



**Together We Can:
Adding Group Games to Your LSSP Toolbox
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Why use group games with your students?



- Allows you to build rapport with your students
- Belonging and Trust: Creates a community of trust among peers and staff.
 - Teachers and assistants may participate in activities depending on the group and activity. Some guidelines should be given to other staff on their role in the group before beginning.
 - This can be a powerful way to build respect between staff and students, if handled appropriately.
- Leadership: Leaders may develop in unlikely places.
- Builds self-confidence.
- Unique skills may emerge that is of value to the group.

Why use group games with your students?



- Creativity: Unique perspective
- Multisensory Learning
- Games can easily be adapted to accommodate different ages and ability levels.
- Materials are cheap, easy to find, and portable.
- Activities can be spontaneous and used in many different environments.
 - LSSPs often have to adapt to the space available on any given day. Most activities can be done anywhere.
- Students have fun while learning.
- Teachers learn the value of group games/team building activities.

Why use group games with your students?

- Provides a fun and interactive way to teach and practice students' IEP goals and objectives.
 - Cooperation: Increases understanding of teamwork, relying on others.
 - Anger management: Practice coping strategies for dealing with frustration.
 - Problem Solving: "Thinking out of the box," making decisions, using limited resources.
 - Communication: Listening, comprehension, conveying ideas.
 - Fine and Gross Motor Skills: Your OT/PT will love you.
- Measure progress on goals and objectives.
- Demonstrates generalization of skills.



Your Role as a Team Leader

- Facilitator - very interactive process.
- Make sure you understand the task.
- Assemble materials.
- Explain task – don't give more information than directed – tasks will be vague.
- Explain role of the team member – safety rules, positive attitude.
- Don't get involved in in the team's solution.
- Allow team to solve the problem themselves.
- BE PATIENT! – The best learning comes from the process, not the result.
 - For some groups it may take 10 minutes for them to decide who goes first even though that may not be a goal of the task.
 - This can provide some rich discussion during debriefing.
- Monitor team interaction for discussion afterward.
- Lead debriefing of task.
- RELAX and HAVE FUN!



Role of the Team Member

- Keep it positive.
- Participate in activities in a safe manner.
- Include all team members.
- Be supportive of other team members.
- Listen to all ideas.
 - Don't think your idea is the only way.
- Be creative.
- Share your ideas.
- Don't place blame on other team members.
- Persist until a the task is completed.
- Have FUN!



Competition?

- The purpose is not to be competitive, however some children and games lend themselves to competition.
- Student's may "compete" with fictional teams, or against their best record.
 - This promotes improvement as a group and makes it fun to repeat games over time.
- If you feel that you want to have teams "compete" base the score on creativity, communication and cooperation.



Materials



- Balls – various sizes, shapes and consistencies
- Bandanas
- Rope/twine/string
- Playing cards
- Paper, colored paper, large butcher paper
- Toothpicks
- Plastic cups
- Paper clips
- Masking tape
- Drinking straws
- Marshmallows
- Spaghetti
- Index cards
- Aluminum foil



Dollar General is usually close to schools and has cheap supplies.

Creative Ways to Select Groups



- Draw cards and then have them get with others of the same suit, or number or group of numbers depending on the size.
- Pick a color of candy (tell them not to eat it) or a colored chip or paper (make sure that there are the right amount of each color for your group sizes) and have them get with their group.
- For larger groups let them select a partner or two and then select teams with their partners.
- Think out of the box so that the teams are more random and not always the same.



Debriefing

- Allow time after the activity for debriefing.
- Debriefing provides understanding of the skills practiced during the activity.
- Acknowledges team and individual struggles and accomplishments.
- Provides information on how to generalize new skills to other areas of life – home, school, peers, etc.

Tips for Debriefing



- Facilitate discussion of the process.
- For larger groups introduce the question and allow for one team member to answer for their team.
- For a small group setting allow time for each participant to talk.
- Introduce the question and have participants “invite” the next person to speak.
 - This encourages listening and teaches appropriate group social skills.



Debriefing Questions: Team/Process

- Did your team reach it’s goal? Why? Why Not?
- Did a leader emerge during the activity or did everyone participate equally?
- Did your team make a plan?
- Did the plan work or did the team make adjustments?
- If the activity was repeated for improved time, progress or different instructions (nonverbal, more objects included, etc.)
 - Did your team improve?
 - Was it harder/easier the second time?
- Specific task or skill related questions.








Debriefing Questions: Individual Team Member

- What surprised you about your self? Others?
- What were you feeling during the process? After?
- What was the hardest part? Easiest?
- Did you learn anything about your strengths? Weaknesses?
- How did you communicate with others?
- Did your role change during the activity?
- What will you do differently next time?
- How does this relate to your life?






Games

- **Group Juggling**
– Objectives: Icebreaker, getting to know each other, introductions, manners, concentration, stressful situations
- **Magic Carpet**
– Objectives: Problem-solving, communication, comfort level and personal space, thinking outside the box, using other resources, asking for and accepting help. 
- **Balloon Blast**
– Objectives: Leadership, feeling "pulled" by others, flexibility, concentration, multitasking, teamwork.
- **Human Knot** 
– Objectives: Working together, emergence of different leaders, communication (verbal/nonverbal), personal space
- **Awareness Game**
– Objectives: Treating others based on labels, cliques, bullying, fitting in. 



More Games



- **Chocolate River**
– Objectives: leadership, listening skills, personal space issues, coping with frustration, perseverance.
- **Ms. O'Reilly** 
– Objectives: Fun, loosen up, create energy, following others. 
- **Bump It**
– Objectives: cooperation, energy, concentration, goals, teamwork.
- **Color Obstacle Course**
– Objective: Making decisions, choices, critical thinking, memory, peer pressure.
- **Have You Ever?** 
– Objectives: Good ice-breaking activity and also great task for showing others that they are "Not alone". Helpful for such groups as Test Anxiety, Divorce...

Build



- **Objective:** Creativity, problem solving, planning, teamwork
- **Size:** Any
- **Materials:** Variety – such as; gummy Dots & toothpicks, marshmallows & spaghetti.
- **Instructions:** Build the tallest freestanding tower using materials provided. Must stay standing for 3 seconds at the end of the time. Or – build a bridge that will hold weights (there is a Magic School Bus episode available on United Streaming about building and working together and they build a bridge with materials that look like Dots and toothpicks)
- **Debriefing:** What worked/Didn't work? Did you plan? Did it help? Did you need to rework your project? Did it turn out the way you envisioned it?

Resources

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