; living/non-living objects; letters/numbers; etc.)

How to play: The cones (or cards) are scattered around the area. Each player stands at a cone. The color of the cone determines which team the player is on. When the music begins, all players move around the area attempting to flip over the cones of the opposing teams while making sure their own cones remain upright. A cone cannot be touched by a player two times in succession. Play for 30-45 seconds and see which team has the most cones upright. Reset and start again.

Crazy Catch

Objective: Agility; hand/eye coordination; throwing; catching; cooperation; basic math computation; right/left recognition

Equipment needed: One "Odd Ball" and one hoop for every two players.

How to Play: This game is played in pairs. Place the hoop on the floor between the two players. One player holds the ball. The players stand on opposite sides of the hoop, facing each other. The player with the ball bounces it (downward toss) into the hoop, toward the opposing player. The opposing player attempts to catch the ball after it bounces one time in the hoop. If the player doesn't catch the ball, the thrower receives one point. The catcher now becomes the thrower. The players continue bouncing the ball back and forth in the hoop. The first player with seven points wins the game. Throws cannot bounce higher than the opposing player's head. If a tossed ball bounces above the opposing player's head, the opposing player receives one point.

Advanced Challenge:

The player with the ball bounces it (downward toss) into the hoop, toward the opposing player. Prior to releasing the ball, the player must call out either "Right" or "Left." The opposing player attempts to catch the ball after it bounces one time in the hoop using either his right hand or left hand depending on what the tosser called out. If the player doesn't catch the ball, or catches it with the incorrect hand, the thrower receives one point.

Crazy Sprints

Objective: Interval training; aerobic endurance; problem-solving.

Equipment: "Crazy Sprint picture cards" (these pictures depict an invisible wall that the runners must pass over, under, around, or through when they cross the middle of the gym).

How to play: Divide the runners into three groups (Rockets, Roadrunners, & Rabbits). The runners stand at one end of the gym. The teacher stands in the middle with the picture cards. When each group is called they sprint to the other end of the gym, attempting to move over, under, around, or through the imaginary wall shown on the picture card.

Cross-Over

Objective: Self-control; self-awareness; cooperation.

Equipment: None

How to play: The players form one large circle. On the signal to begin, everyone attempts to cross to the other side of the circle without touching anyone else. When the group is successful, make the circle smaller and try again. Discuss the ways that are used to cross the circle to avoid touching others.

Flash Tag

Objective: Math computation; cooperation; agility.

Equipment: None

How to play: The players form pairs and stand facing each other. Each player makes a fist and shakes it three times (palm facing down) with their partner. On the third shake each partner sticks out any number of fingers (1-5). The object is to add your number of fingers with your partner's number of fingers and call out the answer first. The person who correctly calls out the answer first wins and a one-on-one tag game begins with the winner trying to get away from the other player. The other player must catch and tag the winner to end the tag game. The pair then starts over with a new math problem and a second tag game. After the second turn, each player raises his/her hand and looks for a new partner to play with. The players can be allowed to run during the tag game if space permits. If space is limited, the tag game can be played as a "walking" tag game.

Grab It

Objective: Reaction; cooperation; quick thinking.

Equipment: One beanbag for every two players.

How to play: The players sit facing each other with legs crossed and beanbag on the floor between them. The teacher calls out "Ready" and the players place their hands on their knees. The teacher then calls out "Grab It" and the players each try to grab the beanbag before their partner. Once the beanbag has been grabbed, the turn is over and the beanbag is returned to its starting position. The players get ready for the next turn.

Variation: Try using two objects at once such as a ball and a beanbag. Call out the object to be grabbed. Also, call out right or left and let the players grab the object with the correct hand.

Hand Off

Objective: Problem-solving; cooperation; creative thinking.

Equipment: Any object that can be handed back and forth between two people (e.g., foam relay baton, beanbag, yarn ball, etc.)

How to play: The players form pairs. The pair stands facing each other with one partner holding the object. The players take turns handing the object back and forth to each other. The object is to hand the object back and forth as many times as possible in the allotted time without repeating any of the handing methods that was previously used. Encourage the players to be creative and come up with new ways to hand the object to their partner. The object cannot be tossed or thrown.

Math Toss

Objective: Tossing; catching; cooperation; thinking; problem-solving; communication; addition; subtraction; multiplication.

Equipment: One soft (foam) ball or bean bag for every two players.

How to play: The players form pairs. Each pair has a ball. The player with the ball calls out a number (i.e., 17) and tosses the ball to the other player. The player catches the ball and must call out a math problem that equals the number called (i.e., $14 + 3$; $10 + 7$; $20 - 3$; etc.). Once the problem is called out, the player with the ball calls out a new number and tosses the ball back. The object is to see how many problems can be correctly solved in a certain amount of time.

Shark Tank

Objective: Listening/following directions; problem-solving; cooperation; communication.

Equipment: Blind folds; Cones; Poly Sharks; Poly Stars; beanbags; smooch balls; Poly spots.

How to play: Make a large square with the cones. The rest of the equipment is spread out randomly inside the square on the floor. The players form pairs. Each pair stands on one of the four sides of the square. One partner is blindfolded. The object is for the other player to give the blindfolded partner verbal instructions to move across the area (Shark Tank), from one side to the other, without stepping on any of the objects. Players start with 3 "oxygen tanks." When an object on the floor is stepped on the players lose one oxygen tank. If a Shark is stepped on they lose all oxygen. If a player steps on a Poly Star they get one oxygen tank back. After they lose all three they must go back and begin again. The blindfolded player must keep both arms extended out in front to act as bumpers in case she gets too close to others. The player should walk slowly and only go where the partner instructs. After the player successfully crosses the area, the partners switch roles and attempt to cross back to where they began.

Team Juggle

Objective: Tossing; catching; teamwork; problem-solving; group dynamics.

Equipment: Foam balls or other soft objects.

How to play: The players form groups of five and stand in a circle. Each group is given one ball to start. The group passes the ball around the circle in a “star” pattern (don’t throw to the person right next to you), with each player always throwing to the same person. After the players have mastered one ball, another ball is added. The challenge is to see how many balls or objects each group can juggle at one time without dropping or missing the balls. To make it more challenging the group can juggle balls forwards, backwards, and while standing inside another group.

True or False

Objective: Chasing; fleeing; quick thinking; cooperation.

Equipment: Cones or markers.

How to play: Players form pairs. Each pair stands side-by-side approximately 1 foot apart so that the group forms two parallel lines. Players on one side are designated to be the “true” team and the other group is the “false” team. A safety line is marked on the floor or ground approximately 15-20 feet behind each group. The teacher asks a question or gives a statement that is either true or false (e.g., the capitol of California is Sacramento). If the statement or question is true, the true team runs to their safety line while the false team attempts to tag them. If the statement was false, the roles of the teams are reversed. A player gets a point for tagging the other player or for making it across the line without being tagged. Each player keeps his/her own score. Switch partners often.

West African Jumping

Objective: Leg strength/endurance; problem-solving; cooperation.

Equipment: None

How to play: The players form pairs and stand facing each other. One player is designated to be the winner when their feet are on the “same” side and the other player is designated to be the winner when their feet are on “opposite” sides. The game begins with the players jumping in place six times. On the sixth jump, both players randomly stick one foot forward when they land. If the feet match on the same side, the “same” player wins, if the feet are on opposite sides, the “different” player wins. The game continues with the players jumping six times again. Once one player has three points the game is over and the players switch to a new partner.

Equipment used in this presentation is available from Toledo PE Supply:

Item Description	Catalog #	Catalog Price
Chinese Jump Rope	CJ16	\$4.75 each
Poly Half Cones	PHCO	\$.99 each
4” x 4” Vinyl-Covered Beanbags	GL522	\$12.99/dozen
Smoosh Balls	11701SET	\$25.99 set of 6
Foam Relay Batons	4129	\$17.99 set of 6
Poly Sharks	22235	\$49.99 set of 6
Poly Spots-9”	79PSS	\$19.99 set of 6
Poly Spots-5”	75PSS	\$12.99 set of 6
Star 9” Markers	70	\$14.99 set of 6
Shark Skin All-Around Foam Balls	SS7SET	\$78.99 set of 6
Blindfolds	43346	\$9.99 set of 6
Large Odd Ball	55360SET	\$23.99 set of 6
No-Kink Skinny Hoops-30”	OS-T0687	\$42.99/dozen

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About Curt Hinson

Curt Hinson Ph.D., has taught for 35 years. He is the CEO of PlayFit Education. In addition, he teaches in the on-line graduate program at Canisius College in Buffalo, NY and is an adjunct professor at Rowan University in New Jersey. He holds a Ph.D. in Kinesiology; a Masters of Education degree; and a BS degree in Health & Physical Education. Curt is the author of three books, *Fitness for Children*; *Games Kids Should Play at Recess*; and *6-Steps to a Trouble-free Playground*. He also is the creator of the *Dr. Recess Playground Program*. He has made presentations in all 50 states, as well as in Washington, DC, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, and Mexico. He was the 1992 NASPE Eastern District Teacher of the Year and the 1991 Delaware PE Teacher of the Year. He has been featured in the *Wall Street Journal*; *Disney’s Family Fun* magazine; and on the *Fox News Network*.