

# Effective Strategies and Learning Activities for Kindergarten Physical Education

NJAHPERD Conference

Presenter: Amanda Amtmanis, Middletown (CT) Public Schools, [amtmanisa@mpsct.org](mailto:amtmanisa@mpsct.org)

## Objectives:

- 1) Participants will explore several types of activities and games that will engage kindergarteners.
- 2) Participants will examine the effect that imagination and storytelling have on young children's understanding of the rules and roles of group games and will learn to play several active games that pair with stories which they can utilize with their young children.
- 3) Participants will collaborate with colleagues to share effective strategies.

## Characteristics of kindergarteners:

Short attention span – Do not plan on doing one activity for any length of time! Also, 5 year olds have great difficulty waiting for a turn

Active imaginations – They particularly enjoy activities that engage their imaginations and love of play (stories and pretending)

Limited language skills – lots of teacher talk and directions don't work well. Activities that demand a lot of communication between the students will be difficult too.

Limited social skills – activities that require sharing, turn taking, and cooperation are very challenging for this age group

## Agenda: activities that play to kindergarteners strengths while minimizing their limitations

### Instant Activities:

Tagging Games – **Stoplight Tag:** Give 2-3 students each a red fluff ball, a yellow fluff ball and a green fluff ball. All other students are cars. When a car gets tagged by a red ball, they must stop, for yellow they must go slow, and for green they go fast(er).

**Fireman Tag:** Give 2-3 students an orange juggling scarf. They are the fire. Give another 2-3 students a blue hula hoop. They are the fire fighters with their big buckets of water. Anyone who gets tagged by the fire must stop and yell "fire, fire!" until a firefighter

dumps their bucket of water over their head to put them out. Then they can run again.

**Rabbits and Foxes Tag:** Spread 4-6 hula hoops throughout the playing area. These are the rabbit holes. Give soft tagging foam noodles to 3-4 students. They are the foxes. Rabbits can avoid being tagged by being in a rabbit hole. But only one rabbit can be in a rabbit hole at a time. So when a second rabbit enters a rabbit hole, the first rabbit must leave. (No jumping right back in to that rabbit hole). When a fox tags a rabbit, they trade places (no tag backs).

*Sharing*

Skill Builders -

**High, Higher, Highest:** self-toss and catch, 3 times high (head height), 3 times higher (3-4 feet above head), 3 times highest (high as you can throw and still catch it). Trade in your ball for a different ball. How many balls can you do before music stops?

**Magic Number Passes:** partner toss and catch. Declare the “magic number” (example – “The magic number is 5. When you and your partner make 5 catches, trade in your ball for another ball. How many balls can you make 5 catches with before the music stops?”)

**Step Back:** partner toss and catch. Every time you make a catch step back one step. Every time you miss, step forward one step. How far back can you get?

*Sharing*

Fitness Lead ups-

**Push up Towers:** Have students help build small towers with 3 foam blocks each scattered throughout the gym. Students build and rebuild towers while holding a plank position. After a student builds a tower, they then move on to build a different tower. Challenge them to see how many towers they can build before the music stops.

**Monsters U Pair Scares:** Students sit facing each other, toe to toe, knees bent, feet flat on the floor. They are going to lie back on the floor and take turns being the scare-er and the scare-ee. Whenever the scare-er is ready, they sit up and roar. When the

scare-ee hears the roar, they sit up and do their best theatrical scared reaction.

*Sharing*

**Parachute Activities:**

Popcorn (jumping up and down on top of the waves)

Deep Sea Divers (crawling around on the floor under the waves)

Mountain Climber (“up high to the sky, and down to the ground, and kneel on the edge of the parachute” Take turns climbing up to the top (center) of the parachute

Merry Go Round (gallop clockwise, then counter-clockwise holding the parachute)

Rocket Ship (“high to the sky, step in, pull down behind, and sit on it”)

*Sharing*

**Whole Group Games:**

**Shopping Cart** – students work in pairs with a scooter collecting foam fruits and vegetables. One student “sits in the shopping cart” (on the scooter) and one student “pushes the cart” (pushes with their hands on the scooter or on their partner’s back or shoulders). After they get one item on their list and put it in their shopping bag, they trade places.

**Oscar’s Trash Can** – Stand 2 folding mats on their sides and Velcro them together to create a cylinder. Choose 3-4 students to go inside the cylinder and be Oscar in the trashcan. Scatter foam balls of varying sizes around the gym (make a mess). All other students clean up Sesame Street by throwing the balls into the trashcan, but Oscar loves a mess so Oscar throws the balls right back out. Stop the action every 2-3 minutes to choose new Oscars until everyone has had a turn.

**Frozen** – All students have a pair of paper plate “ice skates” and skate around the gym, except for 4-6 students who have snow balls (white yarn balls) and 4-6 students who have ice melt (foam rings/noodles/etc). The students with the snow balls throw them at the skaters. If a skater gets hit with a snow ball, they must freeze and pretend to shiver until a melter touches them and melts them.

Stop the action frequently so that everyone gets a turn to play each role. (Play “Let It Go” and watch them lose their little minds!)

**Join My Team** - Choose 4 or 5 students to be the “Coaches.” They will run up to students standing in personal space and show them the sign that they are holding (i.e. basketball player) and say “Join my team!” The student then pretends to shoot hoops, dribble a ball, etc. until one of the other coaches recruits him/her for their team. Each coach is trying to get the most players for their team before you call a stop to the game. Play several rounds, assigning new coaches and new activities for each round. \*The only students who should be traveling around the playing area are the coaches. The other students should be moving in place. This is a good small space game.

*Sharing*

**Small Group Centers:** Developing motor skills and cooperative/social skills in small groups

Racquets and Balloons

Scooters

Helicopter

Rocket Launchers

*Sharing*

**Games That Incorporate Literacy:** Using stories to help students understand the rules and roles of games

**Good Night Gorilla:** Tagging game paired with *Good Night Gorilla*. Zookeepers hold a “flashlight” and are taggers. If an animal is tagged by a zookeeper, they must go to a cage (hula hoop) and wait for the gorillas (who carry “keys”) to let them out.

**Lizard’s Home:** The story *Lizard’s Home* is a great intro to the concept of home and away partners and also helps children understand the concept of fair play

**Finklehopper Frog:** Take home fitness kit to help with building individual connections with students, building home-school connections with families, reinforcing the message of being active outside of school, and adding a literacy component to your program. (For more information on this, you can check out the webinar that I presented on this topic. It is available

on the SHAPE America website in their library (along with many, many other resources) – free for members, 19.99 for non-members)

**Wrap up and *sharing* of additional strategies and activities**