



20 OUTDOOR GAMES

For Families!



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OCTOPUS

This game of tag involves an Octopus who is IT and fish who need to get from one end of the yard to the other without being tagged. Once tagged, kids have to stay in place and try to tag others as they pass. This game is more fun with more kids. It can be played with older and younger kids, but grade school kids will like it the best.



GHOST IN THE GRAVEYARD

Whoever is the "ghost" hides while the rest of the children count from 1 o'clock to midnight. The kids then link arms and walk around the house chanting "star light, star bright, hope I see a ghost tonight" until the ghost pops out. At this point, it's a straight game of tag. The ghost has to try to tag someone before they make it back to safety. The first person tagged or the last to safety is the next ghost.



RED LIGHT, GREEN LIGHT

In this game, kids can only move when the person who is IT has their back turned. If IT is looking, you have to freeze. If IT catches you moving, you have to go back to the start. The first person to touch IT is the next IT.

MICHELANGELO'S MADHOUSE

Whoever is "Michelangelo" takes each of the other players by the hands and spins around with them several times before letting them go. Each player then freezes as they land. This part doesn't really affect the outcome of the game, so kids can "fall" as silly as they want. After each statue is set, Michelangelo walks through his madhouse trying to get the other players to laugh without touching them. The first to giggle (or, if you prefer, the last) is the next Michelangelo.

HELICOPTER (JUMP ROPE GAME)

One person stands in the center and spins the jump rope around on the ground. The players have to jump the rope as it comes around. If the rope hits you, you are out. The last person standing is the next helicopter.

FROZEN T-SHIRT RACE

Soak a bunch of t-shirts in water, place them in plastic bags, and then stick them in the freezer overnight. The next day, hold a race to see who can 'defrost' and put on a frozen t-shirt the quickest. This is a great choice to play on a sweltering day--you'll want to keep the chilly t-shirt on even after the race is over!



BEAN BAG TOSS

Grab a ladder from the garage, and assign each rung a certain amount of points. (For example, 50 for the top, 40, 30, and so on, down to 10 points. They can be written on a piece of paper and taped to the ladder, or even post-it notes will work). Toss bean bags through the different rungs to earn points.

FISHING FOR MARBLES

Stick your feet into a tub of freezing water (a bag or two of ice in a kiddie pool will work) and try to pick up as many marbles as you can using only your toes.



PICNIC BASKET RELAY

Teams compete to see who can set up a picnic first (lay down the blanket, set up the silverware and plates, etc.). When one player finishes setting it up, they rush to get everything back in the basket, and then pass it off to the next player.



SANDWICH MAYHEM

This relay-style game is a fun way to enjoy your lunch! Teams line up beside a table and work together to make a sandwich FAST (one person spreads the mayo, one person adds the meat, etc.). When the meal gets to the end of the line, the last person has to eat it.

KICK THE CAN

One person (or a team of people if the group is large) is designated It and an empty can is placed in the open playing field. With eyes closed, IT counts to an agreed upon number, and the other players run and hide. IT then tries to find and tag each of the players, always keeping a watchful eye on the can. Any player who is tagged is sent to the "jail," usually in plain sight of the can. The rest of the free players attempt to kick the can before being tagged out. If they can kick the can without being caught, they set all the captured players free. At least 5 people are recommended for this game.

ANTE-I-OVER

There are two teams, one on each side of the barrier (typically a house roof, but any barrier that you can't see through will work). A player on the team that starts with the ball throws the ball over the roof to the other team, yelling "Ante-I-Over" to warn them that it has been thrown. If the other team fails to catch the ball before it hits the ground, then they will yell "Ante-I-Over" and throw it back. If the team that is thrown to catches the ball, then the player holding the ball runs around the building and tries to hit one of the members of the opposing team with the ball. Players are "safe" if they succeed in running around the building without being hit. If a player is hit, they then join the team of the player who hit them with the ball. Gameplay continues until one team has all of the players or there is just one left.



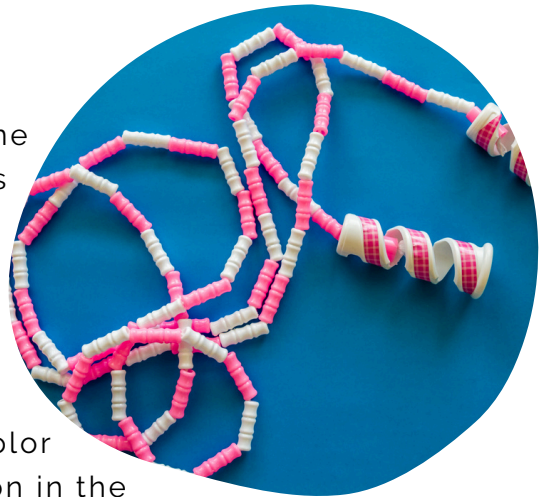
WATER JUMPING (JUMP ROPE GAME)

Spin the rope while each of the others jumps five times with a cup of water. Whoever has the most water at the end of their five jumps wins.

BIRDIE IN THE CUP

Everyone stands in a circle facing each other with one person in the middle. The person in the middle holds a cup with water in it. Every person must choose a color (in their head -- not spoken aloud). The person in the middle also chooses a color in their head, not spoken aloud. The person in the middle approaches each person one at a time in the circle and says,

"I have a birdie in this cup. What color is it?" If the color the player responds with is the same color the person in the middle has chosen, the person in the middle splashes them with the water in the cup. The person who guessed the correct color now stands in the middle with the cup of water.



SPUD

This outdoor game is a lot of fun. Every player gets a number and crowds around the person who is "it" for that round. IT then tosses the ball straight up and the other players run away. As the ball reaches the top of its toss, IT calls out the number of one of the other players and then runs away also. The player whose number was called must run back and catch the ball (or chase after it if it is bouncing around). Once that person has the ball, they yell, "Spud!" Then everyone else must freeze. The person with the ball must try to hit one of the players with the ball. If they do, that new person gets a letter (first S, then P, then U, then D) and is now "it" If they miss, the person who threw the ball is "it" for the next round.

SHADOW TAG

In this fun version of Tag, you tag each other's shadow with your feet instead of tagging their body. It's best if this is played on a sunny day. The closer to noon, the harder it is!

TRAFFIC COP

This game works best on a street with little to no traffic, or in a large paved area of some kind. You need bikes, wagons, pedestrians, scooters or whatever is available. One person directs traffic to make sure kids don't run into each other. It is more fun than it sounds, and helps kids learn about waiting to cross the street and about traffic safety.

WHAT TIME IS IT, MR. WOLF?

One child is chosen to be Mr Wolf, who then stands at one end of the playing area. The other players stand in a line at the other end. Mr Wolf turns his back to start the game play. The players call out, "what's the time Mr Wolf?" and Mr Wolf turns and answers with a time (i.e. 3 o'clock). He then turns his back again while the children advance again chanting "what's the time Mr Wolf?". To which Mr Wolf will continue to respond until the players come very close. Once the line of players is close to Mr Wolf, he can respond to the chant with "It's dinner time!" at which point, he will chase the players back to the starting line with the aim to catch one of the them, who will then become Mr Wolf for the next round of the game. This is a great pool game too, just change it from "Mr. Wolf" to "Mr. Shark!"

HUMAN KNOT

A group of 10 (give or take a few) is ideal for this game. All 10 kids stand in a circle, facing inward. Tell everyone to reach their right arm towards the center and grab someone else's hand. Make sure no one grabs the hand of the person right next to them. Next, have everyone reach their left arm in and grab someone else's hand. Again, make sure it's not the person right next to them. The kids need to work together to untangle the human knot without letting go of any hands. The goal is to end up in a perfect circle again. They can go over or under each other's arms, or through legs if needed! Encourage them to do whatever they want, as long as they don't break the chain in the process.

WATCH YOUR STEP

Players have a balloon tied to each of their ankles and everyone runs around the yard trying to pop other player's balloons using their feet--whoever keeps their balloons intact the longest is the winner.

