

CATCH ME IF YOU CAN!

Games and Activities To Help Develop Catching Skills

Jim Ross

Ridgewood, New Jersey

jross@ridgewood.k12.nj.us

BOUNCE, SLIDE AND CATCH

Tired of the old bounce or toss and catch in self space? To spice it up add a little movement! This will also increase the level of skill needed to be successful. Give each student 2 cones and a ball that bounces (tennis ball, spalding sponge ball, etc...). The student determines how far apart to space the cones - the further apart the more difficult the challenge. When ready the student bounces the ball and tries to slide-step to one cone and back to the middle, catching the ball before it touches the ground. Repeat sliding to the opposite direction.

Variations:

1. Allow for multiple bounces (lower skill level).
2. Bounce, slide and catch continuously for 30 seconds. 1 minute?
3. Toss up, slide and catch.
4. Perform with a partner, catching each other's ball.
5. Bounce a ball at the 1st cone, slide to the 2nd cone and bounce a 2nd ball. Slide back to the 1st cone, catch 1st ball and slide back to the 2nd cone - catching the 2nd ball.
6. Do the above challenge continuously. (Highest skill level!)

BOUNCE AND CATCH SWITCHEROO

Starting in pairs, each player bounces a ball and attempts to catch his/her partner's ball. If successful 5 times in a row (optional), increase the group size to 3. With more success increase the group size. Is it possible to do a class size group?

Variations:

1. Add challenges to perform before catching (ie clap 2 Xs, turn around)
2. Increase the group size for each successful round - decrease when a miss is made.
3. Set a time limit. How many successful attempts within the time limit?

CLAP OFF CHALLENGE

Students challenge each other to a "clap off". Player A begins by tossing a ball over the head, clapping once and then catching the ball. Player B must do the same. If each is successful, Player A attempts to toss and catch with 2 claps. Player B attempts the same. Play continues until one player misses the catch or cannot clap enough times. RULE #1: The tossed ball must travel over the head! Encourage the higher skilled catchers to toss the ball higher or give them a smaller/lighter ball to catch (more challenging).

"200"

Split the class into small groups - 2's and 3's work best. Give each group a ball and an information sheet prepared ahead of time. On the sheet write the words "ground ball" and "fly ball" next to the numbers 1-6. To start the game, each group decides who will start as the "batter" and fielder. The teacher rolls the die. The batter throws a ball that indicated by the number on the info sheet (1 might be a fly ball, 2 might be a ground ball...). If the fielder catches the ball s/he receives points - 50 for a ground ball, 100 for a fly ball. Play continues until the fielder scores 200 points and then roles are switched.

ROCKET LAUNCHERS

This activity helps develop catching skills. Students place an object on the end of launcher. By stomping down on the opposite end, the object is projected into the air. Students attempt to catch the object! Following are some possibilities of activities:

- 1) Launch and catch 1 object;
- 2) Launch 2 objects at the same time and attempt to catch both objects;
- 3) Partners: 1 launcher and 1 catcher;
- 4) Partners: 1 launcher and 1 blindfolded catcher
- 5) Team Launch: 2 vs 2 Challenge another pair to catch your launched objects

PARTNER CATCH COUNT DOWN

Each group of partners is given a rocket launcher, space station and 8 balls of the same color. Placing the launcher on the space station, the groups have 3 minutes to catch all 8 balls before time runs out. VARIATION: Players may be allowed to catch the bounce, or not.

PARTNER CATCH COUNT DOWN - Bonus Ball Edition

Each group of partners is given a rocket launcher, space station and 8 balls of the same color. Placing the launcher on the space station, the groups have 3 minutes to catch all 8 balls before time runs out. Have a second bucket of balls ready. If a group catches all 8 of the original balls, the group may start catching the "bonus balls". CLASS GOAL VARIATION: Challenge the groups to have "20" bonus balls caught as a class.

TEAM CATCH COUNT DOWN

Each group of partners is given a rocket launcher, space station and 8 balls of the same color. Placing the launcher on the space station, the groups have 3 minutes to catch all 8 balls before time runs out. If a group finishes before time runs out, they may go to another team and ask if help is needed. Only one group may help another group. If helping, the group brings the ball back to its own area, instead of having 3 catchers attempting to catch the same ball, which isn't helpful at all!

SUPER MARIO BROTHERS

This game is played in groups of 6-8. Students partner up from within the group. One set of partners is designated as "Mario and Luigi" (the names are optional or subject to change!) and are the dodgers. The other players line up opposite their partners on each side of the playing area. The playing area should be 7-10 feet wide. The length is dependent upon the number of players within the groups. The sole job of the partners who are lined up opposite each other is to roll a ball back and forth across the playing area. They are not to try and hit the dodgers. "Mario" and "Luigi" must cross to the opposite end of the playing area and back without being touched by a ball. One hundred points are scored for each successful crossing. At the end of a specified time period rotate the players. If you have trouble with students intentionally trying to hit the dodgers, give the rollers 5 points for every pass that is completed to their partner - without touching "Mario" or "Luigi".

- Variations:
- (1) Set up different "worlds" such as a walking world, a jogging world or a skipping world;
 - (2) Set up different levels to make it more challenging to travel through such as changing the size of the ball or move from dodging a rolling ball to dodging a bouncing ball.
 - (3) Have the rollers set up a different pattern of rolling the balls. For example, each roller may not roll to his/her own partner. This would create a crisscrossing of the balls.

TWO PASSES

Divide your class into four groups. Assign each group a color using pinnies. The objective is to complete 2 passes with a partner. If successful, score 100 points! One of the groups will play defense. The defense tries to intercept or knock down any passes. If a ball touches the ground or is intercepted, the offense must find a new ball to throw. If successful, the partners put the ball down and find a new ball to throw. Rotate the defense.

Variations:

- (1) Increase the number of passes as the skill level increases;
- (2) After being successful with one partner, must find a new partner (score 100 bonus points for using every player on your team);
- (3) Passing partners must be from other teams;
- (4) Assign different point values for different balls.
- (5) Dictate the type of pass that must be thrown (ie. bounce passes, chest passes)
- (6) Add different types of balls. Each ball indicates the skill used. For example, picking up a basketball would dictate a basketball pass would have to be used; pick up a football - a shot gun snap or spiral pass.

“That’s The Best Game Ever!”

Kid Tested - Kid Approved

Jim Ross

Ridgewood, New Jersey

jross@ridgewood.k12.nj.us

GUESS YOUR TASK

This is more of a teaching strategy than an activity. It can be used with a variety of problem solving type games and activities. TURNSTYLE is the sample activity describe below:

- The teacher starts with “I have a task in my mind for you to do as a class (team). However, I am not going to tell you what it is - your class must figure it out! I will only tell you if your attempt is incorrect.” It is also wise to give any safety rules at this time. For example, when doing turnstyle I tell the kids they have to run past a specific point (a cone). This could be considered a hint, but that is OK.
- Turnstyle Activity: The task is to run under the turning rope, one person at a time, no jumping, no missed turns, 25Xs.
- The teacher then steps back and observes the class. Watch the dynamics of the class (who leads/follows, planning, listening to others, etc..). This will lead to the discussions that follow the activity.
- IT IS THE PROCESS AND DEBRIEFING AFTER THE ACTIVITY THAT MATTERS - NOT WHETHER THE CLASS WAS SUCCESSFUL AT FIGURING OUT THE TASK!
- Topics of discussion may include: Who was being a true leader? Why? What worked as a team? What didn't work? Was everyone's opinion/suggestion given fair consideration, etc.

MATCHING HOOPS

Divide the class into smaller teams. Give each team a hoop, positioning the teams around the perimeter. In the middle of the playing area place a hoop containing various groups of objects (6-8 of each kind of object). The objective is to be the first team to gather all the objects of one type of group (ex. 8 blue tennis balls). On the starting signal, each team sends out one person to collect an object. Players may take objects from the middle or from other team hoops. No defending the hoops. Only one player from each team may be in the playing area at one time.

4 SQUARE JUMP ROPES

Create 4 large connecting squares. Designate 1 square as the “scoring square”. Designate a second square as the “entry point” (it should be adjacent to the scoring square). Start the game with a player in each square and a line of the extra players just outside the entry

square. Players all need a jump rope. The player in the entry square calls out a jump rope skill to perform. The player in the scoring square yells "go" and everyone begins to perform the skill. When one player misses the round is over. The player who misses is out. All the other players move one square toward the scoring square and away from the entry square. For every round a player stays in the scoring square, s/he scores a point.

SLIDING DOORS (Craig Mahler, NJ)

On each line assign a pair of students who are connected by a rope (8-12 feet long). The students connected by the rope are the defenders. Each pair of defenders must stay on its line. The pair may slide back and forth, but may not cross over each other. Starting at one end of the playing area, the other students attempt to dribble to the opposite end. The dribblers may not go over or under the rope. The dribblers must maneuver around each set of defenders. If a dribbler loses control of the ball or stops dribbling, s/he must go back to the start. If a dribbler successfully reaches the opposite end of the playing area, s/he does a quick "victory dance" and then runs back to the start to try again.

VARIATIONS:

1. Try this game with different skills (dribble a basketball, dribble a soccer ball, running with a football, using a hockey stick and puck, etc...
2. Students may want to keep track of the number of successful trips.

3 VS 0 COOPERATIVE KICKBALL (Peter St. Pierre, GA)

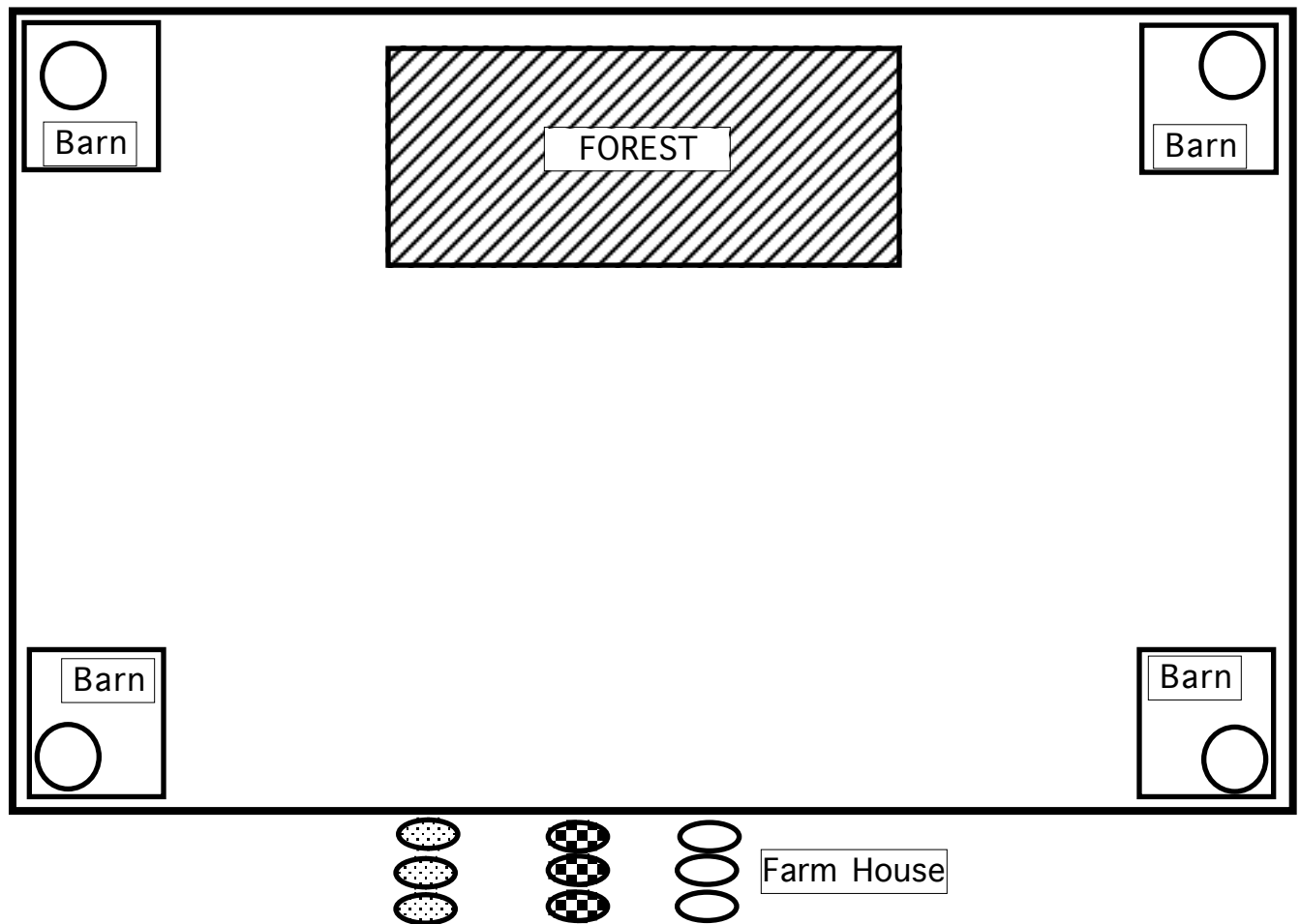
The class is set up in groups of three. The game has 3 positions: the kicker, pitcher and fielder. The pitcher rolls the ball to the kicker. The kicker TRIES to kick the ball to the fielder. If the ball is caught in the air, the group scores 5 points. If the ball is caught after 1 bounce, 3 points are scored. The group receives 1 point if the ball is caught after 2 or more bounces. Zero points if the ball stops before being caught or is bobbled and missed. The group rotates after every kick. Pitcher to kicker, kicker to fielder, fielder to pitcher. Designate spots for the kicker and the pitcher. Add a time limit such as 3-5 minutes to speed up play and make it very aerobic! Rotate teams after the time limit or have each team try for a better score.

THE NEW KICKING GAME (OK..I don't have a name yet!)

This is a multi-team game. Place 3-4 goals in the middle of the playing area. Place 1 goal in each of the 4 corners of the playing area. One team is defender the goals in the middle of the playing area. They may not use their hands. The other teams are stationed around the periphery of the playing area. *They do not defend the corners. Teams on the periphery are assigned specific spots to kick the ball from - aiming for the center goals. These players may travel anywhere to obtain a ball, but must return to a kicking spot before attempting a goal. The team defending the middle goals may kick at the corner goals but may NOT travel with the ball - they must kick from where they stop the ball. After scoring, a player adds a tennis ball to his/her team's scoring bucket. Count up the goals at the end of a time period. Begin another game with a different team in the middle.

TURKEY SCRAMBLE

Divide the class into 3-4 teams. Designate 1 area as the forest. The turkeys are safe in the forest. In each corner of the playing area, create a 10'x10' square placing a hoop with bean bags (or tennis balls) inside each square. These are the barns to be defended by the farmers. Opposite the forest (other side of the playing area) place poly spots. This is the farm house area. The turkeys try to run to the barn area to gather food to eat (bean bags). If a turkey arrives safely inside the barn area, s/he brings one bean bag back to the forest area and then may attempt to find more food. If a turkey is tagged by a farmer when outside the forest (and not inside a barn area), the turkey must go to the farm house. Turkeys inside the farm house may be saved by another turkey on his/her team. The rescue turkey must reach the farm house without being tagged and then must escort his/her teammate to the forest area. Farmers are not allowed inside the forest, barn or farm house. After 3 minutes count up the scores and rotate teams. For larger classes, add more barns and/or more teams. The playing area may also be made larger.



Jim Ross

Other Stuff from Orchard School

jross@ridgewood.k12.nj.us

SLEIGH RIDE

suggested music: "Jingle Bells" by Hampton and the Hamsters

Regular clap (with beat 8 times)

Clap up high (with beat 8 times)

"It's getting bumpy" (bop up and down) - (interchange with up and down a hill)

"Going around the bend" (lean to the side)

"Uh-oh! Going the other way" (lean to opposite side)

"Which way do we go?" (point right and left)

"I don't know!" (shrug shoulders)

"But we're having a good time!" Whoop and Shout (hands up with a shout)

Galloping horse (slap knees right-left-right-left, etc. for 8 counts)

Ring the bells (3 rings with a clap on the 4th count - do 4 times)

REPEAT

BUG EYES

Freeze tag is a classic beginner game that will always be around. The trick to having lots of tag games is to modify existing games! The kids think you have reinvented the wheel and be very excited about the "new" game to play! In "Bug Eyes" give the taggers an inflatable eye (purchased around Halloween). If tagged, the player must stand frozen and cover his/her eyes. To become unfrozen, another player must stop in front of the frozen player and say "Hocus-Pocus-Bobbity-Boop!" while doing the magic hand thing that magicians do. A player may not be tagged while performing the magic act.

SUMO TWO TAG (Garry Bowyer, OH)

Each student has a partner to play this game. Using a grid square as the playing area, each student is a tagger. The object is to tag the partner before being tagged. Players start in separate corners of the grid square. Each player takes three "Sumo Steps" toward the middle of the square. Specify where the tag must be made (ex. on the arm or below the knee). If a tag is made, the partners take a step back and begin again. This game may be played while dribbling a basketball or soccer ball.

PURPLE PEOPLE EATER TAG (Percy Hill, NH)

Players are chased by a purple people eater "with one big eye". If tagged players must freeze and make a large eye with the hands. Unfrozen by an "untagger". Players may avoid being tagged by stopping and covering the eyes ("if you cannot see the eyeball, the eyeball cannot see you").