

A close-up photograph of two children's faces. The child on the left has light skin and blue eyes, looking slightly to the side. The child on the right has dark skin and black hair, smiling broadly. The background is a soft-focus green, suggesting an outdoor setting.

# KIDS 4 KIDS GAMES & GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

For thirty years Scott Graham has inspired children across Canada and the UK by using cooperative games, group management techniques and team building activities to inspire leadership .

Written by: Scott Graham

# GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

**"I do not lose; I only win, or I learn."**

**Nelson Mandela**



In developing the Kids 4 Kids Leadership Program I have learned ways of positively influencing groups of children. I don't believe in yelling or forcing children to do what I want. Children need to learn ways of managing their behaviour that will transfer to other areas of their lives. Here are some of the usable techniques I have learned since beginning Kids 4 Kids in 1993.

In this book you will find group management techniques that are fun, engaging and useful. The techniques will help you manage your group, so they get the most out of your program.

You will also find a selection of games that are easy to play, which don't require a lot of setup. They encourage cooperation and teach usable leadership skills.

Cooperative games, team building activities, and object lessons are great ways of teaching children life lessons that will direct them to success and help them reach their potential.

ENJOY!

Scott Graham

# GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

**I GOT THE POINT:** To encourage appropriate group behaviours such as teamwork, sportsmanship, and leadership. **Activity:** Every time a leader notices an appropriate behavior it is acknowledged, and possibly discussed. Points are then given to the group for individuals displaying positive group behaviours. This will encourage the children to act in positive ways, highlight positive behaviours, and provide positive role modeling. Points are never lost, only gained. The reason behind this is to pay attention to positive behaviours and ignore, as best as possible, negative behaviours. It gives the leader an opportunity to acknowledge, reinforce and discuss leadership skills. Behaviours to Acknowledge ● Listening ● Encouraging others ● Playing fairly ● Handling a loss well ● Overcoming a personal challenge ● Using all team members the game ● Showing concern for a fellow player ● Helping out during set up or tear down

**KERFLUFFLE Skill - Listening Activity -** Children need to listen to instructions so they will know the rules of the game, but how can you compete with the distractions of their environment? Children enjoy outwitting the instructor. Tell your group that you are the king or queen of trickery. At times during the course of the session, you will be throwing a trick their way. Of course, they will all deny that you can trick them. You now begin the instruction of a new activity. At some point during your instruction, you say when I say the word "kerfuffle" I want you all to line up. You continue with the instruction for the game. When instructions are finished and questions are answered you then say, "GO!" Of course everyone will get up and start moving. You then announce that you just tricked them. I didn't say the word, "kerfuffle!" The children will realize that you did trick them. The children will be determined not to be tricked again. For them to be victorious they must listen. You've accomplished your goal. This is similar to the example I gave you in the Time Must Not be Wasted Section. **GETTING KIDS TO LISTEN** "I'm going to ask you a question, Are you paying attention?" There is nothing more frustrating than explaining a game and having to re-explain it because someone wasn't listening or had a game fail because of inattentive children. So how do you get kids to listen? I explain to children what's in it for them and why they should listen attentively: 1. If you don't understand the rules and play a game by your own set of rules it looks like you're cheating. 2. You waste valuable game time. 3. You are not able to play as many games during a Kids 4 Kids session. 4. The game is not as much fun. 5. You increase the likelihood of arguing and player conflict. 6. You build a bad reputation and affect your "brand."



# GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

You want to encourage the children to listen while you explain a game or teach a leadership lesson. If they think you may ask a question after an explanation or they may get points for listening they are more likely to keep their focus. "I am going to ask you a question after my explanation. If you don't know the answer I will know you weren't listening." Keep an eye on your audience. Are the kids looking at you? Are they showing an interest in what you are saying? Are they playing with grass? (Outside) Are they poking or talking with their friend? (Inside) Getting the distracted child to focus can be as easy as a look in their direction or a point. You don't need to stop your explanation. "OH, OH!" - If I see a child not listening, talking, or poking or distracting other kids I look at them and say, "Oh, oh." It's like the - "I'm going to count to three" strategy. When kids hear the words, "oh, oh" attention is brought to their behaviour and they realize that something "bad" may follow the "oh, oh!" Try it, it works. YELLING DOESN'T WORK. It just creates a lot of noise. Yelling also creates reactive behaviour with ADHD children and just adds to the chaos. Children will eventually tune out the leader who is constantly yelling.

PHRASES THAT GET KIDS TO LISTEN: Have a phrase kids can repeat: • McDonald's restaurant theme - Leader sings - Do Do Do Do Do, Children say: I'm loving it! • Leader says: Who lives in a pineapple under the sea, Children: Sponge Bob Square Pants

This is just a fun way to get the kids to pay attention

**I GOT A ROOM FULL OF ZOMBIES Skill** - Group Cooperation Activity - Any task that needs to be completed can contain a lesson and be fun. Something, even as simple as getting a drink of water, can be turned into an adventure. I remember having a group of ninety-six children who all wanted a drink of water at the same time. Can you imagine 96 children running frantically toward the drinking fountain? Teachers and parents would be running for their lives to clear space for these overzealous, thirsty children. I decided to turn this drinking extravaganza into the game. I told the kids we would go to the different drinking fountains and would walk and act like zombies. We would freak out all the staff in the school. All 96 children were quiet, acted a little strange, but enjoyed something as simple as a drink of water. This simple activity taught them that when you work together nothing is impossible. You can create other water fountain adventures or bathroom adventures by turning the kids into "Silent Ninjas" or invisible people. You can turn the most mundane task into an adventure. Divide children into groups so they have a chance to earn rewards such as privileges or points.

**IT ONLY TAKES ONE PERSON** When one part of a car engine feels so does the entire engine. The same is true when it comes to a team. If one player is not working as a team player the team is not strong. If a player is a poor sport or is having difficulty winning or losing or is not doing their best, they are letting their team down. This player is preventing their team from being the best they can be.

# GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

I remember watching a youth baseball game. There was a player by the name of Tim getting ready to go up to bat. He's swung hard but missed hitting the ball three times- he was out. He took a major fit in front of his team, parents, and opposing players. He not only made himself look bad but made his team look bad too. Don't be that one person who makes the entire team look less than it should be. Encourage others and encourage yourself.

**TIME IS NOT TO BE WASTED** It is very frustrating when valuable time is wasted because the group is not working together. Group members could be talking, goofing around, spinning, interrupting, or any of the many behaviours that waste group time. You must explain to the group that you are not willing to give away game time. You will need the group to help. Explain what time wasters are why it's important to listen when the rules are explained. Children will have more time to play the game because you are not re-explaining the rules, dealing with the perception of cheating, or the arguments that come from children thinking that someone is playing unfairly.



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# GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

**THE WHISTLE** I prefer not to use a whistle to get the attention of children, however, if you don't have a loud voice, a whistle will work. Don't overuse a whistle and use it specifically and sparingly. Make sure the kids know what the whistle signals. One whistle may indicate the game is over. Two whistles may indicate that everyone gathers around the leader. Specify what the whistle signals, if you choose to use one. I prefer using my voice. To make getting the group organized fun, the leader can offer a time challenge. "You have ten seconds to get all the balls put away and be sitting quietly in front of me." You begin counting. It's amazing how the kids will move. The next time I want the kids to finish a game and be sitting in front of you to see if they can beat their last time. "You have 8 seconds to get all the balls put away and be sitting quietly in front of me." It's all about making it fun. The kids enjoy the process and you accomplish your goal of not wasting time.

**QUESTIONS** It doesn't take much to excite children, especially when you tell them you're about to play their favorite game. Encourage the group not to react when you mention the name of the game that reactions can lead to a waste of time. Explain that they need to listen to the explanation even if they know how to play. Other children might not be familiar with the rules or the rules may be different. As you explain the game, hands will start popping up everywhere. Encourage the children to wait and ask her questions at the end of the exclamation. If you have to stop every time there's a question, you would take a lot longer to explain the game. Children should never be embarrassed to ask a question as someone else in the group may have the same one. .

**CUES TO AVOID INTERRUPTIONS** - You may notice a group member poking another member or twirling on the ground or doing something that's inappropriate. Instead of interrupting the group, you could use a cue to grab the attention of the distracted child. You may point, snap your finger, make eye contact, or casually say their name. When they hear their name they will make eye contact with you which will give you an opportunity to get them back on track. **I DON'T WANT TO PLAY** You will be faced with a child who just does not want to play. Never force a child to play a game. They may not want to play because they don't understand the rules. They may not want to play because they're nervous about playing. Tell the child they can sit out and watch, but when they are ready they are more than welcome to play. Sometimes the child just needs a few minutes to check out what's happening and prepare himself to play.

**CHOOSING TEAMS** We need to encourage children, help them build their confidence, and improve their self-esteem. Teams should be picked randomly. Have children line up and number kids with odd and even numbers. Odd numbers are one team and even numbers are the other. Watch children don't position themselves in the line to get themselves on the team with the strongest players. The idea of picking a team captain and having the captains form teams leads to children feeling excluded.

# GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

**LEADERS COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES** Figuring out who the leaders are in your group can help you with group management. They may be the older children, more active, or even the disruptive children. When a child is given an opportunity to lead the group or a position of responsibility they are also receiving positive attention. Use the leaders in your group to inspire, lead, and motivate the other children. Even the children who are disruptive can be redirected into a leadership role. Sometimes the extra attention they receive as a leader is enough to direct their behavior and help you with group management. **GROUP ENERGY LEVEL** It is important to know when the game has lost its effectiveness

## KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

Be sure to watch your players to see when the enthusiasm for a game is waning. Provide variety in your game selection along to create momentum. Active games are usually played at the beginning of the session when the group has the most energy, or just before the time you need to sit and talk to the group

Passive games are played in the middle of the program, or just before the end, so you can bring the energy level down before you leave the group. It is up to the leader to decide when active and passive games are utilized according to how they have set up the program. Try to provide momentum by using active and passive games wisely, so your group will be as effective as possible.

I start with the story which primes the kids for what's about to happen within the session. Stories can be great passive activities that can captivate children. I then play three active games that help the kids work out their energy and prepare them for the leadership lesson. This is followed by the leadership lesson, then we play one more active game which will be followed by two passive activities, and finally, we end with a story.



# GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

## HOW TO MODIFY A GAME SO IT IS CHALLENGING AND AGE APPROPRIATE

Duck, Duck, Goose is a game that is played with preschool-age children. Children form a sitting down circle, and a player is chosen to be "it." They walk around the circle touching the other players on the head saying "duck," "duck," and when the player says "goose" the touched player must run in the opposite direction as "it," trying to get back to their original spot before "it" gets there. To add a challenge you may have "it" and the touched player do some sort of action. For example they could shake hands, give each other a high five, and a hip bump. Adding these elements makes the game a little more exciting and challenging for older kids. MODIFYING Never be afraid of modifying a game. That's what makes being a leader fun, you can be creative. For example: If you are playing with older children you may want to change the name of the game to Tic, Tic, Boom, the same rules would apply as Duck, Duck Goose. In the summer you can play Drip, Drip, Drop using a cup of refreshing water, or a Super Soaker Water Pistol. A good icebreaker game is, "How do you do?" When "it" touches a player on the head "it" may shake the player's hand saying how do you do three times. When they meet in the middle they say, "how do you do?" another three times and race to the starting point. "Animal, Animal" can be fun if you have a lively group. "It" walks around the group, touching other players, calling the name of an animal. When "it" changes the name of the animal they begin to act like that animal, as does the player that was touched. For example try Bear, Bear, Bear, Monkey

Each player runs around the circle acting like a monkey, trying to get back to their original spot.

Never be afraid to modify a game to meet the needs of your group. It is amazing what you will come up with.

**TRANSITIONS** Transitions are important when it comes to managing a group and the group's time. Before a game ends warn your group that they have three minutes left, then two then one

Sudden endings create frustration for some kids. Prepare them for the end of the game.

If you are playing a game that involves a circle and you can play another circle game later on during the session, you may want to play the games and closer together to avoid wasting the time it takes getting into a circle. You want to go from one activity to another as smoothly as possible. Try to arrange your activities so one will flow into the other. There should be an actual thought-out sequence. For example: If you play too many active games in a row you may find your groups and energy level waning. Have a mixture of active and passive games that match your group's dynamics.

**MAKING A CIRCLE** The secret to making a circle is for all the children to hold hands, pull out, and drop their hands. Older children will find this juvenile but is still the most effective way of saving time and making a circle. The first time you explain this technique to your group be clear on your expectations and your rationale. No one will be pushing and pulling and that the circle will be ready in no more than 10 seconds. When children see the reasoning behind the strategy they will go along with your approach. If the circle is too small and players are left outside the circle, players just need to take a step or two back to accommodate the left-out player. The goal is to work as a team, communicate and waste as little time as possible.

# GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

**BE AN ENCOURAGER** Good leaders always look for ways of encouraging their group. It is easy to criticize, but with criticism, comes learned helplessness and feelings of failure. I remember being all excited because I got my first goal in soccer. I soon realized that my first goal was on my own net. It was encouragement and advice from my coach that helped me and prevented me from losing faith in myself. I later became one of my team's top goal scorers. Encouraging words can go a long way.

**SAFETY MUST COME FIRST** It is crucial that you as a leader have a plan so that if the unexpected happens you are prepared.

If you are playing a game and a group member breaks their arm do you know what to do? If the child has a bloody nose will you be prepared? It would be a good idea to take a first aid course so that you are aware of the basic techniques which are to be used in a variety of situations. Go through a number of scenarios with your group and plan what would happen and who would be responsible for what. It is very common for people to panic in unexpected situations. You need to remain calm

Keep your group calm and coordinate the plan with the injured group member. Cellphones and phone numbers are helpful when an unexpected situation occurs. Make sure you have a plan. What will the group be doing? Who will be in charge if you need to take the child to the hospital? Who will contact the parents? What if the parents cannot be contacted? Be prepared.

It is also important to see potential hazards and avoid them if possible. If the group is large you may want to avoid running games as you are increasing the likelihood of children banging into each other. Think about the game. Think about the play space available. Also, look around the playing area for possible dangers.

**BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT** Be clear, concise, and consistent when you are defining a group expectations and consequences for inappropriate behaviour. If a child chooses to act in a specific way, they are also choosing the consequence that goes along with that specific behaviour. Don't feel guilty for consequencing the child. You are an important factor in teaching this child that if they choose to act in a certain way that a consequence will always follow. That's a rule of life. It is better to learn now. Leaders should all decide what the natural consequences should be for specific behaviors. Everyone must deliver the same consequences consistently. If not, a child will use one leader against another and get reinforced for the negative behavior as they know that they can get away with it. Children like to push to see how far they can go. Once they know the parameters, they are less likely to misbehave. It has also been proven that children feel a lot more secure in an environment with well-defined boundaries. It is a frequent mistake of new leaders to try to be every child's friend and not do or say anything that might jeopardize that friendship. Although a child will not like getting consequences, they know that they were wrong, and will respect you if you consequence them and not let them get away with it. Be firm but fair and deliver realistic consequences. You will be on the road to having a successful group.

# GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

**TIPS TO REMEMBER** If a child needs a time out, five minutes is more effective than twenty minutes. You can deliver more five-minute time outs than you can twenty minute time outs. If a child is constantly getting timed out, the monotony of going to a timeout will be effective. Do not negotiate with a child. They always have a choice. They can behave or take the consequence

If they continue to negotiate or do not make a decision the decision is made by the leader. If a child continues to disrupt the group, it is important for the leader to contact the parent. Working together consistently for the benefit of the child. If the child continues to be disruptive, the consequences could be one warning then a timed suspension, or a permanent suspension

Remember the child is choosing the consequence with their behavior. Too many people rescue children. Rescuing children from situations they create only sets them up for failure. It is better to teach a child now that they are in control of the consequences. They need to choose appropriate actions.

## **MORE TO THE STORY**

As a leader, you'll run into many different types of children. It is important to take every opportunity to expand your knowledge as well as your group's knowledge. Help the children in your group realize that there is always more to the story. I tell the kids a story about a boy who came to every session in tears. Other children called him a crybaby and a wimp. They never ever asked him why he was crying. In the last session someone asked him why he was crying. He told everyone that his mom had cancer and was worried about her. The kids understood the rest of the story. It is easy to make assumptions about people. It's good to understand that there is always more to a person's story.

**SQUARE PEG IN A ROUND HOLE** One behaviour modification technique does not work with all children. A stern tone and a serious look may work on some children, however, with others, it will set them off and create a flight or fight scenario. For example, the worst thing you could do with a reactive child is to yell. You will receive reactive behaviour. With a child like this, you may want to master the art of negotiation. **RELATIONSHIPS** The best way of dealing with all children is to get to know the child and build a relationship. Show the child you care and are interested in their lives. Knowing the child's family life and parameters around their behavior will help you steer them through their challenging moments. If the child likes you they are more likely to listen and change their behaviour. The - "I'm an adult and you are a child. You have to listen," phrase won't get you very far. **REAL-LIFE EXAMPLES** Here are examples of real children with behavioural issues. Each child is dealt with differently. **EXAMPLE ONE:** Dane is a young man assessed with attention deficit disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, anxiety, and depression. If you tell Dane he has to do something he will dig his heels in and give you a solid, No. What Dane needed was a safe place to go when he felt he was escalating, and a go-to person for support. He also needed to feel he had a purpose and was liked

I gave Dane a few "helper jobs," to help him fulfill his need for purpose and made an effort to make sure he felt cared for. This helped Dane navigate through a week of camp and be successful. We all, as humans have basic needs

# GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

Some children have a heightened need in a specific area due to family issues, self-esteem, and confidence. Build relationships with children. Get to know their needs. This relationship will go a long way to steering the child toward success.

I have worked in many classrooms and what I have noticed is how some teachers believe they can apply the same behavior management approach to every child.

It may sound like a good idea to treat all children the same, but in reality children are not the same and require different understanding, compassion and behavior management techniques.

For Example - I was working with a grade four student who was diagnosed with ODD (Oppositional Defiant Disorder). The teacher insisted on treating him the same as the other students. There were no accommodations made for this young man. Her method of dealing with him created explosive reactions. He was very intelligent, however struggled with reading and spelling. He as given a task that he felt was too much. It overwhelmed him. It could have been broken down into smaller sections over a longer period of time, however the teacher expected it to be done in the same amount of time allotted for the other students. He ended up going into a rage. The classroom was evacuated. This is one example of how one approach doesn't work for all students. The teacher could have avoided the blow up by adjusting her expectations to meet this student's needs. The "My way or the highway" method doesn't work.

**PERCEPTIONS OF TOO MUCH ATTENTION** - There is a balance between giving a child the attention they need and the perception that you are favouring that child over others. It is important to be aware that this perception may occur. The attention you would be giving Dane would be no different than what a child would receive in a school setting who requires an independent program plan. The difference is that camp is not school and perceptions are different. If you become aware that this perception is occurring have a discussion with your group. Tell them that all children are important, but at times some kids require additional attention because of their needs. You may not know someone's entire story and the reasons why they need extra attention. Some children may need a little extra attention at times to help them. Having an open discussion with your group will eliminate misunderstanding and negative perceptions.

**EXAMPLE TWO:** Kyle is a young man adopted from Russia. It is suspected that he was emotionally and physically abused as an infant and toddler. This has led to a child who is impulsive, who has an attachment disorder, and displays a variety of socially inappropriate behaviour. Applying the "my way or the highway" approach does not work with Kyle. He sometimes needed to be away from his camp group. He needed guidance in knowing what behaviours are socially appropriate and needed acceptance for who he is at this time. Kyle is always in the sightline of his camp counsellor and often plays by himself. He engages when he is ready. Forcing Kyle to join the group only creates intense anxiety for him. Having knowledge of Kyle's background helps you get him to where he needs to be. **GET TO KNOW YOUR CHILDREN** It is possible to get to know the kids who attend your groups. First, get to know their names, then their interests followed by their quirks. When you have a large group it is often not possible to get to know all the kids, but make the effort to get to know as many as you can.

**Building relationships goes a long way!**

# GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

**"Challenging children can offer the biggest rewards. Be patient, listen, build trust, and a strong relationship."**

EXAMPLE THREE: Phoenix is a boy who is sent home from school every second day for inappropriate behaviour. He is considered to be a child with an extreme case of ADHD. He is impulsive and full of energy. It is very difficult for Phoenix to sit still. He is constantly on the move. He is also autistic. So, picking up social cues from his peers is not his forte. He takes medication to regulate his behaviour, however, he still has difficulty interacting with his peers. Children his age don't get him. Children like Phoenix have poor self-esteem and lack confidence because of the negative feedback they receive from peers and educators who don't take the time to understand him. These kids also take time before they trust adults. Building trust and a solid relationship will help you lead kids like Phoenix to success. While he was at camp we gave him a few special jobs and were intentional about acknowledging him, listening to him, and caring for him. Phoenix got through the entire week of camp without a major incident. His parents were surprised that they hadn't received a phone call to come and get him.

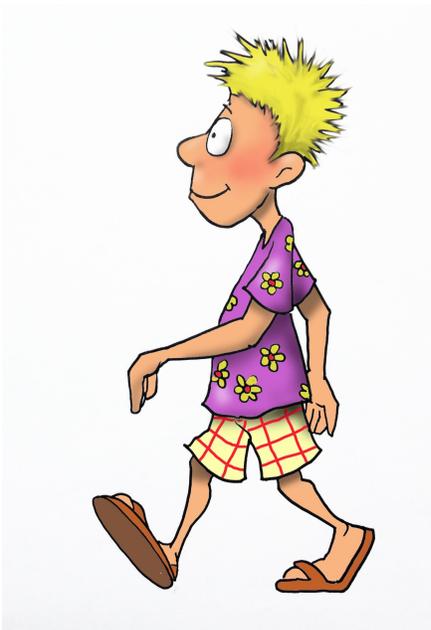
EXAMPLE FOUR: Cole was a very intelligent nine-year-old boy. He also has a temper. He could destroy a classroom in a matter of minutes. Cole also enjoyed playing soccer. What worked with Cole was to play soccer in the stairwell for twenty minutes with the condition that he would finish his work after soccer. Cole would play soccer and complete his work. The educators that worked with Cole felt it was more important to have Cole in the classroom and not to play soccer. All this accomplished was from the classroom to be evacuated and no one completed their work. It is important to decide what's important. Should you make a child conform to a norm that doesn't work for them, or should their program work so it works for them and benefits the majority? I think the answer is obvious. EXAMPLE FIVE: Bobby was a young man who was a casualty in a brutal divorce. He was also a boy with extreme ADHD. He was intense. When I first met Bobby he punched me in the stomach, told me to "f" off, and asked me what I was going to do about it? Everything he did was for the status he received from his peers. He wanted to be known as the bad kid. He was really looking for a sense of belonging, acceptance, and love that he didn't receive from his family. I built a good relationship with Bobby and asked him to help me at one of my Kids 4 Kids Programs. The kids loved him. He was playful, helpful, and surprisingly gentle. Most importantly he was modeling good leadership behaviour. Getting to know Bobby and his needs helps me fulfill them by filling them with positive opportunities. KNOWLEDGE IS KEY You will meet many types of children who come from different social systems that can affect their behaviour. They may also have specific challenges they are dealing with: ADHD, anxiety, depression, self-regulation, autism etc. Just remember that there is always more to the story. Familiarize yourself with the child's home life, cultural norms, personal challenges, likes and dislikes. This will help you provide the best care, the best programming for this child.



# GROUP MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES

**AVOID LABELLING CHILDREN** - We are quick to attach labels to children, which are limiting. Labels like jock, artsy, hyper, mischievous, bad, quirky, strange, impulsive, sensitive, angry; the list is endless. Aren't we all some of these labels some of the time? It is argued that labels help educators get services for certain students. This can be true, however, we need to be careful with these labels as they often place children in boxes with solid, impenetrable boundaries that are hard to break free of. We label a child as a bully and interpret all their behaviour under the light of being a bully. We react to their every move. When I was in Scotland I heard from numerous people how they felt kids with ADHD were destined to be drug users and in jail. If a child was aware of this prophecy they may believe it, and if it is believed they may become it.

We are all more than one label. We have a variety of combinations of interests, likes and dislikes, idiosyncratic behaviours, quirks and attitudes. We need to stop limiting people with limiting labels.



**REDEMPTION** We all live lives of bad decisions and regrets. We make choices in life that are sometimes the wrong choice, however, they should be opportunities to learn, and grow from. We should have the opportunity to change our choices, learn from our choices, and be forgiven for our choices. We are all in the same boat. People tend to define a person by their mistakes and not permit them from opportunities to change and better themselves. They do this to balance the feelings they have toward themselves around their mistakes. It makes their poor choices more forgivable. This happens with bullies. We label a child as the bad kid or as the bully. When they try to change they are confronted by people who don't forgive nor do they forget. They condemn the person to a life of being a bully. People have the ability to change and learn from their mistakes. Give them the opportunity to grow as you would appreciate the same opportunity.

**BECOME THE BEST EXAMPLE YOU CAN BE** We are all broken. As much as we try to be good role models and good people, we can fail. We hold on to the phrases - "Practice what you preach" and "Walk your talk." but as hard as we try, we fall short. So, how can we teach children integrity when we often fall short of being integral? Having integrity doesn't mean that you need to be perfect. It does mean that you are intentionally trying to match your words with your actions, with the realization that you are bound to fail at times. The difference is that when people with integrity fail, they admit their mistakes, learn from their mistakes and get back on the road of modelling integrity. Learn, grow, and teach from your mistakes. When you are teaching children don't be afraid of showing your weaknesses and mistakes. It shows you are human.

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## GAMES THAT TEACH LEADERSHIP

The following are games used in the Kids 4 Kids Program to teach leadership concepts. These games don't require a lot of set up. They are suitable for all ages. All games can be modified to suit the age of the children in your group. Create a leadership program that is fun, educational and inspires leadership in children.

## COOPERATIVE GAMES

### Medic

The game has the same rules as Kings Court except each team must pick a doctor. The doctor has the power to get a "hit player" up and back into the game by touching them. The players who are hit by the ball by the other team do not go to jail, rather they must sit down where they got hit and must wait for the doctor to touch them. The team must also try to protect their doctor because if the doctor gets hit they must sit down and there are only two ways for the doctor to get back in the game. (1) The doctor must get the ball and hit an opposing player from a sitting position. (2) one of the doctor's teammates leaves the doctor touching the ball and then takes it back to hit an opposing player for the doctor.



### The Great Wall of China

This game is similar to British Bulldog or Octopus. One player stands in the middle of the gym and is the caller. The rest of the players are at one wall. When the caller yells "GREAT WALL," the rest of the players yell "OF CHINA." Players must run from one side of the gym to the other without getting touched by the caller. If they get touched they must form a line in the middle of the gym. Once touched you can not move your feet. If players who are on the middle line touch a player that player must stand on the middle line. You are building the Great Wall of China. Each time a player gets caught the wall gets bigger and the game becomes more challenging.

### Cops and Robbers

Divide into two teams but make sure there are more "robbers" than "cops." The "robbers" must follow the colored lines in the gym, where the Cops must follow the black and white lines. Set up a predetermined area to serve as the jail. The object is for the "cops" to capture the "robbers" by tagging them. If a "robber" is tagged, the "cop" escorts the "robber" to jail. Another "robber" may free a captured "robber" by tagging them. Set a time limit. If there are more "cops" than "robbers" at the end of the game the "cops" win, if not, the "robbers" win! Note: you can set up the boundaries differently depending on your space).

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## Fireman's Pull Challenge

Players sit against a wall with their legs pointing toward the middle of the gym. The fire person stands in the middle of the gym. On the word "go" the fire person races over to the wall and grabs a player's legs and pulls them to the middle of the gym. When that player makes it to the middle of the gym they can get up and run over to the wall to pull another player. This continues until all players are pulled over to the middle of the gym and sitting down. You can encourage players to pull more than one person or have the player being pulled help by using their hands to push them along. This is a timed activity.

## All Aboard Challenge

You show your team a blank piece of paper. The challenge is to get everyone on the paper following the guidelines. You tell the children that the only rule is that you must either put your foot on the paper or on someone else's foot. The trick is to form a human chain, with one foot on the paper and the rest of the feet on another player's foot. If your team tries to get everyone on the paper it will most likely fail.

## Frogs and Flies

This is a passive game. Form a sitting down circle. Everyone closes their eyes. One or more players are chosen to be frogs. Everyone else is a fly. The frog attempts to kill the flies by sticking out their tongue without being seen by the group. The group is trying to figure out who the frog is before they get killed. If a player figures it out they must keep it a secret until the game lead asks the group who the frog is.

## Pinball

The object of this game is to knock the opposing team's pins down. You can use orange pylons or wooden pins. Form two teams. Each team sets up four to six pylons/pins behind their team. Teams can have one guard per pin. Each team stays on their side of the gym and does not cross the middle line. Teams try to knock the opposing team's pins with dodgeballs. Teams can also try to hit opposing players below the waist. If a player is hit they must sit down. They can stand up when their team knocks over a pin or if they hit a player. The first team that knocks all the opposing team's pins wins.

## Kings, Queens, and Sea Urchins

Players line up at one end of a designated playing area. All players close their eyes and the group leader will touch two players on the head to signify they are the King and Queen. Once chosen, the King and Queen will remain secret. All players open their eyes and begin the game. All players are to cross the playing area to the other side. In the beginning, no one will know who the King and Queen are. The King and Queen however will be able to tag a player and this will turn them into a Sea Urchin. Once a player becomes a Sea Urchin, they must kneel down in the spot where they were tagged. They can then try to tag other passing players thereby turning them into Sea Urchins as well. This game is suspenseful as initially, no one knows who the King and Queen are. To add even more suspense, you may tag another player to be the Black Knight. They can also then turn players into Sea Urchins. The game is played until there is only one player left who is not the King, Queen, or Black Knight.



# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## Kings Court

Players are grouped into two teams. The object of the game is to hit an opposing player below the waist, eliminating the player and eventually the whole team. When a player is hit they must go to jail (which is behind the opposing team in a marked off area). The only way a player can get out of jail and back to their team is to catch a ball while in jail and then hit an opposing player. Teammates are encouraged to help their fellow players by passing the ball to the players in jail. The first team that eliminates all players on the opposing team wins. If players pass the ball to each other in jail and then one player hits an opposing team player, then ALL the jailed players can be freed at the same time.

## Rescue the King

This game is a variation of Kings Court. Players are divided into two teams. The object of the game is to hit an opponent with a ball beneath the waist. If a player is hit by a ball they must go into the opposing team's jail. There are two ways of getting out of jail: (1) By getting the ball and hitting an opponent or (2) by having a member of your team RESCUE you. The rescuer must run across the opposing team's area waving their hands over their head. Once they have made it into the jail they are safe. When the coast is clear they must drag their teammate across the opponents playing area to safety, which is their playing area. If the player being pulled or the rescuer gets hit they both must go back to jail. (This game promotes working as a team)

## Casualties

This game has the same rules as Kings Court with the difference being where you get hit and the consequence of that. For example, if you get hit in the arm or leg you cannot use your arm or leg afterward. You can throw only with the arm that wasn't hit or hop around on the left that wasn't hit. If however, you get hit in the head, back or chest you are a casualty and must go to the side lines and lie down. A team member can tag you back into the game, however if you get hit again you must sit down in your own team's playing area to become an obstacle. Your team may hide behind you so as not to get hit and you may still participate if a ball rolls to you by throwing it at your opponents. The winner of the game is the team with one player remaining.

## Squat Ball

Squat ball is played exactly the same as Medic except a hit player must sit in a squatting position. To get back in the game they must get the ball and shoot it from their squatting position to hit an opposing player. They can also pass the ball to one of their teammates and have them hit a player for them. Once that occurs the hit player can begin to play the game again.



# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## Circle Dodgeball - Circle Game

To play this game have players form two circles, one inside the other (at least 8-10 feet apart). Players in the inside circle join hands and walk around clockwise. The players in the outside circle roll a ball across the circle to try to hit the legs of a player in the inside circle. When the ball makes contact with a player they must join the outside circle and play continues. Players in the inside circle may jump or step over a rolled ball, but they cannot stop walking, run or drop the hands of the other inside circle players. The game is over when all players from the inside circle have joined the outside circle.

A variation would be to have an inside circle drawn on the ground and an outside circle marked with pylons and the inside circle group would not hold hands but must not "catch up" with the player in front of them.

## Square Dodgeball - Circle Game

Square dodgeball is played exactly the same as circle dodgeball except the playing areas are in the shape of a rectangle or square rather than a circle.

## End Zone

Have all players line up at one end of the playing area. Number off each player and tell them to remember their number. The leader then simultaneously throws the ball to the opposite end of the playing area and calls a number of one of the players. That player runs after the ball, collects the ball, and yells "End Zone"! The remaining players must get into a vertical line behind the player with the ball. The ball is then passed over/under between all the players beginning with the player whose number was called. When the last player in the line received the ball, that player ran to the front of the line and yelled "Touchdown"!

This game can be timed to add a little more excitement and competition by establishing a time to beat. This is a cooperative game. Point out to players that they must all do their part if they want to beat the clock!

## Partner Dodgeball

Players find a partner. The playing area is defined by pylons and the whole area is used. The object of the game is to get a ball and try to hit another player making sure that the player and their partner are not hit. If a player is hit they must sit down and wait for their partner to save them. There are two ways for a player to get back in the game: (1) if they catch the ball and from their sitting down position hit another player on the opposing team. (2) If their partner gets the ball, allows their partner to touch the ball, and then hits another player for their partner.

At any time the group leader may blow a whistle to indicate the end of the current game. Those players standing with their partners are the winners. This is a great game to teach children the benefits of working as a team and being cooperative.

There have been schools that have "outlawed" games of Dodgeball. Children love this game or any form of it. As long as you have definitive rules regarding hitting players below the waist and you use soft gator skin balls, there should not be a problem. There are inherent risks with all games. The joy that children experience with dodgeball outweighs the risk, which is minimal. I have used Dodgeball to teach many leadership concepts. Enjoy the game!

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## Octopus

Players are asked to stand at one end of the playing area. One player is chosen as the "Octopus" and stands in the middle of the playing area. When the "Octopus" yells "OCTO", the players yell "PUS". Players then run and attempt to cross the playing area to the other side without being tagged by the Octopus. If a player is tagged, they must stand at the spot where they were tagged as they become "Seaweed". The player who has been turned to seaweed cannot move their feet, but may move all other parts of their body. As the game progresses, both the Octopus and the Seaweed can turn other players into seaweed.

Eventually the game becomes extremely challenging as there will be more pieces of "Seaweed" which will make it more difficult to get from one end of the playing area to the other. The last player to make it through the seaweed and past the octopus without being touched wins.

## Spiders and Flies

This game is similar to Octopus. Players are divided into two teams. Each team stands at one end of the playing area. The players at either end of the playing area are the Flies. A spider is chosen and stands in the middle of the playing area (mark a centre line with pylons). The object of the game is for the Flies to get to the other end of the playing area without being tagged by the Spider. If a Fly is tagged, they become a Spider. The Spiders must not leave the middle of the playing area. The winner of the game is the last fly to make it from one end of the playing area to the other. This game is a little more challenging than Octopus, as players are running toward each other, trying to avoid the spiders at the same time. This can lead to confusion and a lot of fun!

## European Pinball

Two teams are formed. Each team has one pin, a guard, and a goalie's crease that encircles the pin. The object of the game is to get points by knocking the opposing teams pin down. The rules to remember when the ball is in play: When you have the ball you can hold it for three seconds and take three steps but then you must pass it to a fellow player or shoot it. There is an invisible box around the player with the ball that protects them from having the ball knocked out of their hands. An opposing player may block a shot or a pass, but cannot knock the ball from another player's hands. If an opposing player steps into the goalies crease the shot does not count and the goal is not counted. The play starts again with a jump ball at the centre of the playing area. The game continues until time is up. The time is determined by the leader. The winner is the team with the most points. This is a high energy game that encourages teamwork and listening skills.

## Crazy Ball

This is a variation of European Pinball except that to receive points you must hit the basketball board on the opposing player's side to get points. 1 point for a hit backboard, 2 points for a basket. There are no pins.



# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## Bench Ball

To prepare the game area you must define a playing area and place two benches at either end, with the seat of the bench facing the middle of the playing area. Divide players into two teams. Have the players sit behind the bench and number off the players. Place a soccer ball in the middle of the playing area. The group leader will call a number and the players with that number will get up and run around the outside of the playing area all the way around to their start point, jump over their bench and race to the middle to kick the soccer ball towards their opponent's bench. If the bench is hit a point is scored for the team. If the ball goes over the bench or past the bench on the sides, no points are awarded. However, if the ball goes over the bench and a player catches it they may throw it to their own player in the middle of the playing area to see if they can score against the other team. If they are able to pass the ball, it is kicked, and hits the opposing team's bench, the player gets the points. Play continues until the group leader blows the whistle. To add a challenge, the group leader may call more than one number at a time.

## Headbands - Circle Game

Divide teams in groups of three. One player in each group wears a headband (any headband will work) with a piece of paper with something written on it that is unknown to the wearer. The other two team members give hints to the player with the headband to try to get them to guess what is written on their paper. The players giving hints can use non-verbal clues, speaking in the jargon of the topic, silent acting, etc. The game ends when one of the headband wearers are able to guess what is on their paper. Timing the event can add to the excitement, or points can be given for the team finishing first. Allow each team player to have at least one turn at wearing the headband and guessing.

## Indoor Version of Capture the Flag

The players are divided into two teams. Each team stands on the line designated by the group leader. When the game begins players must move off their line, moving into enemy territory and attempting to capture the opposing team's flag. If the flag is captured it must be brought back to the captors side in order to win the game. If a player is captured they must go to the opposing teams jail. The captured player is freed when a player from their team enters the jail and tags them. Encourage the teams to think of strategies which will help them capture the flag. In the inside version of the game there is no middle ground that is a safety zone.

## Shark Attack

The leader will at some point call out "shark attack". At that time the fish must get to an island before being tagged by one of the sharks. To be safe on an island, the fish must have both feet on an island with no other part of their bodies touching the floor/ocean. If a player is tagged they become a shark but they must wait in the middle of the playing area until the next shark attack. Other players can help one another to stay on an island, but they cannot push/shove another fish off the island. The consequence of pushing/shoving another fish off an island is to be disqualified and go to the "mainland" which is an area outside the playing area.

After each shark attack the group leader will remove one of the islands and the game continues. The game ends when there are no fish left, or when one fish is left standing in the final island. If there are no fish left, the sharks are victorious, however if there is a fish left, the sharks are defeated!

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

As the game progresses it becomes increasingly challenging as there are more sharks and less islands.

## Snatch the Bacon

Begin by setting up the playing space by placing islands (newspapers/cloths/or similar) on the floor at various intervals around the playing area. Players ("Fish") are to stand in a circle around the outside of the islands. Two players will be named as "sharks" and asked to stand in the middle of the playing area. The leader will ask the "fish" to move in a counterclockwise or clockwise motion around the playing area but still outside the islands.

Divide all players into two teams and number each player. Place a baton or bean bag in the center equal distance from each team in the center of the playing area. The line of players becomes the team's goal line. Placing teams further apart makes it more challenging! The group leader then calls a number and the

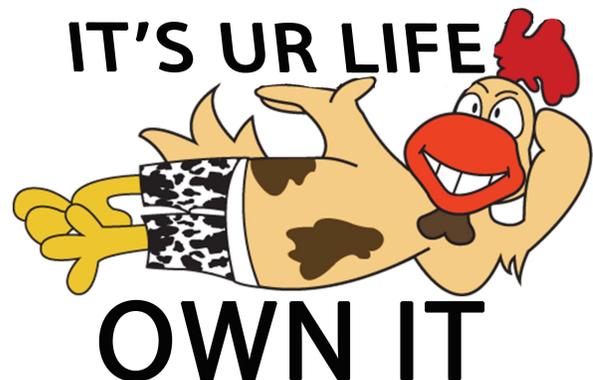
members of each team with the corresponding number called runs out and tries to get the baton/bean bag. The member of the other team that gets the baton/bean bag and crosses their goal line without getting tagged by the other player wins a point for their team. If a player is tagged, the opposing team gets a point. The game ends when all players' numbers have been called at least once.

## Flying Dutchman

All players form a circle and join hands facing toward the center of the circle. Two players are chosen to be "runners". They go to the outside of the circle and join hands. The "runners" run around the outside of the circle with their hands clasped at all times. While running, the inside runner tags the joined hands of two circle players. The two tagged players, retaining their hand clasp, start around the circle in the opposite direction. Both sets of partners run to reach the vacant place in the circle. The winning set is the team that arrives there first. The losing team becomes the new tagging duo and the game continues until the group leader calls time.

## Flinch (Shoot, Don't Shoot)

Players are asked to form a circle with their arms folded across their chest or placed behind their backs. A player stands in the middle of the circle and will either shoot the ball, where the players are expected to catch it, or fake shoot it expecting that the players do nothing. If the shooter fakes shooting the ball and the player flinches they are out, if they don't flinch they are safe. If the person in the middle throws the ball, if the person catches it they are safe but if they miss it they are out. The game continues until there is just one player remaining.



# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## Spud

One player is chosen to begin the game in the centre, and given a ball. All other players are each given a number (1, 2, 3...). Everyone gathers in a circle around the player with the ball. The centre player shoots the ball up in the air and calls a player's number at the same time. The player whose number has been called must retrieve the ball and once they have the ball, they yell SPUD. However, when the centre player calls a player's number all the other players must scatter away from the centre player. Once SPUD has been called, all players must stop immediately. The player who has retrieved the ball can now take three giant steps and try to hit another player below the waist with the ball. The players can try to avoid being hit by moving their bodies, but not their feet! If a player is hit, they get an S for SPUD and they then become the centre thrower. Everyone immediately gathers again in a circle around the thrower and the game is repeated. Once a player has S, P, U, D then the game ends. It is important that players immediately gather around the ball thrower to keep up the momentum of the game.

## Who's the Leader?

The group gets into a sitting down circle. One player is chosen as the guesser and is asked to leave the circle and turn around so they cannot see the group. The group leader will choose one player to be the "secret leader". The secret leader must strike a pose and all the other players must replicate it. The guesser is then asked to come back to the group and has three guesses to determine who the secret leader is.

## Sleeper

Everyone in the group is asked to close their eyes. The group leader will then secretly choose a "Sleeper" by touching them on the head. The group is then asked to open their eyes and begin to shake each other's hands. If they happen to shake the Sleeper's hand, the Sleeper will squeeze their hand. That player may then shake two other players' hands normally before falling down asleep. Once the players have had several minutes to play the game but before too many players have fallen asleep, the group leader calls guess time. The remaining players may now guess who they think the Sleeper is. If they guess right the player guessing wins the game. If the player guessing is wrong, they instantly fall asleep. The game ends with everyone has fallen asleep and the Sleeper is the last player, or a player guesses correctly who the Sleeper is.

A variation of this game is called Murder Wink however many people cannot wink and blinks can be confused with winks!

## Junk Yard

Players form a circle and each player is given the name of a car. Three cars are usually chosen (BMW, Chevy, Dodge, etc.) There will be a caller standing in the middle of the circle which is the junkyard. The caller will call out the name of one of the cars. Everyone with that car name runs counter-clockwise around the circle trying not to be the last player sitting back into their original spot. The last player that is sitting back in their original spot changes places with the caller in the junkyard and the caller takes the space of that player.

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## Drop the Handkerchief

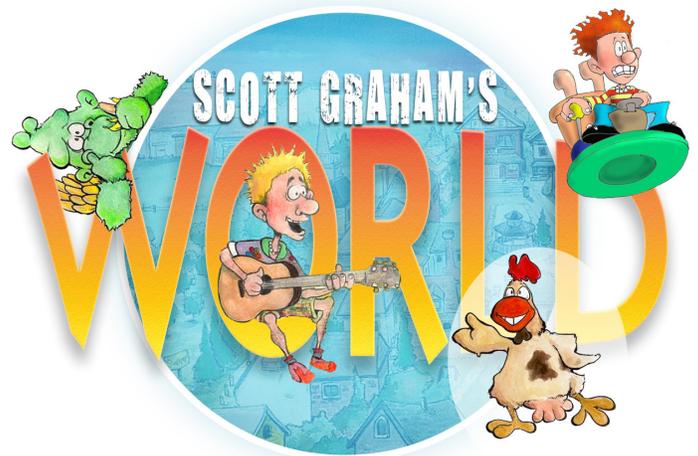
Players form a sitting down circle with at least an arms-length between each player. One player is chosen to be the dropper of the handkerchief and stands in the middle of the circle holding onto the handkerchief. The group leader will say "go" to start the game and the dropper begins walking around the outside of the circle preparing to drop the handkerchief in front of one of the circle players. The dropper determines when to drop the handkerchief and may even pretend to do so. When the drop is finally made the dropper and the player chosen by the handkerchief run in opposite directions to get back to the spot vacated by the running player. The game continues until the game leader calls time.

## Grave Diggers

This is a great game to calm your group down. Everyone lies down on the floor except for the Gravedigger. The Gravedigger must come up to a player and attempt to make them laugh or move. The Gravedigger is not allowed to touch any player. They must perform their attempts by voice or action. If a player laughs or moves then they too become a Gravedigger. The last player lying on the floor is the winner. For an added challenge, the players on the floor cannot close their eyes!

## 7 UP

Seven members of the group are chosen to be "IT." All other players sit down in a circle and close their eyes and keep them shut. When the group leader says "go" the seven players who are "IT" go around the circle and touch ONE player each. Once a circle player has been touched, they must raise their hand but keep their eyes shut. When all seven IT players have touched their one player there should be seven circle players with their hands up. When the group leader tells the circle players to open their eyes, the players can begin to guess who of the group of seven touched them. If they are correct, they switch places with the member from the group of seven and that player joins the circle players. If they are wrong, they remain a part of the circle group. For every time a group of seven players does not get a guess that is correct, they get a point. When any group of seven players gets 7 points they choose one player from the circle group to switch and they sit down and the chosen player joins the group of seven.



# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## Sleeping Pirate

The group gets into a circle and sits down. A player is chosen as the sleeping pirate. They sit in the middle of the circle that the remaining players have made and are then blindfolded. A treasure (keys) is placed in front of the sleeping pirate. A circle player is then pointed at by the group leader. That player's job is to grab the keys and get them back to their original spot without getting pointed at by the sleeping pirate. The sleeping pirate has three chances to point at the approaching thief. If the thief gets caught, they switch places with the sleeping pirate. The players are encouraged to come up with creative ways to help them get the treasure – i.e. take off their shoes, make distracting noise, etc. The other players sitting in the circle however must not make any noise that will distract the sleeping pirate. Only the player trying to get the treasure can make noise.

## The Battle of Kingdoms

This game is similar to Doctor Dodgeball. The group is divided into two teams. Each team must choose a King and a Queen. This must be done in secrecy. The King and Queen have the power to touch a player who has been hit with the ball to bring them back to life in the game. If a King or Queen gets hit the team must either yell "The King is Dead" or "The Queen is Dead" depending on which one got hit. If both the King and Queen are hit then the game turns into an elimination game. The first team to get all of the opposing team players hit wins the game. Once a player is hit, they move to the side of the playing area. They may help their teammates by throwing balls to them. To add more fun have the two teams choose names of countries for their team names. If you have a very large group you may divide into smaller groups and have a round-robin tournament and then a final game of the winners. To make this even more challenging, divide your playing area into four. This is a fast-paced game!

## Coloured Eggs (A version of British Bulldog)

Divide players into two teams. The two teams face each other in a line, side by side holding hands. The distance between each team should be about 15 feet. Before the game begins the two teams huddle together and each player chooses the name of a colour. That player will then remain that colour for the rest of the game. One player from each team is chosen as their team's leader and shouts towards the opposing team "Knock, Knock, Who's There?" The other team responds "Coloured Eggs." The first team then replies, "What's the colour?" The other team's leader will then call out a colour – i.e. pink. If any of the opposing team has pink as their colour, they unclasp their hands and run as hard as they can towards the other team to try to break through the opposing team's line. If the player manages to break through the line that player chooses one of the opposing team's players to join their team. If the player does not manage to break through then they become part of the opposing team's line.

## Alligator Island

Players are divided into groups of 8-12. An imaginary island of approximately 18 inches in diameter is set for each group which they circle around. Each player puts their right foot into the center of the "island" with all their toes touching. Due to the alligator-infested waters, players try to get their left foot off the floor and out of the water. Players need to help one another to keep their left foot out of the water (off the floor). Ask players to count out the seconds that they are able to have all players' feet out of the water. The longest time wins. To add an additional challenge, have one or two players act as "alligators" by trying to tag a player's foot that is in the water. Count how many tags the alligator receives and how many seconds the group can manage to hold their feet out of the water.

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## The Royal Race

This game needs to be played in an area where there are at least two coloured lines on the floor. At one end, team one stands in a line side by side and are named the Black Knights. These players must run on the black lines. At the other end of the playing area, the other team stands in a line side by side and are named the Royal Family. They must run on the coloured lines. When the group leader says "go" the Knights and the Royal Family players begin running along their appropriate coloured lines. The object is to get your whole team to the other side of the playing area battling through the areas that criss-cross with the first team with all their players across winning the game. You may include statements such as "bonus points for the first team sitting down with their finger on their nose." Statements such as these will encourage listening and having the teams work together to increase speed and to remind their teammates to fulfill the special instructions. Encourage players to think of how they can increase their speed or help each other.

## Find the Thang

All players form a tight circle. One player is chosen as the Finder and stands in the middle of the circle with their eyes closed. All other players in the circle put their hands behind their backs. The group leader will then place a ball or scarf in a circle player's hand. The circle players then pass the ball or scarf to the player on their right and it is passed until the group leader says "Find the Thang". At that point, the Finder in the center of the circle opens their eyes and the circle players stop passing the ball or scarf. The Finder then tries to guess where the ball or scarf is. When the Finder locates which player has the ball or scarf, they will exchange places with that player. The object is to be the player who has the least number of guesses needed to find the ball or scarf.

## Big Base

All players are split into two teams. An area is designated at one end of the playing area as Home Base and at the other end of the playing area as Big Base. A line of pylons is set up in a line from the home base to the big base and this will become the base running path. One team will line up at Home Base and the other team will be in the field which is all of the area on the other side of the pylon base path. One player from the Home Base team becomes the batter. The Batter takes a ball and throws it into a corner on the field side. The batter and one other player from the Home Base team must then run as fast as they can to the Big Base and back to Home Base. There must always be two runners from the Home Base team running at the same time. If one of the players is hit then another Home Base player must take their place and keep running back and forth between Home Base and Big Base. The fielders retrieve the ball and their goal is to tag the Home Base runners out by hitting them with the ball below the waist. If a Home Base player is hit they return to the end of their team line and wait until their turn comes up again. If they are hit the Fielders get a point. Each time a complete run from Home Base to Big Base and back again, the Home Base team is done they get a point.

Fielders can pass the ball to each other but may only take one step once they have caught the ball. If they take more than one step, travelling is called and they must stop and get rid of the ball. However, if they travel and have thrown the ball at an opposing player and hit them, then the hit does not count. The group leader will keep an eye on the rules of the game. Once the Home Base team has gone through their team twice the groups change places.

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## Honey If You Love Me, Won't You Smile?

All players form a circle. One player is chosen as the Lovelorn Stranger and they stand in the middle of the circle. The Lovelorn Stranger then picks one of the circle players to join them in the center of the circle. Face to face the Lovelorn Stranger asks the circle player this question – “Honey, if you love me, won't you please, please smile?”. The circle player must respond with – “Honey, I love you; but I just can't smile.” This player cannot smile. If the player smiles, they change places and become the Lovelorn Stranger and the other player takes their spot in the circle. If, however, the circle player does not smile, the Lovelorn Stranger must choose another circle player. Play continues until the group leader says time. The whole object is for the Lovelorn Stranger to get the circle player to laugh. They may use a variety of tricks however they cannot touch the other player.

There are two variations to this game – Dirty Diapers and Sausage. A circle player is asked to repeat Dirty Diapers or Sausage after everything the center player says. If they laugh the center player wins and takes the other players' spot in the circle.

## The Sculptor

Divide players into groups of three. One player is the Artist, one the Model, and one the Clay. The Artist is blindfolded. The model is asked to strike a pose. The Artist is then asked to mold/pose the Clay exactly like the Model. The Model must hold the pose for the whole game so make it something they can do. Each group of three gets a 6-foot diameter and must stay within that area. The group leader will ensure that each group remains within their boundary. You can use all members of your group to be split into

threes, or use only some groups of three and have the rest of your group be the judges and then switch them up. The group leader will call time when appropriate. Each Artist should have about 2-3 minutes to work on their Clay.

## Guess The Fib

Divide the group into 3-4 smaller groups. Once players have been divided each group finds an open space where all members can form a comfortable circle. Each person in the group has a turn to make three statements about themselves. Two of the statements MUST be true and ONE must be false (the closer the false statement is to something true the harder it will be for the others to guess). Once your statements have been stated, the other members of the group must talk together and try to decide which statement is false. This game encourages cooperation, listening, and communication.

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## Magic Squeeze

Have all players form a circle. Make sure the circle is as wide as possible but each player must be able to hold hands with the players beside them. One player is chosen to be the Magician and stands in the center of the circle with their eyes closed. One of the circle players is chosen as the Lead Rabbit and once that is done the Magician may open their eyes. When the Lead Rabbit decides to begin, they squeeze the hand of a player on either side of them and that player sends it on to the next player. When the squeeze gets back to the Lead Rabbit they can keep the same direction going to change directions. The Magician must locate where the squeeze is at any player and point to them but they must do so before the player has sent the squeeze on. If the Magician guesses correctly they switch with the player called out. For bonus points, the Magician can also try to guess who the Lead Rabbit was. The game is repeated until the group leader calls time.

## Rattlesnake

Two players from the group are chosen, one as the "Rattlesnake" and one as the "Game Warden". The Game Warden is blind-folded. The remaining players form a large circle around the Rattlesnake and the Game Warden. Both the Game Warden and the Rattlesnake are allowed three giant steps from the center of the circle. The object is for the Game Warden to catch the Rattlesnake by asking the question, "Rattlesnake, where are you?" The Rattlesnake must reply by saying, "I'm over here Game Warden!" Between each turn both the Game Warden and the Rattlesnake take a step (3 max). The game ends when the Game Warden catches the Rattlesnake or time is called. If all players are to get a turn then a time limit may be placed on the game time (i.e. 2 minutes)

## Voice Recognition

One player is chosen to be blindfolded. The remaining players form a circle. The blind-folded player is led to the centre of the circle. The group leader chooses one player from the circle and whispers a word or phrase to that player. The chosen player must then repeat the word or phrase and the blind-folded player must locate and identify the player speaking the word or phrase. Try to come up with a fun word or phrase

and encourage players to raise or lower the pitch of their voice to help disguise who they are. The game ends when the blind-folded player guesses correctly. To add a twist, each round can be timed as to how long it takes the blind-folded player to identify the other player, and using the fastest time as the marker for the winner.

## Line 'Em Up

Divide players into groups of 6-10 with plenty of space to allow for lots of room between players. Each group's task is to rearrange themselves in the order the game leader calls out. For example alphabetical order by first name A to Z, or tallest to shortest, darkest hair to lightest hair, etc. Each group hurries to rearrange themselves so players are all standing in a row in whatever order the caller has asked for.

Other examples: birthday months, age, number of brothers or sisters, how long they have lived in their current house, length of hair, bedtime hour, time up in the morning, shoe size, shirt colour lightest to darkest, etc.

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

This is a great ice breaker game and encourages teamwork and cooperation.

## The "Knotical Dilemma"

Divide players into uneven numbered groups of one or more (dependent on the number of players in total). Two players from each group are chosen as the "ends of the rope". With the exception of the "ends of the rope," all other players must join hands with another player in their group, but each player's hand **MUST** be joined with a different player and not a player standing directly beside them. When all players have joined hands, one "end of the rope" will have their right hand free and the other "end of the rope" will have their left hand free.

The object is to try to untangle the human knot without letting go of any player's hand. This is a cooperative game that establishes skills in working together to solve a collective problem.

## Beachball Dodge

Divide players into two equal teams. Mark a centerline between the two teams. Teams may **NOT** cross the centerline. The game leader begins by tossing a beach ball into the air, down the centerline. Players from either team may volley the ball to the opposite side, and this begins the game. The object is to keep the ball from hitting the ground. If the ball hits the ground, whatever side it hits on, that team loses a point and the other team gains a point. Players are allowed to catch the ball but must put it right back into play by volleying it to another of their teammates, or to the other side of the centerline to the other team, trying to get the ball to hit the ground on the opposite side. The game leader will keep score and will also time the game, (time limits are set ahead of the game), and at the end of the time allotted the team with the most points wins.

## Mingle

This game tests your group to see if they are thinking like true leaders. When the game leader calls out a number, the group must coordinate itself into a group with that number. If the leader calls out six – the players must get into groups of six. This game teaches your group the importance of communicating. If everyone talks at once it will be hard to coordinate the activity. Once you have made a few calls, call out a number that is two less than the total number of players. See what happens. Hopefully, you will have two players who will voluntarily step out of the larger group so that all the groups can be formed. However, you don't want players to force two players out involuntarily. If this happens it is a great opportunity to discuss with your group the importance of working together, communicating, and how to accomplish a goal without hurting others (i.e. a leader would have taken a step away voluntarily to ensure the rest of their team is able to accomplish the goal).

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## Numbers / Head-To-Toe

The leader must know in advance how many players there are so groupings can be made. Players will arrange themselves in groups according to the number given by the leader and how the group should interact – i.e. 5 players, holding hands. The leader will then call out another number and what the group is to accomplish – i.e. 7 players, shoulder to shoulder, etc. To make it easy, start with smaller numbers and easy tasks. As the game goes on make the numbers larger and the tasks harder – i.e. 9 players, head-to-toe. To test leadership skills, call an uneven number versus the number of total players you have where one or two players cannot fit in a group. This will show how the group can process having true leaders either pull out of the group to ensure the group can go forward, or having a player step back and not be included but help other teams accomplish the goal.

## Catch The Dragon's Tail

Two lines are formed with 8-10 players in each line. Everyone puts their arms around the waist of the person in front of them. The last person in each line has a handkerchief in their belt. Each dragon tries to

catch the tail of the other dragon. The lines must not break. A variation of this game is to have each dragon catch the end of its own tail.

## Panther

The game panther is actually a modified version of What Time is it Mr. Wolf? This version meets the needs of an older group of players. One player is chosen to be the Panther and stands at one end of the playing area with their back to the other players, about 5-10 feet from the end of the playing area. All the other players stand against the opposite end of the playing area. The game leader will call out "how many steps Panther" and the Panther will respond with how many steps he wants them to take. Each player will take a normal step forward for the number of steps the Panther has called for (not giant steps, just normal steps). The object of the game is to get past the Panther. If the Panther yells out "I'm Hungry!" and players have NOT passed the Panther, they must run back to the starting point at the opposite end of the playing area from the Panther. The Panther will give chase and if the Panther tags a player(s) they become a Panther as well. If a player makes it past the Panther they get a free pass back to the starting point and will begin to play again. The winner is the last person caught by the Panthers.

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## Pass The Squeeze, Grab The Keys

Divide the players into two equal teams. The players will each need a chair to sit on and an extra chair to be put at one end of each row. The "squeeze starter" may either stand or sit at the end of the rows of players. To begin, the two teams, facing in, holding hands with the person beside them, close their eyes. Their chairs should be touching. A set of keys is placed on each chair at the end of the rows. The "squeeze starter" holds one hand of the first person in each row. It is up to the "squeeze starter" to begin the game by simultaneously squeezing the hands of the first person in each row, thus starting the squeeze. It is then passed down the line. The last person who gets the squeeze grabs the keys from the chair beside them. The first team to get the keys first gets the points. The "squeeze starter" may use 1, 2, or 3 squeezes to keep the teams on their toes!

## Chocolate Pudding Puddles (Messy)

Two players are blindfolded. Cut a hole in a plastic garbage bag to use as a cover for each of the players. When the leader says GO, each player attempts to feed the other chocolate pudding. This activity is just as fun to watch as it is to play. Make sure there is a drop cloth under the players to catch any pudding dropped while playing.

## Find The Marshmallow

Use an aluminum pie plate and place 10-15 mini marshmallows on the bottom, then cover with whipped cream (use from a can). Players are asked to sit in front of their pie plate with their hands behind their backs. When the leader says "go", each player races to pick out as many marshmallows as they can with their teeth. The winner is the player who has the most marshmallows when time is called. If you want additional fun, ask one of the group leaders to participate, but don't let them know that on their plate there are NO marshmallows! This makes it fun

## Wacky Tacky Trivia Show

Divide players into two teams and have them sit in a line. At a distance in front of each line, a bucket is placed upside down on the floor with a stick beside it. The leader will announce a question. A member from each team must race up to the bucket, beat on it, and yell out "The Wacky Tacky Trivia Show" and answer the question. If the question is answered correctly, the team gets a point. If, however, the answer is incorrect, the other team gets a chance to answer the question. This is a great way to teach your group about an interesting concept and have tons of fun.

## Statue Tag

Players scatter around the playing area. The players stand like statues with their arms stretched out in front of them. One player is chosen as IT and one player as the RUNNER. The RUNNER has a ball and runs around, trying not to get touched by IT. If the RUNNER gets touched by IT, they must immediately pass the ball to IT as the roles have now been switched. If the RUNNER passes the ball off to a statue, before being tagged, the RUNNER becomes a statue, and the statue who now has the ball becomes the RUNNER.

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## Vampire Tag

A playing area is set out ahead of time. All players close their eyes. One player will then be chosen as the vampire. The group leader will ask the players to take one step at a time in any direction – keeping eyes closed at all times. When the vampire bumps into another player they squeeze their arm. That player will let out a blood-curdling scream and now also becomes a vampire. However, if two vampires meet, they revert back to being mortals. The group leader will continue asking players to take steps and vampires will continue tagging players until all players are vampires or time is called.

## Elbow Tag

All players divide into groups of two with the exception of two players, one who will be IT and one who will begin as the RUNNER. All the other groups of two link elbows and position themselves around the playing area. The group leader will yell “go”. IT must now chase the RUNNER trying to tag them. The RUNNER must run away from IT but can link arms with any group of two at any time. However, the player in the group of two who did not get their arm linked by the RUNNER, must now break away from the group and become the NEW RUNNER trying to evade IT. The object is for the RUNNERS to change up often in order for the game to continue moving forward as quickly as possible. If IT tags the RUNNER, the tagged RUNNER becomes IT and must count to 10 before continuing. In the meantime, the previous IT may link arms with any group of two, and whoever in the group is not linked becomes the RUNNER.

## Group Pull-Up

The group stands in a circle back to front, back to front. On a signal from the group leader, the group sits on each other's lap. See how long they can keep their position without falling over. The group must all

## Everyone Over

Divide all players into two groups. They are encouraged to work together to get everyone from their group from one side of the playing area to the other – however, they are only allowed to have three feet on the group at any point. The group must come up with a plan on how to get everyone over in the

shortest possible time, only having three feet on the group at any time. This encourages communication, critical thinking, and team building. (three players could hop over; one player could piggyback another player, etc. How will it be done? The trick is thinking outside the box – all players could crawl over without the players having any feet on the ground!) How long will it take to get the group across?

## Operator

All players sit in a circle. The group leader will whisper three words into the ear of the player who is sitting next to them. (two tiny tinkers, big brown bubbles, or achy breaky bark, etc.) The three words will be passed from player to player by whispering them in their ear. If a player does not hear the three words the first time they may say “Operator” and the words will be whispered to them one more time. However, they must then turn to the player on their other side and whisper the three words to them. The object of the game is to be able to pass the three words around the circle without them changing. This game encourages focus, communication, concentration, teamwork, and listening skills.

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## Pulse

All players form a circle and hold hands. The group leader will time the game. One player is chosen to start the pulse. When the group leader says GO the time begins. The pulse starter squeezes the hand of the player to their right. As soon as that player feels the pulse they pass the pulse along to the player on their right. This is repeated until the pulse makes its way back to the starting player and they yell STOP. The group leader will then stop time and record it. The object is to see how quickly the pulse can make it around the group. Each time the starting pulse is given by a different player. Variations are to split the group into smaller groups and compete against each other.

## Minute to Win It Games

Suck it up – need straws, smarties, paper plates – put 25 Smarties on a paper plate and place an empty paper plate directly beside it. Each player needs their own Smarties and paper plates so any number of players can play at one time. The goal is to transfer all your Smarties from the filled plate over to the other plate using a straw to suck up each Smartie and holding it to transfer to the other plate. The winner is the first to transfer all their Smarties in 60 seconds.

Chocolate Unicorn– need two bite brownies, 7 for each player – Players tilt their head back and begin stacking one brownie at a time onto their forehead. The object is to get 7 brownies stacked on their forehead in 60 seconds. The stack must remain on the player's forehead for at least 3 seconds after getting all 7 stacked.

A Bit Dicey – Need large tongue depressors, 5 sets of 5 dice – each player takes a tongue depressor and puts it in their mouth holding onto it with their lips. Taking and placing one die at a time they stack all five dice onto the tongue depressor as they keep it in their mouth. They have 60 seconds to get all 5 dice placed on the tongue depressor and it must be held without falling for at least 3 seconds.

Marshmallow pickup – need two mega bags of miniature marshmallows in a large bowl, 6 sets of chopsticks, 6 smaller bowls/Chinese food takeout containers - Each player gets a small bowl and a set of chopsticks. The goal is to pick up with the chopsticks as many miniature marshmallows as possible and put them into their bowls in 60 seconds. The winner has the most marshmallows.

Face the Cookie – need a bag of peanut free cookies - Each player takes a cookie and places it on their forehead after they have tilted their head back. The object is to get the cookie into their mouth without using anything other than their face muscles to move the cookie in 60 seconds.

Bouncing Pong – need six Big Red Cups for each player, six ping pong balls for each player, played on a flat surface that allows balls to bounce - Set up the six cups in front of each player and give them the six ping pong balls. The objective is to bounce the balls into the cups until there is a ball in each cup in 60 seconds.

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

Scoop It Up – need 2 small bowls for each player, one empty and one with 8 ping pong balls OR cotton balls OR large marshmallows, plus one plastic spoon for each player - Each player puts the handle of the spoon in their mouth and then transfers all the balls from one bowl into the other bowl in 60 seconds. If one drops it must be placed into the first bowl before trying to move it again.

Nutstacker – need tongue depressors, 6 bolts per player, straw for each player. Each player puts a tongue depressor in their mouth and with the straw picks up a bolt through the middle and starts stacking them on their edge until they have stacked all six bolts onto the tongue depressor in 60 seconds. If the bolts drop the player must begin again.

Who Am I - Write the name of a famous person (real or fictitious, a celebrity, superhero, politician, historical figure, etc.) on a sticky note for each player but don't let anyone read them before placing one note on each forehead. Each person has up to 20 yes/no questions to guess who they are. Taboo - Each team sends up one player.

The players each get an identity card with the keyword that needs to be guessed by their team and a list of TABOO words that they are NOT allowed to say/use in their description words that they are using to try to get their team to guess the right word. If the player says a "Taboo" word their team must sit out for the rest of that turn. Nte: You Need to have a set of words with enough of the same cards for the number of teams you have.

# COOPERATIVE GAMES

## AUTHORS MESSAGE

I hope you enjoyed my book of games and group management techniques. This ebook will have many future revisions. I am constantly learning and developing new games and techniques.

Please make sure you access the [scottgrahamspeaker.com](http://scottgrahamspeaker.com) membership page for future podcasts, videos and programming ideas.

