



Healthy Play IS a Solution

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We encourage participants to use their own good judgment when monitoring their well-being and activity levels. You have it within you to know yourself better than anyone else does. Creative Spirit assumes no liability for injuries.

A POCKETFUL OF GAMES

INTRODUCTION

This is a handout about putting the power of play into action. No more studying, intellectualizing, rationalizing, quantifying, or procrastinating about how to use play...just action! It is important as individuals and as a society that we implement what is idealistic, naturalistic, and practical about play. The positive impact of doing so will enhance our quality of life whether we are teachers, children, parents, youth workers, or business executives.

Successful learning is accomplished by playing. This concept must be acknowledged and stressed. Play is intended to be the safe arena where we can practice and sometimes fail and then practice some more so that success and self-improvement is constantly being achieved. Play is not just a set of time-consuming activities that we do until we grow up and become workers. It is an essential mechanism that allows us to learn how to become good workers, parents and friends. Through play we discover how to be empathetic, creative, patient, caring, kind, honest, and learn how to organize our thoughts, self-regulate and problem-solve. If we expect our students to lead successful and full adult lives, this healthy play process started when they are children should continue. We would like to invite you to join with us in discovering how many ways that "Healthy Play Is A Solution."

LIKE, TOTALLY IT TAG

(All grades, any number of players, large playing area, no equipment)

This is the ultimate freeze tag game and a perfect place to start focusing on playing fair. Set up a playing area and make sure everyone knows the boundaries. In this game, *all* the players are simultaneously "It." The rules are simple. Whoever touches another person first freezes them. When two people tag at the same time, both players are frozen. Once they're frozen they stay that way until the game ends. Play continues until only a few players are left unfrozen (about six). At that point, have everybody who is frozen yell out a five-second countdown to indicate the game is coming to an end. To have a "toad-a-lay awe-sum" time, this game should be humorously explained in your best Valley girl or boy accent. This is a fast game and a good one to explore what effect different size boundaries have on a game. Play it many times before moving on to something else.

TRIPLE TAG

(All grades, a large playing area, no equipment, any number of players)

Set up boundaries for your playing area. Like LIKE, TOTALLY IT TAG, all players are "It" and may tag any other player. The change for this game is that kids must be tagged three times before they're frozen solid. The first time a student is tagged they must use one of their hands to hold the spot where they were touched. The second tag makes them to use their other hand to hold that spot. (Now that both of their hands are occupied, they can tag players with his head, elbow or body. Feet or knees may **NOT** be used for tagging because of safety concerns). The third tag freezes that player solid.

Play continues until only a few players are left unfrozen (about six). At that point, have everybody who is frozen yell out a five-second countdown to indicate that the game is coming to an end.

SAFETY HAVEN

(Kindergarten and up, 8- 50 players, indoors or outdoors, bandanas or markers to identify the players that are "It")

This is a special tag game where the participants are only *safe* when they seek *haven* with each other. Decide how large a playing area you will need, and call everyone's attention to the boundary lines. Have several players selected as "It" (one for every 6-8 players), and give them the identifying markers. Players disperse throughout the playing area and the game begins. If a player who is "It" tags another player, "Itness" is then transferred from the original "It" to the person who was tagged. They also transfer the identifying marker to the new person who is now "It," so everyone can easily see the change in roles. Players may choose to run around to avoid being tagged, or they can seek SAFETY HAVEN (a safe moment of freedom from being tagged "It") with another player by hugging them and humming together. Their safe period only lasts as long as it takes to hum together on *one* breath. After their humming breath is out, they must find a *new* person to hum and hug with or risk being tagged.

Variations during this game keep it feeling fresh. Feel free to change the SAFETY HAVEN rules. Try being safe only when hugging people wearing "green," or in groups of "four," or people who like "broccoli."

THE iPod OF THE 50'S

(Any age, two or more players, inside, an oven rack, a piece of string)

Take a five-foot piece of string and tie each end to one side of the oven rack. The first student winds the string around each of his index fingers so that the rack hangs about 18 inches down from his hands. Then he places his fingers in his ears. He bends over from the waist, so the oven rack is not touching his body. Then have the other participants gently strike the oven rack with any type of object they can find (car keys, pens, shoes, books, bracelets, soft-drink cans, whatever). Each object will produce a wonderful sound that will vibrate up the string to the listener's ears. What the "musicians" hear and what the person plugged in hears create two, very different experiences. End your symphony with a gong: one person strikes the oven rack simultaneously with the heels of both fists, creating a deep and resonating note.

Hints: You can have little children wind the string, holding a full size oven rack, around their *whole* hand and put their hand over their ears. Also, you could substitute a lighter metal object, such as a toaster oven rack.

RUMPELSTILTSKIN (Formerly **Bumpity Bump-Bump**)

(Kindergarten and up, 10 or more players, indoors, no equipment)

Ask participants to stand in a circle. Next select the "Challengers" and have them move inside the circle. A good balance is to have one Challenger for every six people in your group. This should allow for a dizzying pace of activity.

Instruct everyone to say the phrase, "RUMPELSTILTSKIN." Have everyone repeat this phrase again as fast as they can. (*Speed is important.*) Next, explain the commands *Left*, *Center* and *Right* to all the participants. The significance of these commands is that the players who make up the circle must now learn the names of the other players on their immediate *Left* and *Right* and, of course, remember their own name, which will correspond with the command *Center*.

At the same time, individual Challengers from the middle will approach any member of the circle and give *one* of the commands (*Left*, *Center* or *Right*) followed quickly by the phrase "RUMPELSTILTSKIN." The player being approached needs to respond with the correct first name (based on the command given by the Challenger) before the Challenger finishes the phrase "RUMPELSTILTSKIN." If the challenger finishes saying "RUMPELSTILTSKIN" first or if the player being questioned gives the wrong name, then the Challenger trades places with the other person and joins the circle. The other player now becomes a new Challenger. If the person being challenged states the right name first, then the Challenger remains a Challenger and must try to find someone else to baffle. Players are moved about all over the circle and very quickly learn the names of many of the participants. Nametags are helpful.

ENDANGERED SPECIES

(First grade and up, 15 or more players, large playing area, identifying markers)

Use a large playing area about the size of a basketball court. Have your class identify the name of an endangered species (such as a panda, whale, tiger or condor) for the focus of the game. Let's pick "Pandas" for this game example. Choose two or three "Trappers" and give them the identifying markers (like bandanas or balls) and have them go to the middle of the playing field. The Trappers' goal is to capture the Pandas by gently tagging them with their hand. A captured Panda has been caught in a net and can no longer run around. Luckily, the other Pandas can work together in teams of two or more to free their trapped friends. Two uncaught Pandas hold hands while encircling the captured Panda. They now raise their arms up and down, yelling "Panda Free!" This breaks the spell of the Trappers' net and allows the Panda to roam free to save other caught Pandas.

There are many strategies in this game for both the Trappers and the Pandas. The Trappers can guard the captured Pandas. When the Trappers look tired or when they capture all the Pandas the game ends. A new endangered species is chosen with new Trappers and the game begins again.

GHOST

(Kindergarten and up, any number of players, large playing area, no equipment)

Have all players form a circle holding hands. (Process any problems like hand squishing or arm-pulling.) Pick four "Ghosts" and place them in the center of circle and have them pretend to go to sleep. The remaining players begin to walk clockwise around the Ghosts while counting out loud the hours of a clock from one o'clock to midnight. At "midnight," players let go of each other's hands and run away from the Ghosts that are waking up. Upon awakening, Ghosts wave their arms high in the air while making ghostly sounds as they chase the other players. Each person they tag becomes a Ghost who also has to mimic the sounds and arm motions of a Ghost. The game is over when everybody is a GHOST.

ACTING WORDS

(Third grade and up, any number of players, inside or outdoors, no equipment)

Select one player to silently think of a secret word. Then instruct this child, the leader, to announce to the group another word that rhymes with their secret word. For example: "My word sounds like goat." The group must attempt to guess the secret word. But to make a guess they act out the word that they think the leader is thinking of. One person might stand up and pretend to be putting on some clothes miming the word "coat." The leader will announce if "coat" is a correct guess. If not, another person might sit on the floor and begin moving their arms back and forth. "No, it's not a boat." A third person stands up and expands their cheeks and abdomen, and the leader states, "Yes, it's bloat." The child who guesses the correct answer is now the new leader, and the game begins again.

WHO'S IN CHARGE?

(Second grade and up, 10 or more players, indoors is fine, imagination is the only equipment needed)

Ever wonder WHO'S IN CHARGE? In this game students will have a chance to find out. Have your group form a large circle sitting on the floor or in chairs. Select one member randomly and have them move into the middle of the circle. The person in the middle now closes his eyes while you, the teacher, *silently* points out one person (and only one person) to be IN CHARGE. The person IN CHARGE is the leader of the group, and all group members must copy exactly what this player does. While the person in the middle still has his eyes closed, the player IN CHARGE starts the game by doing some motion like waving. Quickly, all the other members start waving. Now the person in the middle opens his eyes and begins to try to figure out WHO'S IN CHARGE.

At any given moment the leader can change motions, for example, from waving to patting his head. Quickly, other group members see the change and copy the new motion. Now the person IN CHARGE (a silly person indeed) stops patting his head and sticks his tongue out. Everyone follows along. The person in the middle gets three guesses to try to figure out who the leader is. If the guess is correct, the two players exchange places and the game begins again. If after three guesses the person IN CHARGE has not been discovered, the game is halted and the great baffling leader is acknowledged. The person in the middle and the leader still exchange places and the game starts over. Encourage the person IN CHARGE to be very creative and use movements like clapping, shuffling feet, snapping fingers, making funny faces, moving in sloooooow motion.

ARE YOU A GOOD LEARNER?

(Kindergarten and up, 10 or more players, an inside space, stable chairs)

Players arrange their chairs in a circle with about one foot of space between chairs. One person is selected to be the first person "IT." This player does not have a chair and moves to the middle of the circle. He or she then selects one of the players sitting in a chair and greets him with a handshake and the phrase, "Are you a good learner?" (An option is to identify the person by whatever the school mascot is. Example: "Are you a good Eagle?") The person in the chair must respond (in a very loud voice so everyone can hear), "Yes, I'm a good learner, and I like PEOPLE who _____." (At this point the sitting player uses his imagination to identify some attribute that several or all of the other players sitting in the circle might have, for example, people who are wearing something green, who are wearing shorts, who brushed their teeth today or who like ice cream.) Now the action begins. All players possessing the given attribute (that is who are wearing green) must leave their current chair and find another place to sit, which was vacated by another person having this same attribute. For each round, one person will be left without a chair and this person becomes the next one to start a new round by asking the question, "Are you a good learner?"

COSMIC MOTIONS

(3rd grade up. However, modifications can be made for younger children. 8-35 players, several RuffSkin balls and other

objects. *Be creative*)

Form the participants into a circle and have everyone raise one hand. You now must establish the orbits (pattern) of the objects that you have in your universe. The leader calls out the name of a player with their hand up and gently tosses them a star (foam ball). That player now calls out another person's name (who has their hand up) and throws the ball to them. Always remember whom you threw the ball to because that becomes the permanent order. After a player has caught the ball, that person puts his or her hand down and cannot catch a throw from anyone else. Continue throwing the ball until everyone has caught the ball from someone. When the last person catches the ball, the leader now raises their hand and the ball is tossed to them thus completing the orbit and allowing the object to be started over again. Practice the order at least one more time making sure everyone throws to the same person they threw the ball to the first time.

Now you're ready to add a planet (another foam ball). Start the star (your first ball) going around the circle. After it has gone 4 or 5 turns, add the planet. If that goes well, add another planet. Now try something different by adding a comet. The comet gets handed around the circle from one player to another in a clockwise direction. Now add a moon. That gets passed around the circle in a counter clockwise direction.

Black Hole!!! Take a brief pause from passing your star, planets, comet and moon around the circle and identify your Black Hole (A distinctly different nerf ball). The Black Hole gets passed in reverse order around the circle. Practice this reverse direction at least once to make sure everyone knows where to toss it. Now put all the other objects back in motion.

Hint: It really helps to call out the name of who you're throwing the ball to so that they are ready to catch it. Special rules: If planets collide, don't worry. Whoever picks them up just puts them back into motion by throwing them to the person they normally throw to. Try bouncing or rolling one or more of the objects.

DETECTIVES

(First grade and up, 15 or more players, indoor or outside, no equipment)

Have your group make a circle and close their eyes. Quietly walk around the inside or outside of the circle and lightly tap a few players on the head to become "Freezers." (Generally, pick one freezer for every six to eight players). Everyone else becomes a "Detective" and can now open their eyes as they begin to quietly *walk* around the playing area. The object of the Freezers is to sneakily touch the other players thus freezing them. Once frozen the children become statues and remain still until they are saved. When another Detective gives them a warm hug, the freezing spell is broken. The object of the Detectives is to figure out who *all* the Freezers are. They can't shout out the name of a Freezer, but it is smart to keep away from them.

Freezers are so sneaky that they can pretend to be frozen and quietly freeze you when you try to save them with a warm hug. If two Freezers touch each other, nothing happens, and the Freezers can deduce that they just met another Freezer. After a couple of minutes, stop the game and have the Freezers raise their hands, so the "Detective" can see how many Freezers they figured out. Play again, having each Freezer pick one replacement by tapping them on the shoulder while everyone, but the former Freezers, have their eyes closed.

DOUBLE SIMON SAYS ♦

(Kindergarten on up. Play this with your upper grades as well and discover how much they love this game)

Same as regular Simon Says except you have two simultaneous games going on with two "Simons." If the Simon of your team succeeds in getting you to goof up, you are not out of the game. However, you will have to switch teams and go play with the other group. Players just move back and forth between groups as they occasionally goof. Praise honesty! After this activity, process inclusiveness with your students. Ask them, "Which way do you like better, playing Simons Says the old way or playing Double Simon Says? A very large majority of children will tell you that they prefer playing Double Simon Says over the older version where they are eliminated.

RATTLESNAKE TAG

(Kindergarten and older, 20-30 players, inside or outside, a rattle or shaker)

Begin by having everyone hold hands forming a circle. The people holding hands define the boundaries of the playing circle and become the "safety net" for this game. Their importance should be strongly emphasized. Now, randomly choose two players to play inside the circle. The two players in the middle decide which one of them gets the rattle. The object for the player without the rattle is to try and tag the person holding the rattle. But, she must do so with her *eyes closed*. The player with the rattle keeps his *eyes open* but must constantly shake the rattle to let the other player know his approximate location. The person with the rattle tries to avoid being touched. The game begins with the two players standing far apart inside the circle. The player trying to catch the RATTLESNAKE closes her eyes and spins around one or two times.

The safety net gently increases or decreases the size of the playing field as the students move closer together or farther apart. One person will be chosen to be the "safety-net monitor." This person will give various commands to the safety-net members. To help the person in the middle of the circle who has her eyes closed; the "safety-net monitor" may command the group to "Take one giant step in" or "Take three baby steps closer." This helps facilitate compassion for those players having a more difficult time tagging the RATTLESNAKE while increasing the challenge for those who find this playful task easy. It's scary to move around with one's eyes closed, and many players may need to open them to check out where they are. This is a perfect opportunity to support safe play and de-emphasize arguments about "cheating." Simply state that a player must acknowledge this by saying, "Oops" when she opens her eyes. When this happens, the game is temporarily halted until the person without the rattle closes her eyes again and spins around one time.

SPELLING-GEOGRAPHY-MATH TAG

(Two or more people, multiple slips of paper with academic questions and answers)

Players are instructed to stand in a circle. Pick one person to be "it" for every four players. Give each person "it" a copy of a piece of paper that has multiple, age appropriate academic questions and answers. The people with the question and answer papers move to the inside of the circle. The game begins as each person "it" simultaneously and randomly chooses a person standing in the circle to answer one of the questions. If players answer correctly they remain where they are standing. However, if they are unable to answer the question correctly the person holding the paper verbally gives them the answer. After the answer is given, the paper and roles are exchanged and the person who missed the question is now "it." They will remain "it" if players questioned answer correctly. But once an individual is stumped roles are again reversed.

DRAGONS DODGEBALL ♦

(Fourth grade and older, 10-40 players, large playing area free of breakables, NERF® balls)

Start by having the players form a large circle. Select two players for every 10 players in the game to become DRAGONS. Each member of your two-player dragon group(s) must decide who will be the head and who will be the tail of the DRAGON. The tail person holds the shoulders or the waist of the front person of the DRAGON. The DRAGONS roam around in the center of the circle.

The object of the game is for the players of the circle to throw the NERF balls and hit the tail person of the DRAGON in the *butt*. *Only the butt counts*. The player who hits a Dragon's butt moves into the circle to become the new tail of the DRAGON. The previous tail now becomes the head of the DRAGON. The former head of the DRAGON returns to the circle, and the game continues. It is not easy to hit the tail of a DRAGON because the head person is always trying to move so that no one can get a clean throw at the tail person. Teamwork is essential, and we usually have a three-second rule to encourage players of the circle to pass to someone else quickly if they don't have a clear shot. It is useful to have two to four balls in action.

Remember that throwing things at people is aggressive. Quickly stop play if players are throwing violently or too hard. All the players have to do is hit the Dragon's butt. They are not trying to knock anyone out. We also make a rule that too hard a throw just doesn't count. This will help players learn that the PEOPLE, not the score, are what is truly important].

BALLOON SOCCER

(Third grade and up, 12 or more people, an inside open space, a bunch of 12-inch or larger balloons)

This is a moderate soft-aggressive activity. First blow up your balloons and store them (in a balloon corral) away from the game. Define a clear space of approximately 20 x 20 feet. Set two, sturdy chairs (the goals) each at opposite sides and encircle the chairs with cones or some other boundary marker like tape on the floor. Randomly divide into two teams and have players *sit* on the floor. Be sure to scatter the members of each team all over the playing area and have one player from each team sit in each goalie chair.

The object of the game is to tap the balloons to your own goalie who must pop the balloon using their fingers. Instruct goalies to pop balloons far away from their and other's faces. Do **not** allow sharp objects, such as pens or needles, to be used to pop the balloons for obvious safety reasons. All players must keep their *bottoms* on the floor at all times, and they cannot rise on their knees to get an extra height advantage. Players may scoot around to get to different positions, but they cannot crawl, stand or roll around to get there. The balloons can only be tapped by the hand. For safety reasons, kicking, carrying or holding a balloon is not permitted. The goalie must stay seated in the chair while trying to catch a balloon that is being tapped toward them. The boundary area around the goalie is a safe zone. Players may reach into the safe zone with their arms to deflect the balloons from the goalie. However, they may not scoot their bodies into the safe zone. Adjust the size of the safe zone to meet your students' needs.

Many variations are possible in this game. First of all, they don't have to pop the balloons to make a score. This makes

the game last longer and cost less. Also, some kids who are too uncomfortable around loud noises don't like popping balloons. Some balloons will pop during play, so be prepared and have some extras. Try having two or more balloons in play at one time. This becomes especially funny when the goalie is holding several balloons yet still tries to catch another. Many a goalie has lost several caught balloons while trying to get another. Have the goalie wear a blindfold or close their eyes to make scoring even harder. Having fixed positions where the players are not allowed to move may be a necessary step to take if you want to slow the action down or if some players become too rowdy. Always explain why you are making such changes, so that the children can learn from the experience.

We've tried this game standing up, and it's just not as safe. Players got too excited jumping around and accidentally hurt each other. We found the only safe, soft aggressive way to play this game was to start and stay on the floor. Once again, sharp objects to pop the balloons are not allowed.

Favorite game revisited with the Healthy Play touch!

SOCCER

*Probably the best thing to do for soccer is to add more balls to the action. (Again, we recommend nice soft sponge balls because they are so people-friendly). Three balls really increases the excitement, and if you use five, almost everyone scores a bunch of goals during the game. You'll actually have people trying to keep track of the score, but unless the game is video taped, there is no way to accurately keep track.

*Another useful addition may be to have more than one goalie. Anytime the goalie gets tired of playing that position; s/he may choose anyone on their team to replace them. Usually, with multiple balls, people get so tired they need a rest and want to be a goalie. Now find lots of other changes.

We at Creative Spirit™/Healthy Play would like to acknowledge all the playful and creative "spirit-masters" who have been inspiration for our endeavors. Special thanks are directed towards the wizards at the NEW GAMES foundation and Terry Orlick. This pamphlet is intended to promote healthy socialization and improved academic skill through play and humor. Our program is designed to educate people so they may achieve the meaningful benefits associated with play. We encourage participants to use their own good judgment when monitoring their well-being and activity levels. You have it within you to know yourself better than anyone else does. Never stop laughing! Never stop playing!

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How to order our book, ***Learning to Play, Playing to Learn,***
Curriculum and Activities for Classroom and Playground Management:
1-520-878-9223 or via **Paypal** at our Healthy Play Store online at
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RuffSKIN balls are available through Palos Sports 1-800-233-5484 or Palosports.com
 We recommend the "Ruffskin 8 Inch Special" foam ball from Palos Sports