



Promoting Unstructured Free Play in Your Community: Games Manual



COMMUNITY HEALTH &
THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT



Funding for the Community Health and the Built Environment project was provided by the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada in partnership with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.

Suggested Citation: Community Health and the Built Environment Project Team (2011). *Promoting Unstructured Free Play in Your Community: Games Manual*. Edmonton, AB: Community Health and the Built Environment Project, School of Public Health, University of Alberta.

Overview

This manual is intended to complement the document “Promoting Unstructured Free Play in your Community: A Resource Manual” by providing a comprehensive summary of a variety of different games that can be played by children and youth. This manual is divided into four sections: (1) ice-breaker games, (2) general games, (3) tag games, and (4) parachute games.

Ice-Breaker Games

Pull Up

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A music player and some fun music

How to play: Participants sit down in a circle. The Youth Leader will select three boys and three girls to stand in the middle of the circle. Start playing the fun music. The participants standing will ask the name of someone sitting down and take his/her spot on the ground. The participant whose spot was taken will then stand and ask another participant his/her name and take his/her spot on the ground. Once the music stops, count how many girls and how many boys are in the middle of the circle. If there are more girls than boys, the boys get a point. If there are more boys than girls, the girls get a point.

Do You Love Your Neighbour?

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: Participants sit down in a circle. One participant will stand in the middle of the circle. The participants sitting down will ask: “Do you love your neighbour?”. The person in the middle then responds: “Yes, especially when he has blue eyes!”. The participants who have blue eyes must then stand up and exchange seats while the person in the middle tries to take one of those seats. The last person standing who does not have a seat then responds to the next “Do you love your neighbour” question. The person in the middle may answer “no” to the question, in which case everybody switches seats.

Brownie Brownie

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials Required: None

How to play: The game begins by having each participant select a partner. One of the partners will be designated as the caller who will yell out a part of the body and the pairs of participants will chose something to do with the body part announced. The pair must do the same thing with the body part announced. When the caller calls out “Brownie Brownie” the pairs must separate and participants need to select new partners.



Screaming Viking

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: Have participants stand in a circle. One participant will stand in the middle of the circle, point to a person standing in the circle, and yell out an action for the person in the circle to do. The Youth Leader can come up with any silly actions for the participants in the middle to yell out, but some examples are: Jell-o- the person has to move their body like Jell-o, Smurfs- the person has to do a silly dance and sing "la-la-la-la", Chia-pet- the person has to act out and say ch-ch-ch-chia, and Vikings- the person has to row a boat and put up his/her hands like the horns on a Viking helmet.

Who Am I?

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: For this game, the Youth Leader pre-makes tags/signs with the name of a commonly known character written on them. These tags/signs are placed on the backs of participants as they arrive so that the participants do not know which character they "are". Participants walk around and ask other participants questions about who their character might be (eg. "Am I a singer?"). Participants may only ask one question and make only one guess as to who they think they are with each other participant they talk to. Then they move on to another person. Participants may visit previously asked peers once they have visited everyone present.

Two Extremes

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: Create an imaginary line from one end of the room to the other. Instruct participants to move to a point on the line as an indication of how they feel about a particular topic. For example, the Youth Leader will announce that if people like chocolate they are to move to one end of the line, and if they like strawberry to move to the opposite side of the line. If participants do not have a strong opinion, they stand in the middle of the line. Continue with other questions such as: sleeping in or getting up early, preference for sweet or salty snacks, doing homework or doing the dishes, summer or winter, biking or rollerblading, to be taller or shorter, TV or movies. When every participant has selected his or her opinion by standing on a part of the line, announce the next opinion statement.

Ape, Man, Girl

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: Participants form pairs. The Youth Leader will provide a verbal signal (such as 3-2-1-GO!) at which point each participant must strike a pose as either an ape, a man, or a girl. Ensure that each pose is demonstrated before the game is started. The concept is similar to that of "Rock, Paper, Scissors", so an individual in the pair who poses as an ape beats their partner if he/she is



posed as a girl, an individual in the pair who poses as a man beats their partner if he/she is posed as an ape, and an individual in a pair who poses as a girl beats their partner if he/she is posed as a man. The losers of each round are eliminated and the winners are paired up. The game continues until you have a winner.

Line Up Game

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: None

How to play: Participants form groups consisting of five to ten people. The groups are then instructed to organize themselves into order of height, first letter of middle name, shoe size, birth date, etc. as announced by the Youth Leader. Select categories of organization that participants will be able to do successfully. The first group to line up in proper order wins.



General Games

Red Light-Green Light

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: This game is played on the tarmac or pavement. A group of participants lines up against a wall. The Youth Leader stands about 100 feet away from the participants with his/her back toward them. The Youth Leader then announces "green light", at which time the players advance forward away from the wall. When the Youth Leader announces "red light", the players must stop moving forward. As the game continues, the Youth Leader may turn to face the participants to catch anyone who moves after "red light" has been announced. Moving can be categorized as forward movement or not being able to 'hold' a frozen position. Participants caught moving at this point are eliminated from the game and sit off to the side. The objective of the game is for participants to move whenever the Youth Leader is not looking back at them, regardless of whether "green light" had been called. The first participant to pass the Youth Leader wins the game.

500

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A ball

How to play: One participant is designated as the ball thrower, and the others cluster within tossing distance from the thrower. The thrower tosses the ball up in the air towards the cluster of participants and announces a number between 50 and 500 (e.g., "this one is worth 200 points!"). If a participant catches the ball they get as many points as the thrower indicated the toss was worth. If someone drops the ball, they lose that number of points. The first person to get to 500 points wins and becomes the thrower for the next round of the game.

Batty Bowling

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A number of silly or odd items that could be knocked over by a ball, such as milk cartons, candlesticks, stand up dolls, plastic vase with flowers, pizza box, a tower of empty cans, an empty oatmeal container, and a book. Balls such as volleyballs, tennis balls, or golf balls are also required.

How to play: Line up the silly items like bowling pins and allow the participants to take turns trying to knock the items down using the various types of balls.



King

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: Each participant shuts his/her eyes and the group counts together, aloud, to 50. At this time, one selected participant (the King) hides. After counting to 50, everyone opens their eyes and starts to look for the King. When a participant finds the hidden King, he/she says nothing and joins the King in his secret hiding spot when no one else is looking. Eventually, fewer and fewer participants will still be searching for the King. The game ends when one participant is left still looking for the King. The first person to find the King's hiding spot and enter without anyone noticing gets to be the King for the next round of the game.

Rock-Paper-Scissors

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: Divide participants into two teams. Establish a center line in the middle and home bases on opposite sides of a field or park. Each team then huddles at their home bases and decides which hand signal they are going to play (rock, paper, or scissors). The teams will then meet at the center line, fanning out to face the opposing team members. Everyone then chants: "rock, paper, scissors, shoot!" and on "shoot!", each team displays their chosen hand signal. The team that wins the rock-paper-scissors match then tries to tag the losing team members on their run back to their home base. Participants who are tagged must join the tagging team. If teams shoot the same hand signal at the center line, everyone must sit down. The last person to sit on the ground switches to the opposite team.

Captain's Cabin (same concept as "Simon Says")

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: The Youth Leader will announce various actions that all of the participants have to do. The participants will all be facing the same direction, pretending that they are on a ship. Example: When the Youth Leader says "Captain's daughter", the participants have to strike the pose of the captain's daughter. Other examples of actions include: captain's son, hit the deck, starboard (run/turn to the right), port (run/turn to the left), clean the deck, submarine, torpedo, climb the ladder, life boats, life jackets, man overboard, captain's coming, hum the anthem, bombs away, sparkling floor.



Catch The Drag

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: The participants form a line and link hands. The first person in the line tries to tag the last person in the line and then joins the back of the line, linking to the person just tagged. Now there is a new person at the front of the line and he/she tries to catch the person now at the back of the line, and the game continues.

Jamaquack

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: Ask for three volunteers to be “Jamaquacks”. The rest of the participants will stand and form a circle, linking hands to create a pen for the Jamaquacks. The three volunteer Jamaquacks will stand in the center of the circle and close their eyes. At this time, the Youth Leader will tap two adjacent circle members on the head to signal them to not hold hands, which will create an opening in the pen. Jamaquacks will then move by crouching down, holding onto their ankles, and travelling backwards. They have to keep their eyes closed the whole time. The object of the game is for the Jamaquacks to make their way out of the pen by feeling with their backsides where the opening of the circle is. Circle members can gently nudge the Jamaquacks back into the center of the circle if they are not located at the break in the circle. When a Jamaquack makes it outside of the circle he/she has to quack loudly to indicate to the other Jamaquacks how to reach the opening of the pen in order to escape.

Duck, Duck, Goose

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: Participants sit down in a circle. One participant is selected by the Youth Leader to walk around the outside of the circle, tap each person on the head and say “duck”. If the person taps someone on the head and says “goose” then the person tapped must race the person who tapped them back to his/her spot in the circle. The person who makes it back to the spot first sits down, and the other person then starts walking around the circle tapping heads and saying either “duck” or “goose” as they tap the heads of those around the circle.

What Time Is It Mister Wolf?

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: One child is selected to be “Mister Wolf”. Mister Wolf stands at the opposite end of the playing field as the other players, who are standing at the starting point, and faces away from them. The participants then together ask loudly “what time is it Mister Wolf?” and Mister Wolf will answer in times of day (for example: “three o’clock”). The participants then take that number of steps toward Mister Wolf. The participants continue to ask the



question and take steps toward Mister Wolf. At some point, when the participants ask “what time is it Mister Wolf?”, Mister Wolf can answer “LUNCH TIME!” and turn around and try to tag as many participants as he/she can as they run back to the starting point.

Hen and Chicks (similar concept to British Bulldog)

Ages: This game is appropriate for participant of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: Designate two safe points in the playing area, such as two trees that are 10-20 metres apart. One participant stands in the middle of the two safe points as the “hen” trying to gather her “chicks”. When she calls for her chicks, the chicks run from one safe point to the other, trying not to get caught by the hen. If the hen successfully catches chicks, they must join her in the middle to help her gather the rest of the chicks. The last chick to be caught becomes the hen in the next round.

Telephone

Ages: This game is appropriate for participant of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: Arrange the participants into a seated or standing circle or line. One player is selected to come up with a sentence or phrase in his/her head and then whisper it to the next player in the circle or line. This player then whispers what he/she heard to the next player. The game continues in this way until the sentence or phrase reaches the last person, who then announces the sentence or phrase that he/she heard to the entire group. Errors typically accumulate during the course of the game, so the final version announced by the last person in the group may differ significantly from the original statement (and could be quite funny!).

Leap-Frog Relay

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: Divide participants into teams of two to four people. Establish a route that the teams must leap-frog through. When the Youth Leader indicates the start of the race, teams will leap-frog relay through the route and the first team to make it to the end of the route wins.



Mother May I?

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: One participant is selected to be the “Mother”, and stands facing away some distance from a line of other participants. The Mother then announces the name of one of the participants and says, for example: “Tom, you may take 4 giant/regular/baby steps forward/backward.” The named participant replies with “Mother may I?” and the Mother will decide to say either “Yes” or “No” and the participant does whatever the Mother says. If the participant forgets to ask “Mother may I?” then he/she must go back to the starting line. The Mother calls out the names of the other participants and the game continues. The first one to reach the Mother wins.

Freeze Dance

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A music player and some fun music

How to play: When the Youth Leader starts the music, all of the participants begin to dance. When the Youth Leader turns off the music, everyone must freeze. If anyone is caught moving when the music is stopped, they have to sit out for the rest of the round.

Piggy in the Middle

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A ball

How to play: Arrange two participants about 10 meters apart and have one participant stand in the middle- they are the “Piggy in the Middle”. The two players on either side of the Piggy in the Middle then throw the ball to each other while the Piggy in the Middle tries to catch it. If the ball is dropped, any one of the three players can recover it. If the participant in the middle is able to catch or recover the ball, the person who was the last to throw the ball becomes the Piggy in the Middle.

Having a Ball Boogie

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A ball, a music player and some fun music

How to play: Have the participants form a circle. They should stand close enough together so that their bent elbows touch. When the music starts, the players will start to pass the ball around the circle by passing it to the person standing next to them. When the Youth Leader stops the music, the person holding the ball comes up with a silly way to pass the ball onto the next player. For example, participants might pass it under their leg, pass it under their arm, tap their knee three times with the ball, or do any other action. Whatever action selected, the player must pass the ball in this way each time the ball comes to him/her. The Youth Leader should stop the music often so that lots of players have to come up with interesting ways to pass the ball. Players caught with the ball more than once continue to pass the ball with their original action and add a new action.



Hopscotch

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: Sidewalk chalk

How to play: Help participants to draw hopscotch courses on the pavement. Toss a coin, beanbag, or small stone onto squares for participants to skip while travelling through the course to add a bit of a challenge to the game. Use your imagination!

Hot Potato

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A ball

How to play: To start the game, all participants sit in a circle. One person is selected by the Youth Leader to become the "Potato Caller", who stands facing away from the circle. A ball (the "hot potato") is passed from person to person until the Potato Caller yells "HOT POTATO!". The person holding the ball at the time "HOT POTATO" is called then stands up and joins the Potato Caller to call the next "HOT POTATO". The game continues until all participants have had a chance to be potato callers. The objective is to pass the ball quickly in this game!

Doctor, Doctor, Dodge Ball

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: 8 rubber (or softer material) balls

How to play: Line 8 balls in the center of the playing field. The players start by lying on their stomachs at each end of the playing field, designated as their safe zones. Before starting, each team selects a "Doctor". On the Youth Leader's signal, participants get up and run for the balls. Participants cannot cross the center line. Balls are tossed at the opposing team, being sure to hit only below the waist. When a player is hit with a ball, he or she lays on the ground and yells "doctor, doctor!". The Doctor from that team must then pull that player to that team's safe zone. Once back in the safe zone, that player is revived and may resume playing. The first team to hit the other team's doctor with a ball wins the game.

S - P - U - D

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A ball

How to play: Number off each participant with a number starting from 1 to however many participants are in the group. Select one person in the group to be "It" and the rest of the group huddles around this individual. The person selected to be "It" will toss the ball up in the air while calling out a number as the rest of the players scatter. The person whose number was called must run to catch the ball and call out "SPUD" at which time the other players must freeze in their spots. The person who is "It" will then take four giant steps toward the closest person and throw the ball at them, trying to hit below the waist. If the person who is "It" hits the person, that person gets a letter S. If "It" misses the person he or she was throwing at, "It" gets the letter S. The game continues with the person who is "It" tossing the ball up



again and calling out a number while the other players scatter. As players accumulate the all of the letters to spell “SPUD” they are eliminated. The game continues and the winner is the last one to get all of the letters S-P-U and D.

Over Under

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A beanbag, ball, or other object to be passed

How to play: Line groups of five or six participants up in a row, one behind the other. The first player in the row will start passing an object (a beanbag, ball, or any other object) down the line, and participants will continue to pass it down, alternating passing the object over the head and between the ankles. When the object reaches the last person in line, this person runs up to the front of the line and starts passing it again.

Cat and Mouse

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A beanbag and a small ball

How to play: Have participants sit in a circle. The beanbag will represent a “cat” and the ball will represent a “mouse”. The game begins by passing the “cat” and “mouse” around the circle and the objective is for the “cat” to try and catch up to the “mouse”. The “cat” catches the “mouse” when both objects are in the hands of one participant in the circle. The direction that the “cat” and “mouse” are passed around the circle can be changed at any time by any player.

Beach Ball Bop

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: An inflatable beach ball

How to play: Participants will be divided into small groups and sit in their groups in a circle on the ground. The task is to try and keep the beach ball in the air for 30 seconds by volleying. The beach ball can’t be held onto or caught. The ball cannot be touched by the same player twice. If the ball hits the ground, allow the group to change their strategy and try it again.

Marco Polo

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: The Youth Leader will select one participant to be “It”. The person selected to be “It” will then close his or her eyes while the other participants are given ten seconds to run as far from “It” as they can and find a hiding spot. With his or her eyes closed, “It” will yell out “Marco” and the participants will all reply “Polo”. The task is for “It” to locate the hidden players by listening to their responses. The participants have to stay in the same hiding spot for the whole game. When “It” successfully catches a hiding participant, this participant then becomes “It”.



Sandman

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: None

How to play: All of the participants sit down in a circle with their legs crossed. Instruct the participants to put their heads down. At this time, a Youth Leader taps one participant on the head to become the "Sandman". The participants then raise their heads and open their eyes. The Sandman then starts putting people to "nap" by winking at them one at a time. When a participant is winked at, he or she silently counts to ten and then closes his or her eyes. If the Sandman successfully makes everyone "nap", then he or she wins the game. However, if a participant suspects that someone is the Sandman before he or she is winked at, he or she can say "I suspect that (name of suspected Sandman) is the Sandman". If another participant agrees and the Sandman indicates that he/she really is the Sandman, the game ends. If the participant wrongly accuses the Sandman, however, he or she must "nap".

Capture the Flag

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: Two small flags suitable for hiding

How to play: Divide participants into two teams. Each team is given a designated area (the back yard, one half of the playground or park) and 5 minutes to hide their flag in their area. When the flags of both teams are hidden, participants try to capture the other team's flag. If a participant is caught and tagged by an opponent in the opponent's territory, he/she must go to a designated jail area. The only way that those in jail can be released is by being tagged by a fellow team mate while the opposing team is not looking. The first team to capture the opposing team's flag and bring it back to their designated side wins the game.

Koosh Ball

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: A ball

How to play: To start this game, participants stand and form a circle. Starting with one ball, toss it to one of the participants. They will then toss it to another participant. The participants must throw the ball to the same person each time throughout the game without dropping it. Once participants have passed the ball for a while and understand the game, add more balls, one ball at a time, to be passed in the same order established with the first ball.



Streets and Avenues

*This game requires a minimum of 12 participants.

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: None

How to play: To begin this game, help the participants form three parallel lines, with a few feet between each line. Members of each line hold hands. Select two participants (or more, depending on the size of the group) to run in between the lines. When the Youth Leader calls "streets", the participants in line make a quarter turn to the right (90 degrees) and then link hands with those facing the same way. When the Youth Leader calls "avenues", participants in line will make a quarter turn to the left (90 degrees) and link hands. Those selected as runners run between the changing lines.

Blind Horse

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: None

How to play: Divide the participants into teams of two. One team member will close his/her eyes and be led through an obstacle course by the other team member.

Down Down Down

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: None

How to play: Have participants stand and form a circle. Start to pass a ball from person to person. If someone drops the ball, he/she has to go down on one knee and continue in passing the ball. If the ball is dropped a second time, the person who drops it has to go down on both knees. After subsequent drops of the ball, the person who drops it has to then go down on one elbow, then the other elbow, then onto their chin. At this point, if someone in this position drops the ball again, they are out of the game.

Head, Catch (Catch, No Catch)

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: A ball

How to play: Participants can either stand in a circle or in a line. One person will start as the ball thrower and throw the ball to someone in the circle or the next person in line. While throwing the ball, the thrower will announce either "head" or "catch". The person catching the ball has to do the opposite of what the thrower said. If the thrower says "head" the person has to catch the ball. If the thrower says "catch" the person has to head the ball. Another variation of the game is to yell "catch" or "no catch" and the person being thrown to has to do the opposite of what is called. If the person being thrown to drops the ball or does the wrong action, he or she is out. The last person in the game is the winner.



Blanket Volleyball

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: Two light-weight blankets and a ball

How to play: To play this game, the participants are divided into two teams and each team is given a blanket. The ball is then passed from one blanket to the other, as though playing volleyball. Nets are not necessary to enjoy this game!

Crab Race

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: None

How to play: Participants race against one another in the crab position (on all fours, facing up and moving backward/forward).

3-Legged Race

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: Old fabric, ribbon, or anything else to tie with

How to play: Divide participants into teams of two. Have the team members stand side by side and tie their inside legs together. The teams then race against other teams in the three-legged position.

Home

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: Two Frisbees

How to play: Participants are divided into two teams. Each team is given a Frisbee and a designated home area. The objective is to get the Frisbee into the opposing team's home area by passing the Frisbee to members of one's team and advancing towards the opposing team's home area. Once the opposing team's home area has been reached, the team gets a point.

Queenie, Queenie Who's Got The Ball?

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: A ball

How to play: One person is selected to be the "Queenie" and then turns his/her back to the other participants. The Queenie then throws the ball over her shoulder (without peeking to see where it lands!) and one of the other players must catch it or pick it up. All participants then put their hands behind their backs so that the Queenie does not know who has the ball. The Queenie then turns around and guesses who has the ball through a process of elimination. The participants have to admit right away when asked if they have the ball. If the person who has the ball is the last person that the Queenie guesses, that person becomes the new Queenie.



Kick the Can

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: A metal can, such as an empty coffee or paint can

How to play: One person is selected to be "It". The game starts with "It" placing the can in the middle of the park or playing area. "It" then closes his/her eyes and counts to a predetermined number (50 or 100, dependant on age) while all other participants run and find a hiding spot in the playing area. Once "It" has finished counting, he/she will open his/her eyes and start searching for the hidden participants. When "It" finds a hider, he/she calls out the hider's name. (Note: the hiders must remain in their initial hiding spot). If a hider's name is called, he/she has to race "It" to the can. If the hider kicks the can over before "It" does, he/she is safe. If "It" beats the hider to the can and kicks it over first, the hider who "It" was racing must wait in an area designated as "jail" next to the can. It is possible to free players captured in jail if another hidden player runs to the can, kicks it over, and calls out "HOME FREE" without getting captured by "It". When released from jail, players can run and find a spot to hide from "It" again. The game continues until all players have been captured. The first person caught by "It" becomes "It" in the next round of the game. If the game continues on too long, an option is to make a player who is caught three times by "It" become "It" in the next round of the game.

Balloon Bop

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: A number of balloons (not helium)

How to play: Blow up a few balloons for each participant and encourage them to throw, kick, catch, and do various actions with the balloons. A fun challenge is to tie a rope between two points and have participants try to hit the balloon up and over the rope. Another option is to try to keep the balloons off the ground for as long as possible.

Volley Balloon

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: A few balloons (not helium)

How to play: Blow up a number of balloons for participants to pass to one another. Start the game with one balloon and then add more for a greater challenge and more fun. Participants can be divided into teams or can just volley the balloon within the entire group.

Frisbee Relay

Ages: This game is intended for older participants (aged 12 and up)

Materials required: Two Frisbees

How to play: This game works the best with 8 to 12 participants. To begin, divide participants into two teams and provide each team with a Frisbee. Each team then forms a line with about 15 meters between each player. When the Youth Leader says "GO", the first person in the line of each team tosses the Frisbee to the second person in their team's line. The second player waits for the Frisbee to land, runs to where it landed, and then throws it into



the third person in their line. The game continues in this way until the Frisbee reaches the last person in line. The first team to get the Frisbee to the last player in their line wins the relay.

Red Rover

Ages: This game is intended for older participants (aged 12 and up)

Materials required: None

How to play: Divide the group of participants into two teams. Each team forms a line and connects by holding hands. The two teams should face each other and be about 9 to 15 meters apart. The team chosen to go first calls for a runner from the other line by saying, "Red Rover, Red Rover, let Thomas come over!". Thomas then runs to the other line and tries to break through the arms linking the other team together. If he breaks through successfully, he chooses one of the participants that he broke through to take back to his team. If he isn't successful at breaking through, he must stay with that other team. The game ends when everyone is in one line.



Types of Tag

Cops and Robbers

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: The participants are divided into two teams, one team will be the cops and the other will be robbers. When instructed to start, the cops run around and try to catch (tag) all of the robbers and bring them to jail. The robbers may be released from jail if another robber tags them without being caught. Once all of the robbers are caught and put in jail, the teams switch roles and the game is started again.

Blob Tag

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: The game begins with two participants as the “blob”. Their arms are linked and they have to stay linked for the duration of the round. Once the “blob” tags someone, the person tagged becomes a part of the “blob” by linking arms. Only the ends of the “blob” have the ability to tag players, so it is possible for players to run through the blob and not be tagged.

Amoeba Tag

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: Two participants are selected to be “It”. These two people hold hands and chase the other participants, trying to tag them. If another person gets caught, he or she joins the chain by linking hands. When another person is caught, the linked taggers can split into two groups of two or stay as a whole. As the game continues and more people get tagged and join the chain, the chain may split in even numbers at any time or rejoin to make one large chain. The game continues until there are no players left untagged.

Human Chains

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: When the person selected to be “It” tags someone, they link arms. The last person to be tagged becomes “It” in the next round.



Toilet Tag

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: In this version of tag, if a participant gets tagged, they must squat down in the form of a toilet, hold one hand out to the side like a handle, and freeze in this position. To be unfrozen and get back into the game, another player must press down on the frozen player's hand, as though flushing the handle, and make a loud "WHOOOOSH" sound.

Frisbee Tag

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A soft Frisbee or disc

How to play: In this version of tag, the person who is "It" tries to tag people by tossing a soft Frisbee or disc at them. If a participant is hit with the soft Frisbee then he or she becomes "It".

Ball Tag

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: In this version of tag, participants are tagged when the person selected to be "It" hits them with a ball.

Grounders

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: This game is played on the playground equipment in the sand. The participant selected to be "It" can only open his or her eyes when they are on the sand. As soon as "It" goes onto the playground equipment, he or she must close his or her eyes.

Octopus Tag

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: One person is selected to be "It" (aka the Octopus). Create boundary lines around the playing area. The rest of the participants are considered to be the Fish. When the Octopus catches the Fish, the Fish become seaweed and must sit down on the ground and wave their arms to try and tag the other players still "swimming" around the playing area.

Hot Lava

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: This game is played on the playground equipment. Players cannot touch the sand but the person selected to be "It" can.



Everybody's It

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: The Youth Leader starts the game by yelling "Everybody's it!" to everyone in the playing area. The participants try to tag others while trying to avoid being tagged themselves. If a participant gets tagged, he or she sits down, extends his or her arms, and tries to tag those still running.

Icicle

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: The person selected to be "It" chooses an action (such as running, walking, skipping, or hopping) and all other participants must do the same action during that round of the game. The goal of the game is to make it from one designated area to the safe area without being tagged. Once a participant is tagged, he or she has to freeze. Once frozen, a participant can be released by being tagged by another player who is not "It".

Dead Ant

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: One participant is selected to be "It". When a participant is tagged by "It", he or she must lay down on his or her back, stretching his or her arms and legs out. In order to be set free and rejoin the game, four people need to tap one of the extended limbs each (doesn't need to be at the same time). Once a limb has been tapped, the tagged person (Dead Ant) retracts this limb and continues to hold the other limbs out. Once a participant has been a dead ant three times, they become "It".

Cyclops Tag

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: This game is played just like normal tag, however, in this version, every player in the game runs with one hand covering one eye.

Cooperation Tag

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: An object to hold on to (such as a bean bag or ball)

How to play: In this variation of tag, one participant is selected to be "It" and all of the other participants try to save each other from being tagged by passing the object to one another. The person who is "It" can only tag a person if that person does not have the safe object in his or her hands. So if the person who is "It" is chasing after someone to tag him or her, the person with the safe object would toss the object to the person about to be tagged to try and save them from being tagged.



Hospital Tag

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: Select one person to be "It". When tagged, the spot on the body that was tagged becomes a wound and it may be covered with one hand. When tagged again, the person may cover this second wound with the other hand. If tagged a third time, this person is either out or becomes "It". Another variation is for the part of the body to go "numb" when tagged. When the body part goes numb it is no longer usable.

TV Tag

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: In this variation of tag, when the person selected as "It" tags a participant, that person has to name a television show. As participants are tagged they cannot name a show that has already been named by another participant.

Home Base

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: Designate a part of the playing area as the "home base". Select one participant to be "It". All of the other players try to make it back to home base without getting tagged.

Always The Same

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: In this version of tag, one person is selected to be the chief catcher. This chief catcher is able to hop, walk, run, or crawl and all other participants must use the same mode of movement. The players who are caught become catchers as well.

Donkey Tag

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A number of pinnies

How to play: Select five participants to be "it" and give them green pinnies. The remaining participants take red or blue pinnies and tuck them in their waistbands like tails. Have the participants in green pinnies stand in the center of the activity area. On a signal, have the rest of the participants run throughout the activity area. The participants in green try to capture the tails of the others. If they succeed, they place the tails in the center and try to capture another. Participants who lose their tails must crab walk to the circle, retrieve their tails and rejoin the game.



Leap Frog Tag

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: When the person selected to be “It” tags someone, that player has to squat down in a small ball where he or she was tagged. Other players that haven’t been tagged can free the crouching “frogs” by leaping over them in a straddle-type jump.

Hot Dog Tag

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: None

How to play: When the person selected to be “It” tags someone, that player has to lie down on the ground, as a Hot Dog. In order to be freed and rejoin the game, two people have to come and lay on either side of tagged participants, as buns.



Parachute Games

Acquaintance Game

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A parachute

How to play: Each participant stands around the parachute, holds onto an edge, and starts raising the parachute up and down. The Youth Leader announces that everyone wearing a red T-shirt has to run under the parachute and switch places with someone else. All of the participants wearing red T-shirts must now run beneath the parachute and look for a new spot. Instead of using T-shirt colours, birth months or first letters of first names are examples of other options to use. Another option is to simply call out two names of participants who must swap places.

The Hare and the Fox

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A parachute and two balls

How to play: Separate participants into two teams and have them stand around the edge of the parachute. Lay two balls, one ball for each team on the parachute. While flipping the parachute, one team tries to catch the other team's ball.

Cats and Mice

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A parachute

How to play: Select two or three participants to be cats and mice. The mice will crawl underneath the parachute and the cats will crawl on the top. As the other participants standing around the edge of the parachute shake it, the cats will try to catch the mice beneath the parachute.

Roller Ball

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A parachute and a ball

How to play: Participants will stand in a circle and hold the parachute up. Place a ball on top of the parachute and have participants try to roll the ball in a circle.

Place Change

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A parachute

How to play: Participants will stand in a circle and hold the parachute up. While flipping the parachute up, instruct a few or all participants to exchange places by running underneath the parachute.



Changing the Colours

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A parachute

How to play: Each participant will hold the edge of the parachute on a certain colour and hold the parachute taught at a comfortable height. When the Youth Leader calls out a colour, all players who are holding onto the parachute on that colour have to change places beneath the parachute. The Youth Leader may call out several (or all) colours at once.

Fruit Salad

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A parachute

How to play: Each player is given the name of a fruit (apple, cherry, pear, etc.) The Youth Leader will call out the name of a fruit and everyone that was given the name of that fruit must swap places by running beneath the parachute. When the Youth Leader calls out "Fruit Salad", every participant must swap places with someone else in the circle.

Washing Machine

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A parachute

How to play: On the Youth Leader's count of three, the participants standing around the edge of the parachute will lift the parachute over their heads, pull it behind them, and sit down on the edge with their bottoms. Everyone should now be sitting inside the parachute. Have the participants start rocking their seated bodies left, forward, and then right to create a washing machine effect.

Parachute Run

Ages: This game is appropriate for participants of all ages

Materials required: A parachute

How to play: In this game, all participants holding onto the parachute will flip it up and down while a few participants at a time take turns trying to run across the top of the parachute and maneuver the "waves". Participants try to run for as long as they can before they fall down. Music could be played during this game and each participants turn to run could last the duration of a song.



Shark

Ages: This game is intended for participants aged 8 and up

Materials required: A parachute

How to play: To start this game, participants will sit in a circle and hold the parachute over their legs at about chest height. Select one participant to be the shark and one to be the lifeguard. The shark will crawl beneath the parachute and the lifeguard will walk around the outside of the circle. Once beneath the parachute, the shark will try to pull participants sitting around the circle by their ankles. Once a participant feels their ankles being tugged, they will yell for help from the lifeguard. The lifeguard will try to keep the participant from “going under” but if the shark is successful with pulling the participant under the parachute, that person then must become a shark and try to pull other participants under.



Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge Community Futures St. Paul-Smoky Lake and our other community partners for their continued support with this project. We would also like to thank the Youth Leaders in St. Paul for their help in creating this document.

