Classroom Games

Children need an opportunity to play outside daily. However, extreme weather conditions (e.g., temperatures below freezing, flooded playgrounds, extreme heat) or rain necessitate indoor play. Included in this section are games that can be played in the classroom. For several of the games, furniture has to be moved for both safety and space reasons. Children can and should be taught how to move furniture properly and to cooperate with others in the process. Game decisions may need to be based on the space that can be created in the classroom. Take into consideration the following when you play games in a classroom environment:

- Avoid high throws that may contact the ceiling.
- Avoid using objects that may break windows or other breakable items in the room. If a game includes throwing or striking, use foam-coated objects, beanbags, balloons, beach balls, or paper balls.
- Make sure that furniture is out of the playing area and that there is no chance of students running into any furniture.
- Keep voices and music at a minimum volume to respect others in nearby classrooms.
- Most of the indoor games can be either teacher or student directed.

### Classroom Games

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Busy Bee

**Grade Level**
K through second

**Purpose**
Listening, body part identification, distinguishing right from left

**Equipment**
None

**Organization**
All desks are moved aside to open space in the middle of the floor, or all desks are in the center so that the perimeter of the room can be used. Players are scattered standing back to back with a partner.

**Activity Description**

1. Call out two body parts, and have the players quickly connect those body parts (e.g., elbow to elbow, knee to knee, hand to foot, left hand to right shoulder).
2. After two or three calls, announce “Busy bee”; the players quickly find a new partner and stand back to back waiting for the next call.
3. If there is an extra player, that individual may join with partners to make a group of three and find solutions to the tasks, or buzz in and out among the other bees until “Busy bee” is called.
Active Simon Says

Grade Level
K through fourth

Purpose
To challenge the players’ listening skills while they perform various movements

Equipment
None

Organization
Players stand by desks or in open spaces in the classroom. The players are divided into four groups based on where they are standing in the room.

Activity Description
1. Just as in regular Simon Says, the players perform the activity only if Simon says to do it using the phrase “Simon says.”
2. Lead the class in movement activities, calling out “Simon says” or not with each. If a player performs an activity that you said to do but without using the phrase “Simon says,” she gains the letter “G.” If she makes another error, she gains an “O,” spelling “GO,” and must move clockwise to another group. The object is to change to another group as few times as possible.
3. An option for older players is to have a leader in each group. When someone has to leave a group or someone new enters a group, a new leader takes over.
Lucky Moves

Grade Level
K through fourth

Purpose
To practice locomotor patterns

Equipment
Music, one die (or numbers 1-6 on small pieces of paper), numbers 1 through 6 on large pieces of paper in different locations in the room

Organization
With all desks in the center, the game uses the perimeter of the room. Players start in a circle all facing clockwise.

Activity Description
1. With players in starting position, call out a locomotor (travel) pattern (e.g., walk, jog, skip, gallop, slide sideways, hop, bear walk, crab walk).
2. When the music stops, the players have 5 seconds to speed walk to one of the six numbered locations.
3. Roll the die or draw a number.
4. If a player’s number is called, he receives 1 point and performs jumps for joy (jumps in place while pumping fists upward) for 10 seconds. All other players clap the lucky number and then count the 10 seconds (1001, 1002, 1003, and so on) out loud for the winners to perform their jumps.
5. Call out another locomotor pattern to continue the game.
6. At the end of the game, have players hold up the number of fingers that denotes how lucky they were this day.
Perfect 100: Catch It If You Can

Grade Level
K through fifth (with scoring adaptations and easier activities for K and first)

Purpose
To challenge the players in various catching activities

Equipment
One beanbag, small ball, or paper wad ball and a penny (optional) per player

Organization
All desks are aside, opening space in the middle of the floor, or all desks are in the center and the perimeter of the room is used. Players are scattered in self-space.

Activity Description
1. Each player starts the game with a perfect 100 and is trying to maintain that score as he tries the various challenges, which are either written on paper or announced. One point is lost every time the player misses the object.

2. The skills get progressively more difficult. All tosses must be underhand, and the height of the toss should be above the head but not past three-fourths of the distance to the ceiling.

3. Have students throw the object (K and first grade children use a beanbag, older children a small ball or paper wad) and catch it according to the following instructions:
   - 10 times: Catch at a medium level (waist level).
   - 10 times: Catch at low level (below knees).
   - 10 times: Catch at a high level (above head).
   - 10 times: Toss from right to left hand, with the toss above your head.
   - 10 times: Catch with dominant hand only.
   - 10 times: Catch with nondominant hand only.
   - 5 times: Toss, then jump and catch high above your head.
   - 5 times: Clap hands once after the toss and before the catch.
   - 5 times: Clap hands once and thighs once before catching.
   - 5 times: Turn around once and catch.
   - 2 times: Toss from in front of your body but catch behind your back.
   - 3 times: Position dominant arm at about a 45-degree angle or slightly more with elbow facing forward. Raise your hand toward your ear as you balance a beanbag, ball, or penny on your elbow. Lower the elbow quickly and try to catch the object with the same hand.
   - 10 times: With a partner, stand five giant steps apart and toss and catch.
   - 5 times: One partner spins, and during the spin the other partner tosses the ball. At the completion of the spin, try to catch the ball. Repeat the partner spin, but change roles.

Score
Perfect 100: The pros will be calling you soon!
90-99: Wow, you are a superstar!
80-89: Great job! What are those challenges you still need to work on?
79 or below: Keep on working—practice can make perfect in this game. Be ready to try to improve your score next time.
Hand and Foot Jive

Grade Level
K through fifth (with sequence reduction for K and first)

Purpose
To challenge the players in memorizing and performing the sequence

Equipment
Music (optional)

Organization
Players stand by desks or in open spaces in classroom.

Activity Description
Have players progress through the sequence, doing each activity and repeating the previous one(s) before adding a new part each time (first; first and second; first, second, and third; and so on). Either teacher or students can lead until the sequence is memorized.

Hand Jive
- Slap both hands on thighs twice.
- Clap twice.
- Raise the roof twice.
- Pound fist twice, right on top.
- Pound fist twice, left on top.
- Pound fist in hand twice, right fist to left hand.
- Pound fist in hand twice, left fist to right hand.
- Snap fingers twice.

Foot Jive
- Jump on two feet two times.
- Stomp on right foot two times.
- Hop on right foot two times.
- Stomp on left foot two times.
- Hop on left foot two times.
- Straddle jump two times (jump with feet wide apart for one jump and then back together for second).
- Scissors jump two times (jump with one foot in front for one jump, switch to other foot in front on second jump).
- Side-to-side skier jump two times (keep feet together and jump right and then left).

Options
1. Place players in small groups to make up their own hand or foot jive and teach it to peers.
2. Combine hand and foot jives by alternating one hand and then one foot activity.
3. Combine hand and foot jives by doing hand and foot activities simultaneously.
Jump the Mark

Grade Level
K through fifth

Purpose
Physical endurance and reaction time

Equipment
One item per person (ball, beanbag, eraser, poly spot, book, and so on)

Organization
Players stand by desks or in open spaces in classroom. One object is placed on the floor to the right of each player.

Activity Description
1. The teacher or a class leader calls out a one-word direction, and the players jump that direction in relation to the object.
   – Right
   – Left
   – Straddle
   – Forward
   – Backward
   – Forward
   – Backward
2. Have players repeat the routine until it is memorized, and then have them repeat it for 1 minute without stopping.

Options
1. Vary the order and repeat.
2. Challenge players to count how many jumps they can do in 1 minute and set personal goals for improvement each time this activity is repeated.
3. Increase the time to 2 minutes and eventually 3 minutes.
One Behind

Grade Level
First through fifth

Purpose
To challenge players to focus and recall previous activity

Equipment
Music (optional)

Organization
Players stand by desks or in open spaces in classroom.

Activity Description
1. The players are challenged to remember a particular movement and repeat it.
2. The teacher or leader faces the group and does an action (e.g., run in place, hop on one foot, raise the roof, straddle jump, swimming arms). The players watch this first move.
3. When the leader performs a new movement, the players are to repeat the previous action.
4. The game continues with the players always performing one action behind the leader.
5. Allow older children to take on the role of leader.
Who’s the Leader?

**Grade Level**  
Second through fifth

**Purpose**  
To guess the leader of the movement activities

**Equipment**  
None

**Organization**  
All desks are aside, opening space in the middle of the floor, or all desks are in the center with the perimeter of the room used for the circle. Players are arm’s-length apart in one big circle.

**Activity Description**

1. Two players are asked to leave the room while you select a leader.
2. The leader starts some type of movement that all can do in self-space (e.g., jump, jog, arm flaps). The movements should range from low to high intensity.
3. Once the movement starts, the two players are asked to return. The returning players try to guess who the leader is. Each guesser gets one chance or 1 minute to determine the leader.
4. The leader must change the movement often and try to be sly about it.
5. When the game is over, two more players are asked to leave the room, and a new leader is selected.

**Hint**

You will need to demonstrate how to be a good and sneaky leader, and also tell the players that they have to help by looking at everyone and never staring at the leader.
Active Rock, Paper, Scissors

Grade Level
Second through fifth

Purpose
A game of chance and physical fitness

Equipment
Large exercise flash cards or board or media display of exercises

Organization
Players stand facing a partner beside desks or in open spaces in classroom.

Activity Description
1. On the signal “go,” players count and jump three times. On the third jump they choose to land in a slight squat (rock), or with feet together (paper), or with one foot in front of the other (scissors). The landing must clearly be one of these choices. Encourage the players to decide their landing before the “go” signal is given. Have them practice the three landings before the game starts.

2. If both players have the same landing, they will need to repeat.

3. Rock smashes scissors, paper covers rock, and scissors cut paper. The winner turns to the board and performs one of exercise activities to the count of 10.

4. Winner gets one 1 point and the game starts again. You may change the exercise or keep the same one for a few turns. At the end of the game, have the players hold up fingers for the number of points acquired.

5. Exercise activities might include jumping jacks, running in place, hopping on one foot, swimming motion crawl, swimming motion backstroke, twists, shadow boxing, and jump kicks.
Active Twenty Questions

Grade Level
Second through fifth

Purpose
A popular guessing game that adds a physical activity twist

Equipment
None

Organization
Players stand beside desks or in open spaces in the room.

Activity Description
1. One player leaves the room.
2. When the player exits the room, another person selects an object in the room and simply identifies it to the rest of the class.
3. The player is invited back to the room and has 20 questions to determine the object.
4. The class answers by jumping in place four times if the answer is yes and jumping and twisting side to side four times if the answer is no.
5. After the four jumps, the player asks another question. Once the player guesses the object or if 20 questions are exhausted, another player is selected to leave the class and a new object is selected.

Hint
You may need to share examples of kinds of questions to ask the first few times the game is played.
Sport Camp

Grade Level
Third through fifth

Purpose
To perform several sport-type activities in a limited space

Equipment
Several pieces of scrap paper, 8.5 by 11 paper, six beanbags, a large balloon or small beach ball, and a timer

Organization
Desks or small tables are arranged as four stations. Players select a partner and then combine with two other pairs for a group of six (alter based on number in class). After 5 to 7 minutes of play, they rotate clockwise to the next station.

Activity Description

Station 1: Tennis

1. Players make a paper ball out of scrap paper. They strike the paper ball with their hands back and forth across the desk. The game can be played cooperatively to determine how many consecutive volleys the set of partners can accomplish.

2. The game can be played competitively to 5 points and then partners can rotate to the next desk to take on another opponent. A point is scored if the opponent’s ball does not pass directly over the desk or if it hits the floor. Back boundaries need to be determined based on space.


**Station 2: Football**

1. Students use paper footballs. To make a paper football, fold an 8.5 by 11 piece of paper lengthwise into quarters. Then, starting at one end, fold like a flag. After the last fold you will have a small amount of paper remaining; tuck that in to form a thick, flat triangle shape.

2. Students can play the game cooperatively by flicking the football back and forth and seeing how many consecutive hits they can make before the football goes off the desk. The challenge is to score a personal best.

3. To play the game competitively, one player flicks the football to the opponent on the opposite side of the desk.

4. Players alternate pushing or flicking the football with their fingers in an attempt to get it across the other player’s goal line and have it balance on the edge of the desk. Players must not be leaning against the desk when the opponent is striking the football. A goal is worth 6 points.

5. If a player flicks the football off the desk, it is a turnover and the opponent puts it back in play at the goal line.

6. An extra point is attempted from the center of the desk. The defensive player creates a goal post by placing both fists on the end of the desk, extending index fingers to the point of touching each other, and finally extending thumbs straight up. The offensive player places the football such that either a point or a side of the triangle touches the desk, and attempts to flick the football through the goal post. A goal is worth 1 additional point.

7. The scoring player now kicks off by flicking the football from his end toward the opponent, and the game continues.

8. Players may choose to play one opponent for half of the time before challenging another member of the group.

**Station 3: Soccer**

1. Using eight paper balls made from scrap paper, two players start in the middle and each of the other four takes a position on defense (D) as a goalie between each set of chairs (see diagram). The timer is set for 1 minute by one of the goalies.

2. The paper balls are all placed in the middle of the playing area, and the offensive players (O) have 1 minute to try to score as many goals as possible. A goal is scored if the ball passes a desk.

3. Unlike what happens in regular soccer, the goalies can use only their feet. If a ball goes under a chair and passes through the chair legs, a point is scored. A ball stuck under a chair is not a score and can be retrieved only with an offensive player’s foot.

4. After 1 minute, the balls are retrieved and a new team takes the offensive role.

**Station 4: Volleyball**

1. The players in this station are divided into two teams and should be spread out in their playing area. Using a balloon or small beach ball, they play a game of desk volleyball. Several desks are aligned side by side to represent the net. Side boundaries are defined by the edge of the last desk on either end, and back boundaries need to be determined before play begins.

2. One team starts by striking the ball over the desks into the other court. The object is for the ball to stay in bounds and not bounce on the floor.

3. Students can play the game cooperatively by counting the number of successful volleys the group can make. The goal is to establish a personal best.

4. When the game is played competitively, points are awarded if the ball hits the floor, goes out of bounds, or hits the desk. No spiking or hard downward hits are allowed. The side where the play ends starts the next point. After one team scores 11 points, change the team makeup and start a new game.