

Planet Play!

10 playground games from around the globe

Everybody remembers the endless playtimes of their own school days but it wasn't all just fun and games! Those activities taught many transferable skills such as: gross and fine motor skills; critical thinking; problem solving; communication; negotiation; collaboration; resilience and reading social cues.

Here is a selection of playground games from across the world and lo and behold many will appear quite familiar whenever and wherever you grew up! Try learning a new game per week with the class and see how it opens up discussions around the things that unite us as the human race in our desire to play and learn.

1. Deweke

Africa > Botswana

This game needs three players; one in the middle and one either side of the playground. In the centre there is a small tub traditionally with several crushed tins next to it although these could be replaced by bean bags or something similar. The middle player attempts to take each tin between their feet and flick them one by one into the tub whilst jumping. Meanwhile the other two players try to hit the child in the middle with the ball. If there is a hit, then that child takes the place of the middle child. The aim of the game is to fill the tub without being hit by the ball. The winner is the child in the centre at this point and they knock the tub on the floor to show that it is game over.

2. Catch the Dragon's Tail

China

This game requires a group of ≥ 10 children. The group form a long chain by placing their hands on the shoulders of the child in front. The chain leader is the dragon's head and the end person is the tail. The head of the line attempts to manoeuvre the chain in order to catch the tail. All the others in the chain attempt to hinder the head whilst remaining intact. When caught, the tail player becomes the new head and everybody else moves back one place in the chain.



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3. Sardinien

Germany

This game requires five or more players. One child is chosen to hide within given boundaries. The others have to count up to 60 whilst the first child hides. On 60, the seekers disperse and each time somebody finds the original hider, they have to hide with them. One by one the others join the first child in their hiding place bunching up together like sardines. This continues until the last one finds the hiding place.

4. Strega Comanda Color

Italy

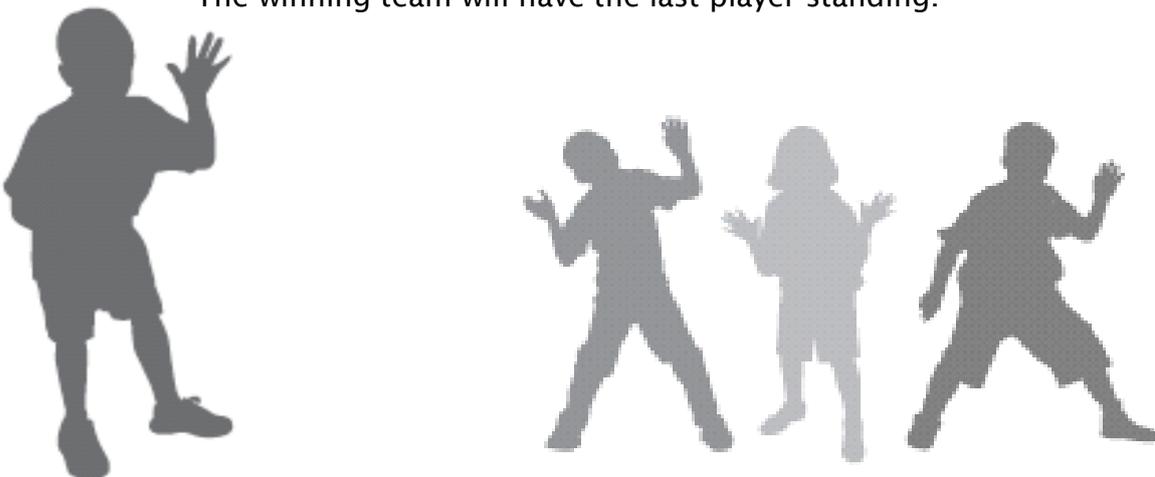
This game requires a minimum of three players, although larger groups work better. Predetermined boundaries are set and one player is chosen to be the 'strega' (witch.) The 'strega' calls out a colour and the other players must run to touch an object of that colour before the 'strega' can tag them. It can be an article of clothing or something in the surrounding environment. The first child tagged becomes the next 'strega'. If the current 'strega' fails to tag anyone then they must call out another colour.

5. Kabbadi

India

Kabaddi needs two teams (preferably each with at least three players), and a wide open playing space divided into two separate territories. The teams line up opposite each other about 10m back from the centre line, in their corresponding territories. The teams take turns to be offensive and defensive.

A player from the offensive team stands near the centre line. To begin the game, this player runs into the opposition's territory trying to tag opponents. This player must keep yelling "kabaddi-kabaddi-kabaddi" whilst on the opposition's territory, without taking a breath until returning to their own territory. Everybody they manage to tag is out. The opponents can try to block that player and prevent them from getting back to their own side. If the player runs out of breath in the opposition's territory i.e. they stop saying 'kabaddi', they are out. The winning team will have the last player standing.



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Health and
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All Ages

6. Kubb

Sweden

Equipment: 1x 'king' skittle, 10 x 'kubbs' skittles, 4 x pitch markers, 12 x short sturdy sticks

Kubb is a classic Viking game played by two teams on a rectangular pitch of ~8x5m but this can be reduced in size. The pitch can be marked out with some corner cones and a 'king' pin is placed in the very centre of the field of play. The pin could be a wooden stump, a plastic bottle filled with some sand, a skittle or similar. The aim of the game is to be the first team to knock over the king using short throwing sticks which need to be tossed end over end. However, before a team can aim at the king they must first knock over all of the opposition's 'kubbs'.

The kubs are smaller skittles and the two teams both have five lined up along one side of the pitch opposite each other. These are referred to as 'baseline kubbs.' Team A will take their shots from their own baseline at the baseline kubbs of team B using each of their six throwing sticks. Team B will throw any of the knocked down kubbs into team A's half of the pitch and they now stand where they land. These are known as 'field kubs.' When it is team A's turn to throw again they need to knock down all of team B's baseline kubbs and then all the field kubbs before they can take a shot at the king. If the king is knocked over before all baseline kubbs and field kubbs then the team responsible loses.

7. Down, Down, Down

Australia

This game involves the tossing of a tennis ball between two players. If a player drops the ball, he must go down to one knee. If he drops it again he goes down to both knees, then to an elbow, then to two elbows before eventually ending up on his chin at which point he loses!



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8. Red Rover Red Rover

UK

This game needs two equal sized teams and a large open playing area. All players in team A and in team B link arms to form two chains facing each other. Team A start by nominating somebody from team B to attempt to run and break through their chain. To do so, team A must chant 'Red Rover, Red Rover send (insert name) right over!' If the player manages to break through they return to their team and if not they join team A. It works best if there is a time limit on the challenge to break through. The team with the most players at the end wins.

9. Four Square

USA

This is a four player game requiring a ball and a large square to be chalked onto the playground and split into four quarters numbered one to four. A player stands in each quarter. Number one serves the ball to another player by bouncing it once in their quarter and hitting it to a player in another quarter. The receiver must hit the ball back to any other player. Continue playing until somebody hits the ball out of play or it bounces twice in their quarter. These mistakes render that player out. Play continues until the last man standing. Alternatively, the game can encompass more waiting players in that any time somebody is out, players move up to the next available number to vacate square one and a new waiting player joins in there.

10. Le Béret

France

This game comprises a caller and two teams of 10 positioned on opposite sides of the playground. In each team everyone has a number from 'un' to 'dix.' A 'béret' (any piece of cloth) is placed in the centre of the playground. The caller says one number e.g. 'sept'. The number sevens of each team have to run and catch the beret and bring it back to their side. However, they can only score a point if they are not tagged by their opponent. The first team to 10 points wins. The caller can shout out more than one number at the same time to make it more difficult however, a 'deux' must tag a 'deux', 'trois' tags 'trois' etc.

