



Sample Newsletter #3 - Physical activity and socialization skills

Learning about co-operation, imagination and self-esteem through physical activity

Dear parents,

This week in the Healthy Beginnings 2-5 program your child has learned about co-operation, creativity and teamwork while they have been physically active. Physical activity can be an excellent way to promote positive social skills and emotional development for preschoolers. To facilitate this, the children have been working on collaborative active games this week. The key messages were:

- Physical activity can help to make your whole body healthy, including the physical, emotional and social parts. Preschoolers can learn more than just physical and fitness skills while active.
- Being active can help preschoolers feel more confident and proud of themselves, can teach co-operation skills, and can foster their imagination. Physical activity can also help to reduce stress for preschoolers .

Central non-physical skills and attributes that can be learned from physical activity participation include:

- Teamwork
- Cooperation
- Sharing
- Peer negotiation/mediation skills
- Tolerating failure
- Tolerating the unexpected
- Literacy skills
- Language skills
- Imagination/creativity
- Increased ability to focus
- Leadership Emotional regulation
- Self-motivation
- Self-expression skills
- Rule-following skills
- Managing anxiety and stress
- Managing aggression
- Sense of belonging
- Sense of achievement
- Self-confidence
- Self-esteem

Does physical activity automatically teach my preschooler these skills? What games can we play at home to facilitate positive socialization skill development?

While research on physical activity has shown that physically active children are more likely to experience the benefits and gain the skills, outlined above, this does not happen automatically. Rather, parental attitudes towards physical activity, the types of physical activity provided, and the overall physical activity environment surrounding your preschooler impact their ability to have a positive physical activity experience.



You can provide your preschooler with a positive physical activity environment by:

- Expressing your own positive attitude towards physical activity. Emphasize enjoyment, play, and creativity.
- Do not focus on competition.
- Participate with your preschooler. Praise them often.
- Focus on the processes, not outcomes, of physical activity. For example, when playing soccer, praise your preschooler for effort or increased competence with kicking skills. Congratulate them for goals, but do not emphasize this.
- If competition arises, promote positive competition. Emphasize the mutual participation of all players, as you need to co-operate to play. Allow your preschooler to negotiate cooperative requirements with their peers
- Set up games such that your child can achieve success, but do not make it so they always succeed immediately. Tolerating challenge, failure and the unexpected is important, as is eventual achievement

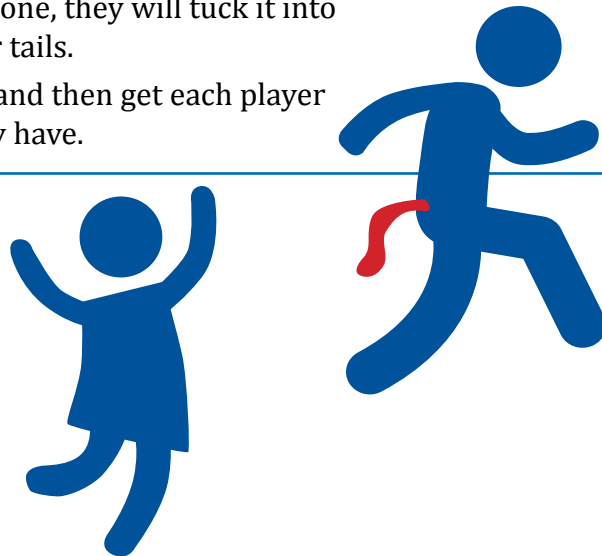
Here are two co-operative games that can be easily adjusted to match the challenge level of various participants.

Tail Tag

Use fabric scraps, mittens or socks as tails, and tuck them into the pocket or waistband of player's pants. Remind players that holding on to their tails, tying them to their pants, or hiding them are against the rules.

Let's play:

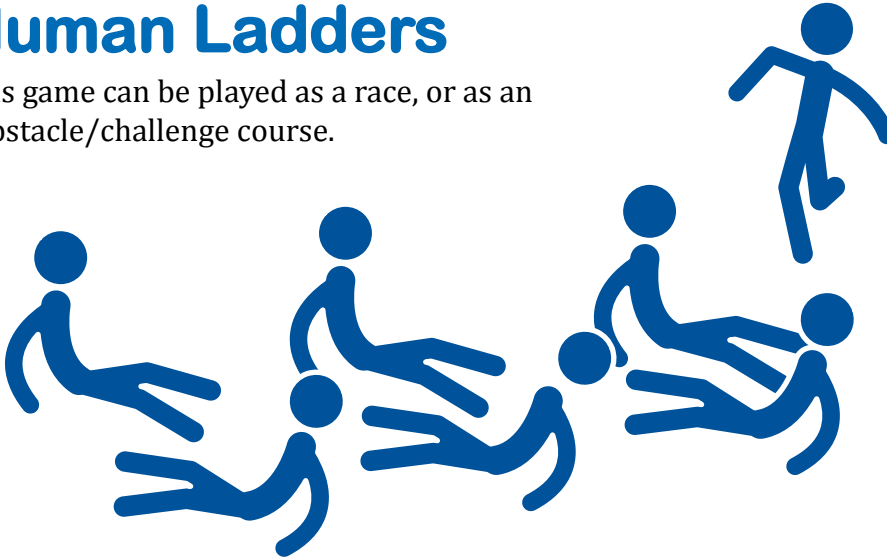
- On go all players will run around trying to snag tails from other players. Once they get one, they will tuck it into their pocket with their other tails.
- Play for about four minutes and then get each player to count how many tails they have.





Human Ladders

This game can be played as a race, or as an obstacle/challenge course.



- Everyone sits in two parallel lines, with their feet straight out in front of them, touching the feet of the person across from them. Their feet should be about shoulder width apart.
- On go the people at the end get up, walk through the feet (or hop/run), and sit down at the end.
- If someone is scared they may be stepped on, they can sit cross-legged and the other players have to run past them.

Adapted from www.dsr.wa.gov.au/benefits-of-physical-activity-for-your-children and www.canadiansportforlife.ca/active-start/physical-literacy-during-active-start-stage