

# Outdoors: The Ultimate Playground



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# Get Ready!

## Let's Begin

Children all over the world have one thing in common, they love to play! For them, play is about having fun! Children enjoy hopping, skipping, jumping, running, bending, balancing, throwing, catching, chasing and hiding. However, play is also a way for them to express themselves, to learn social skills and to work out the stress in their daily lives.



The **benefits of physical activity** go beyond fun. Adopting an active lifestyle at a young age can decrease the chances of developing heart problems, hypertension, osteoporosis, Type 2 diabetes and cancer. Regular physical activity strengthens bones, builds muscle, works the heart and contributes to a healthy body weight and lifestyle.

Playing with peers in our diverse community gives children an opportunity to integrate their racial, ethnic and cultural awareness. Games allow them to practise teamwork and leadership skills through decision making, communication, time management, problem solving, conflict resolution and goal setting. Learning these skills builds a feeling of confidence, which encourages them to engage in new challenges. Mastering these challenges builds self-esteem and provides a foundation of strong **social and life skills** for their future.

**Outdoors: The Ultimate Playground** is a **toolkit** developed by Toronto Public Health in consultation with various community agencies, childcare centres and physical activity experts, and adapted with permission by the Middlesex-London Health Unit. It includes **50 different games for boys and girls between the ages of 6 and 12**. These games were selected to encourage children's participation in physical activity during all **four seasons** of the year. Be creative when using this toolkit! There are no hard and fast rules. Feel free to change or adapt the activities and suggestions in a way that works well for you and the children.



No two children are the same. **Ability Adaptation Guidelines** provide suggestions for changes that can give children with personal challenges an opportunity to participate. Other suggestions may come from parents, friends and the children. Trial and error, with attention to safety, often is the best way to get all children of all abilities involved in interactive fun.

We encourage you to allow children the freedom to change the games if their creativity guides them to do so and safety is not compromised.

Fun! Enjoyment! Curiosity! Excitement! Health Benefits! All can be linked effortlessly. By using this toolkit, children can play freely outside, use their imaginations and develop a life-long love of physical activity!

Users of **Outdoors: The Ultimate Playground** should exercise their own judgement to determine the appropriateness of the games and to identify safety measures that need to be considered before children play the games. The City of Toronto and Toronto Board of Health disclaim any and all liability arising from injuries incurred by participants who use this resource.

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# Get Ready!

## How to Use “Outdoors: The Ultimate Playground” Toolkit

This toolkit is divided into eight colour-coded sections. Three sections provide background materials. Five sections contain games.

### 1. Get Ready!

- Outlines the benefits of physical activity and terms used.
- Games and skills chart lists: what’s needed to play each game and the skills children will develop.
- Most games can be modified to suit different skill levels using the **Ability Adaptation Guidelines**.

### 2. Get Set!

- Lists stuff you’ll need and how you can make it.
- Tips on dressing for the seasons and sun protection.
- Safety.

### GO PLAY! 50 games in five categories

- Each category has a different coloured section. The games are in a grab and run format on plastic cards, colour-coded with the section, easy to take outside and then return to their place.
- Each card contains what’s needed to play the game, number of players, suggested ages, equipment, directions, Skimbols (skill development symbols).
- **Ability Adaptation Guidelines** give suggestions for making changes related to players’ skill levels/ability challenges.

### Get ready! Get set!

Choose a game and go play in the great “Outdoors: The Ultimate Playground”

### 3. Go Play Ball!

### 4. Go Play Group Games!

### 5. Go Play Hopscotch!

### 6. Go Play Rope Games!

### 7. Go Play Tag!

### 8. Get More Info and Add Games!

- Bibliography
- Add more info and games



# Get Ready!

## Glossary of Terms

**Cardiovascular Endurance** – the ability of the heart and lungs to sustain prolonged activity requiring large muscle movement

**Communication** – the exchange of thoughts/messages by verbal/nonverbal means

**Cool Down Activity** – slower paced activity, like walking/stretching done at the end of vigorous activity; it allows the heart rate to slow down

**Developmentally Appropriate Games** – games that are consistent with the level of skill development of the children

**Fair Play** – participating with integrity, respecting others (playmates, opponents) and game rules

**First Aid Principles** – the sequence of events recommended in an emergency situation; check your organization's first aid guidelines

**Flexibility** – the ability to move a person's joints through their full range of motion without discomfort or pain

**Injury** – damage (harm/hurt/wound) to the body by an external force

**Healthy Lifestyles** – behaviour patterns promoting optimal health

**Modifying Task** – changing activities/intensity of a game to change the degree of difficulty for players

**Movement Skills** – the activities that are the foundation of all physical activity and include:

- Locomotion/travelling skills – those used to move the body from one point to another (e.g., walking, running, galloping, jumping, skipping, hopping, climbing)
- Manipulation skills – those which give/receive force to and from objects (e.g., throwing, catching, collecting, kicking, punting, dribbling, volleying, striking)
- Stability skills – those that have the body remain in place but permit movement around its horizontal/vertical axis (e.g., balancing, bending, stretching, twisting, turning)

**Muscular Endurance** – the ability to perform repeated muscular contractions/hold a contraction until fatigue sets in

**Muscular Strength** – the ability to contract muscles to overcome resistance and exert force

**Non-loco-motor skill** – movement that is performed from a relatively stable stationary base such as stretching, balancing, turning

**Physical Activity** – using muscles to move the body by using energy

**Physical Fitness** – qualities, which help define capacity for physical work (e.g., flexibility, agility, co-ordination, strength, balance, cardio-vascular endurance and muscular endurance)

**Skimbols** – picture symbols that represent the physical activity movement skills, social skills and ability adaptations used in a game



Locomotion/  
Travelling



Manipulation



Stability



Social Skills



Ability  
Adaptations

**Social Skills** – inter-personal skills used by children playing together (e.g., communication, planning strategies, decision making, logical consequences, problem-solving, negotiation, compromise, organizational skills)

**Variations** – changes that increase/decrease the difficulty of a game or other ideas to give variety to the game

**Vigorous -Intensity Physical Activity** – physical activity that will cause children to sweat and be 'out of breath'

**Warm-up Activities** – activities done to prepare the body for more active playing and to reduce the chance of injury (e.g., fast/brisk walking)

# Get Ready!

## Ability Adaptation Guidelines

### CONSIDERATIONS

### SUGGESTIONS (Involve players and get agreement on changes)

#### Action

- Varying skill levels among players' can provide a healthy challenge. However, extreme differences create inequities and a child may lose interest and quit.
- Aim to decrease the impact of ability differences/create a fair activity for all players.

- Before playing, decide what changes can be made to accommodate players' varying skill levels.
- Define all terms:
  - what is the action or how to do it, number of times ball goes around, series of actions, how players or marker move through the grid.
  - bounce, roll, throw, pass, hit, miss, fault, crouch, jump, step.
- Decide what help is needed - work on one skill at a time, have player stand in to jump, to hold/hit with a racquet (if grasp is weak, wrap a tensor bandage around the racquet and the player's hand, hit with a large arm movement).

#### Boundaries/ Space

- Clearly marked boundaries help players follow rules and encourage safe play.
- It is difficult for players with visual/physical challenges to stay within boundaries.
- Paths and spaces between players must be wide enough for children with equipment to travel safely and to allow for turning.

- Have players using an assistive device (wheelchair/walker) keep a wheel or leg of the walker within the boundaries.
- Increase space between players by having children touch fingers instead of holding hands.

#### Equipment

- Equipment that is suitable for all players allows more children to participate in a game.

- Consider ball size, softness and bounce (a large, soft ball is easier to catch than a small, firm one).

#### Pace of Play/ Travel

- Challenges in locomotion/travel, manipulation and stability skills impact fairness/equity.
- Guidelines may permit a player to use a different skill to promote equity in moving.

- Increase the time allowed for activities.
- Players can travel in various ways/at different speeds (walk, hop, take small steps).
- Change speed of play (turn ropes slower/allow more turns between jumpers).
- Increase challenge by increasing the number of times around bases/circle.
- Changing the distance between bases/the length of the field.
- Partner to share the challenges (1 to hit and 1 to throw/run).

Most children will have the skills necessary to play the games. Some do not, so we have introduced to most games **Ability Adaptation Guidelines**. These are key words to help you decide what changes can be made to a game so children with varying levels of motor and/or cognitive skills can participate safely. All situations that may arise are not covered above.

## Ability Adaptation Guidelines

### CONSIDERATIONS

### SUGGESTIONS (Involve players and get agreement on changes)

#### Pairing

- Partnering with another player, for stability, allows children with ability challenges to safely and successfully participate in ball, tag and group games. Consider the effect of excitement on a player's movement and social skills.

- Have players with different skills form a pair (running-stability/catching-throwing/hitting-running).
- One player pushing another player in a wheelchair. A player in a wheelchair must be in control of their chair at all times.

#### Safe Tagging/Hitng

- The act of tagging or being hit by a thrown ball can frighten a player and put them at increased risk of injury from falling.

- Decide how tagging will be done and select safe tag spots/zones.
- Use tag flags (small bits of cloth hanging from a pocket in a designated spot on the body).
- Select a softer ball to decrease impact of a hit and to make catching easier.
- All hitting with balls must be below the waist. Select a safe hit spot/zone.
- For players using assistive devices select a hit/tag area (small wheels on wheelchair/spot on a walker).

#### Safety

- Ability challenges may affect a child's reaction time, increasing the risk of injury.
- Providing support during a challenge promotes the development of physical and social skills, builds confidence and fosters self-esteem.
- Consider the effect of excitement on players' social skills.

- Get to know all players' ability levels.
- Select actions that can be done safely (run through, pairing).
- Hula hoops may create a safety hazard for players in wheelchair/walkers.

#### Scoring

- Ability challenges may give an unfair advantage to some players and lead players to quit.
- Changing aspects of a game can provide equal opportunity and still provide a challenge for other players without boring some players.
- Discussing these considerations provides an opportunity for children to learn empathy.

- Set time limits if excitement leads to excessive aggressiveness/bullying.
- Decide how to score (contact with ball may count as a hit).






#### What ends a turn?

- A player's skill improves with practise, encouragement and support; inequity in skill levels affects fair play for everyone; playing rather than competing provides practise.

- Change distances to be travelled, pace of play, actions.
- Set guidelines. Give more time.
- Make allowance for players' ability (an effort for an action may count as a hit).






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## Games and Skills Chart

Activity	Ages	#Players	What's Needed	OA – Open Area	LOA – Large Open Area	HSA – Hard Surface Area	SC – Sidewalk Chalk	Locomotion Travelling	Manipulation	Stability	Social Skills	Ability Adaptations
												
Ball Games	1. Beat the Ball	6-8	5+	OA, 1 large ball				•	•	•	•	•
	2. Circle Pinball	8-12	8+	OA, 1 large bouncy ball				•	•	•	•	•
	3. Crocodile Island	6-10	6-12	OA, any ball, sidewalk chalk, long rope, variations – hula hoops				•	•	•	•	•
	4. Four Square	8-12	4+	HSA, 1 bouncy ball				•	•	•	•	•
	5. High – Low Bounce	6-8	4	HSA, 1 bouncy ball, 1 long rope				•	•	•	•	•
	6. Human Bowling	8-12	6+	HSA, 1 ball, sidewalk chalk, tape				•	•	•	•	•
	7. One, Two, Three, O' Leary	7-10	1	HSA, 1 bouncy ball				–	•	•	–	•
	8. Paper Tennis	8-12	Groups of 2	OA, paper ball, racquet				•	•	•	•	•
	9. Two Ball Wall Ball	9-12	1	HSA, with wall, 2 balls each				•	•	•	–	•
	10. Wandering Ball	8-12	10+	OA, 1+ balls				•	•	•	•	•
Group Games	1. Airborne	8-12	4-6	OA, hacky sack, beach ball				•	•	•	•	•
	2. Alaskan Baseball	6-12	10+	LOA with 4 bases, 1 large ball				•	•	•	•	•
	3. Circle Point Dodge Ball	6-12 or 9-12	16+	LOA, 1 medium-large soft ball, watch/timer				•	•	•	•	•
	4. King's Court	9-12	16+	LOA, 4–6 balls, boundary markers				•	•	•	•	•
	5. Mouse Trap	6-8 or 9-12	10+	OA				•	–	•	•	•
	6. Paths and Trails	6-8 or 9-12	20+	LOA, 1 tag flag				•	•	•	•	•
	7. Red Light Green Light	6-8	4+	OA				•	–	•	•	•
	8. Rock, Paper, Scissors	8-12	8+	LOA, tag flags				•	•	•	•	•
	9. Scout	9-12	16-24	LOA, 1 ball				•	•	•	•	•
	10. Soccer Baseball	8-12	10+	LOA with 4 bases, soccer ball				•	•	•	•	•
	11. SPUD	6-10	8+	OA, 1 large bouncy ball				•	•	•	•	•
	12. Starboard Port	6-8 or 9-12	10+	LOA, boundary markers				•	–	•	•	•
	13. Sticks and Stones	6-10	8+	LOA, boundary marker, tag flags				•	•	•	•	•
	14. The Wizards' Challenge	6-8 or 9-12	4+	LOA, boundary markers, 2–4 large balls, 6–8 tennis balls, 6–8 pylons, hula hoops/ropes				•	•	•	•	•
	15. What Time is it Mr Wolf?	6-8	4+	OA, tag flags				•	•	•	•	•



## Games and Skills Chart

Activity	Ages	#Players	What's Needed	OA – Open Area	LOA – Large Open Area	HSA – Hard Surface Area	SC – Sidewalk Chalk	Locomotion Travelling	Manipulation	Stability	Social Skills	Ability Adaptations
												
<b>Hopscotch Games</b>	1. Boggy Marsh Hopscotch	6-10	2+	SC, HSA, no markers				•	–	•	•	•
	2. Discover the Universe	6-10	2+	SC, HSA, marker/player				•	•	•	•	•
	3. Dragon Hopscotch	6-10	2+	SC, HSA, marker/player				•	•	•	•	•
	4. Earth to Sky Hopscotch	6-12	2+	SC, HSA, marker/player				•	•	•	•	•
	5. Everyone's Hopscotch	6-10	2+	SC, HSA, marker/player				•	•	•	•	•
	6. Neighbourhood Hopscotch	8-12	3-6	SC, HSA, 4 + small bean bag markers/player				•	•	•	•	•
	7. Snail Hopscotch	6-8	2+	SC, HSA, marker/player				•	•	•	•	•
	8. Village Hopscotch	8-12	2+	SC, HSA, no markers				•	–	•	•	•
<b>Rope Games</b>	1. Banana Split	6-8	5+2 skilled	HSA, 1 long rope				•	•	•	•	•
	2. Cat and Mouse	8-12	3+	HSA, 1 long rope				•	•	•	•	•
	3. Catch Me	9-12	3+	HSA, 1 long rope				•	•	•	•	–
	4. Eevey Ivy	6-12	3+	HSA, 1 long rope				•	•	•	•	–
	5. Follow Me	9-12	8+	HSA, 1 long rope				•	•	•	•	•
	6. Helicopter	6-7	2+	HSA, 1 short rope				•	•	•	•	•
	7. Snake	6-7	3+	HSA, 1 long rope				•	•	•	•	•
	8. Stack'em Up	6-12	8+	HSA, 1 long rope				•	•	•	•	•
	9. Weave	9-12	8+	HSA, 1 long rope				•	•	•	•	•
	10. Yogi	6-12	3+	HSA, 1 yogi rope				•	•	•	•	•
<b>Tag Games</b>	1. Chain Tag	6-12	10+	OA, tag flags				•	•	•	•	•
	2. Cops and Robbers	8-12	5+	OA, tag flags				•	•	–	•	•
	3. Dragon's Tail Tag	6-8	6+	OA, tag flag				•	•	•	•	•
	4. Fox and Geese	6-12	4-8	OA, tag flags				•	•	•	•	•
	5. Go!	6-10	14+	OA				•	•	•	•	•
	6. High Five Tag	6-8	5+	OA, tag flags				•	•	•	•	•
	7. Sharks and Minnows	6-8	6+	OA, boundary markers, tag flags				•	–	•	•	•