

# Parachute Activities and Co-operative Games for Children

**P**arachute games are fun, exciting and appeal to children of all ages. Parachute and co-operative games are played in a non-competitive, non-threatening atmosphere and appeal to even the 'non sporty' child. These games encourage team work, participation, fair play and development of skills such as running, throwing and catching. We all know how unfit and unhealthy our children are becoming. So, grab that parachute and go and have some healthy fun with the children. Remember – our attitude has a huge influence on their future attitudes! Co-operative games also link across with SPHE in promoting healthy lifestyles and nurturing self-esteem. You can, of course, provide your own cross-curricular links eg English (oral language), mathematics, (space and area) and science, (energy and forces).

## Warm up games

**Stuck in the mud!** One child is the catcher. When another child is caught, s/he must stand in the spot or stick in the mud, waving his or her hands in the air. To release someone, another child crawls under their legs (inside area or grass) or tips their hands in the air, (if it's a tarmac area). The emphasis is on releasing as many children as possible.

**Beat the circle!** Children stand in a circle. One child passes a ball to next child in the circle. The ball is passed around the circle and then the child runs around the circle and tries to get back to own place before ball reaches there. If the circle is too big, break the group into smaller circles.

## Parachute games

**Hold on tight!** Children space themselves around the parachute. They hold the parachute,

thumbs underneath and fingers on top. Children form fruit bowl shape with parachute.

**Up, up and away!** On a signal, children lift the parachute over their heads.

**Let's shake on it!** Child waves across to another child as parachute is hoisted up. Child can also run in and shake hands with another child on lift, while holding onto the parachute with one hand.

**Number game!** Each child is given a number between 1 and 5. On lift, teacher shouts out an instruction and children must respond eg 1s run in and make a letter 's' on ground ... (make a number, shape etc).

**Football crazy!** If the parachute has a hole in the centre, you can divide your group into two teams and use two different coloured balls – a goal is scored when one team gets ball into centre hole.

**Space invaders!** After the lift,

children pull the parachute under their bums, while still standing and walk in clockwise and anticlockwise movements, like a giant bug.

**Eskimos!** Children now sit inside parachute, (natural progression from last game) and you have now transported them to the North Pole! Ask a child to pop their head through hole or under parachute and what do they see? (polar bears, arctic foxes, ice, snow, santa, reindeer, etc)

**Jaws is back!** Okay so they won't remember Jaws, but you can still try and recreate the atmosphere! Children sit on ground, (this game is better done indoors). The parachute is draped over the children's legs. One child starts off as Jaws. The rest of the children shake the parachute to create waves and hum the Jaws music – de, de, de, de... Jaws goes under the parachute and grabs a child's leg. This child is then a Jaw's helper and they keep going until everyone is caught. (This game is a real favourite with all age groups).

**Toss the Pancake!** Children do the lift and on a signal, let go. If all the children let go at the same time and the indoor ventilation is favourable, the parachute can actually float upwards and stay suspended in the air for a few seconds.

Even if it doesn't, they'll have fun trying!

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