Using Games to Enrich Preschool and Kindergarten Programs

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Overview: How games cover all developmental domains

- Games and Assessment
- Student Engagement & Learning
- Implementation of games throughout the day
- Family Involvement & the Festival
Games Overview

• What is a Game? (vs. play, sport, etc.)
• Purpose of Games
  – Fun!
    • (enjoyment, amusement, entertainment, etc.)
  – Fitness!
    • (challenge to strengthen skills in all domains of development)
  – Friends!
    • (making friends, playing by the rules & getting along, etc.)

Games Overview

• For each game, consider
  -Why? (the goal or object of the game, competitive vs. cooperative)
  -Who? (age group, number of players, individual or team)
  -What? (pieces or equipment, rules, positions)
  -How? (strategies vs. luck, endpoint vs. score vs. time, management tips)
  -When? (length of game, time of day)
  -Where? (indoor / outdoor, anyplace vs. specific place, board or field)

6 Developmental Objectives

• Self Esteem and Independence
• Interaction and Cooperation
• Communication
  - Oral
  - Written
• Discovery and Exploration
• Physical Capabilities
• Artistic Expression and Appreciation
Games & Developmental Objectives
• Self-Esteem & Independence
  – Showing pride
  – Sharing preferences & experiences
  – Coping with winning & losing

Games & Developmental Objectives
• Interaction & Cooperation
  – Taking turns
  – Following directions and rules
  – Being a good sport

Games & Developmental Objectives
• Communication
  – Learning new words for game play
  – Explaining game procedures
  – Recognizing letters, numerals and words
Games & Developmental Objectives

• Discovery & Exploration
  – Observing and describing (e.g., I Spy)
  – Remembering rules, clues, etc.
  – Strengthening logical thinking

Games & Developmental Objectives

• Physical Capabilities
  – Moving game pieces, throwing dice, etc.
  – Practicing sports movements
  – Improving coordination, balance and strength

Games & Developmental Objectives

• Artistic Expression & Appreciation
  – Creating new game scenarios
  – Illustrating handmade games
  – Learning to be a supportive spectator
Games & Developmental Objectives

• Teachers can support relationship and skill building by integrating games that focus on different content areas in a variety of learning centers.

• Once children are familiar with a particular game, teachers can gather valuable assessment data in the context of natural play.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kindergarten Bingo</th>
<th>What is assessed?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self Esteem &amp; Independence</strong></td>
<td>Bingo caller, presentation skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction &amp; Cooperation</strong></td>
<td>Turn Taking, Learning to be a good sport</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Listening Skills, Verbal Skills, Recognition/recall</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Discovery &amp; Exploration</strong></td>
<td>Persistence in playing the game, Learning friends’ names</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Physical Capabilities</strong></td>
<td>Fine Motor, Managing bingo card</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Artistic Expression &amp; Appreciation</strong></td>
<td>Noticing the differences between the friends</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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<th>Uno</th>
<th>What is assessed?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Self Esteem &amp; Independence</strong></td>
<td>The level of independence in managing cards and playing them effectively</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Interaction &amp; Cooperation</strong></td>
<td>Turn Taking, Learning to be a good sport</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Communication</strong></td>
<td>Listening Skills, Recognizing numbers, colors and symbols</td>
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<td><strong>Discovery &amp; Exploration</strong></td>
<td>Persistence in playing the game</td>
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<td><strong>Physical Capabilities</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Artistic Expression &amp; Appreciation</strong></td>
<td>Comparing colors, numbers and symbols</td>
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Student Engagement & Learning

- Welcome novelty and challenge
- Diverse game options fit range of interests and skill levels
- Excitement re: sharing games with other children & families (home & school connect)
- Focused introduction to a range of developmentally appropriate games sets the stage for independent use

Implementation of Games Throughout the Day

- Free Choice
  - Independent choice
  - Smooth transition
  - Social start of the day

Implementation of Games Throughout the Day

- Circle Time
  - Fun way to introduce new concepts
  - Large group cooperation
Implementation of Games Throughout the Day

- **Activity Time**
  - Additional instruction time
  - Reinforces concepts that were taught during circle
  - Children with different abilities can be included or the game can be modified

Implementation of Games Throughout the Day

- **Playground**
  - Structured, organized form of exercise
  - Opportunity to practice gym class skills

Implementation of Games Throughout the Day

- **Transition Times**
  - Increase in positive behavior during wait times
Family Involvement

- Children’s excitement about games learned at school encourages families to play more games at home.
- Offering opportunities to play games can provide a comfortable entrée for parents into the center, as well as chances for home-school connections.

Games as a Theme

- Whole School Unit
- Thread Throughout the Year
- Family Festival
GAMES

What is the unit focus?

The concept of GAME is a challenge to specify because there are so many different types of games. For the purpose of developing this unit, we began with the following definition:

‘A game is a structured or semi-structured recreational activity, usually undertaken for enjoyment. A goal that the players try to reach and a set of rules concerning what the players can or cannot do create the challenge and structure in a game.’

This unit is designed to begin by exploring children’s existing concepts re: games, to broaden their experience to include diverse forms of games that originate from different cultures and strengthen skills in all domains of development, to encourage game play among school friends and family, and to pique children’s interest in designing their own games.

Why is this focus important?

As with exploratory play, game play has many benefits for all aspects of young children’s development. Game play invites children to master skills in all domains, which enhances both self-esteem and independence. Game playing fosters interaction and cooperation because many games involve direction following and turn taking. Team games involve cooperation and peer support, as well as a chance to learn sportsmanship. The more children play together, the better they understand other children’s points of view, demonstrate empathy and caring, and develop conflict resolution skills.

As children interact during game play, they learn communication skills to describe their play, negotiate rules, plan strategies, etc. Their vocabulary increases as they learn words for new objects and actions in a variety of games, including those that relate specifically to our themes. Children’s game play provides many opportunities for strengthening cognitive skills that support discovery and exploration. Attention, observation, memory,
and problem solving are enhanced as children develop and test game playing strategies.

During game play, children’s physical capabilities are often challenged, which builds both small and large motor skills naturally. Increasing physical prowess builds self-esteem and enables greater independence in play. There are even games that support the growth of artistic expression & appreciation because they involve acting, drawing, etc. Parents can support game play in many of the same ways that we do at school, by providing space, opportunities, materials, and appropriate scaffolding.
Key Conceptual Content: GAMES
January / February, 2007

Plan to Subdivide the 4 Weeks of the GAME Unit:

Week 1: Beginning January 22nd
What is a game? (and what’s not, e.g., play, puzzles, sports)
Why do we play games?
What makes games fun to play (or not)?
Lots of game play throughout the day and in various centers with conversation using games vocabulary

Note: Throughout the unit, lots of encouragement to experiment with game play at home too

• Purpose of Games

  Fun!  (enjoyment, amusement, entertainment, etc.)
  Fitness!  (challenge to strengthen skills in all domains of development)
  Friends!  (making friends, playing by the rules & getting along, etc.)

• For each game, consider
  Why? (the goal or object of the game, competitive vs. cooperative)
  Who? (age group, number of players, individual or team)
  What? (pieces or equipment, rules, positions)
  How? (strategies vs. luck, endpoint vs. score vs. time, management tips)
  When? (length of game, time of day)
  Where? (indoor / outdoor, anyplace vs. specific place, board or field)
And describe origins (culture, time period, etc.). Add possibilities for adaptations re: complexity, timing, etc.

• Contrast with play / exploration, etc. where the goal & structure are less clear (e.g., playing with bubbles, pegs, blocks, playdough, sand, etc.)

Week 2: Beginning January 29th
Who makes the rules?
How do people in different places play games?
Lots of contrasting ways to play essentially the same game, noting variability across families, cultures, etc.

Week 3: Beginning February 5th
What games can we invent?
Lots of exploring variations of games and generating ideas for Children’s School games, referring back to our concept of what’s a game and considering options from broad perspectives.

Week 4: Beginning February 12th (Family Festival is Thurs the 15th)
How can we share our games with others?
Choosing favorites, finishing invented games, and generally preparing for the Family Festival.

**Research / Experimentation Possibilities**

Consider games to modify for authentic assessments

Bob Siegler’s research group project ideas
Geetha - Impact of board games
Nicole – Body involvement
Possible Parent survey, record keeping, notes re: experience
Key Developmental Goals for Emphasis
January / February, 2007

1) Self-Esteem & Independence Objectives to Target via Games

CONCEPTS
• Game preferences, strengths, accomplishments
• Family traditions, cultural practices re: games

SKILLS
• Describe personal experiences with playing games
• Describe personal preferences and accomplishments with certain games
• Showing pride/confidence in ability
• Share experiences as they happen at school
• Express and cope with emotions related to winning and losing

DISPOSITIONS
• Safety

2) Interaction & Cooperation Objectives to Target via Games

CONCEPTS
• Teamwork (cooperation, coordination, support)
• Sportsmanship (fairness, honesty, respect, gracious winning & losing)
• Leadership (motivating others, help others through challenges)

SKILLS
• Follow basic rules (for various games)
• Follow directions for game play
• Sit appropriately and attend to circle time games
• Share, take turns and cooperate with peers while playing or creating games
• Handle self well when not participating
• Care for game pieces / equipment
• Cooperative play & synchrony in team games
• Respect differences in game preferences and practices
• Resolve conflicts appropriately, with adult guidance as necessary
• Negotiate and compromise during game play and design

DISPOSITIONS
• Effort / Persistence / Perseverance

3) Communication Objectives to Target via Games

CONCEPTS (depends on the specific game)
• Word Games (e.g., rhyming, alliteration, draw-a-person, etc.)
• Vocabulary related to games in general and each specific game

SKILLS
• Recite game related songs and fingerplays
• Participate in game related conversations
• Ask questions related to games
• Demonstrate and explain game procedures
• Use body language to support expression
• Converse during game play
• Relay game experiences to others
• Listen attentively to game related stories and recall story content
• Distinguish real vs. imaginary stories re: games
• Retell game related stories
• Make up game related stories, with realistic detail and vocabulary
• Dictate, illustrate, and begin to label game related stories, directions
• Identify game roles, setting, pieces / equipment, etc.
• Recognize and write letters when creating games
• Identify beginning sounds and rhymes while playing and creating games
• Recognize letters on game pieces, boards, cards, etc.
• Read standard game words (or recognize environmental print)
• Use print to record game scores, etc.
• Illustrate game pieces, boards, etc.
DISPOSITIONS
• Articulate / Attentive

4) Discovery & Exploration Objectives to Target via Games

CONCEPTS (depends on the specific game)
• Observation Games (e.g., I Spy, lotto & bingo games, scavenger hunts, treasure hunts)
• Memory Games (e.g., Memory, What’s missing?, I’m going on a trip…)
• Knowledge Games (e.g., Trivia, sorting & matching games, etc.)
• Math Games (e.g., Sudoku, dominoes, etc.)
• Card Games vs. Board Games vs. Games with no “equipment”
• Strategy vs. Chance
  (e.g., checkers, blockus, chess vs. candyland, chutes & ladders)
• Practice (training / coaching)

SKILLS
• Use all senses to explore different games
• Collect, sort, and count game pieces, etc. as required
• Use size, color, shape and other distinctions as needed in each game
• Recognize and utilize patterns, sequences, quantities, etc. as needed
• Compare & contrast games, especially different versions of the same game (e.g., from different cultures)
• Recognize game related symbols
• Apply information from one game to a related game
• Predict cause / effect re: game play, strategies, etc.
• Notice which approaches work best in each game
• Accept mistakes in game play as learning experiences

DISPOSITIONS
• Positive / Motivated / Resourceful / Strategic / Intentional
5) Physical Capabilities Objectives to Target via Games

CONCEPTS (depends on the specific game)
- Fitness (mental or physical strength, coordination, agility, speed)
- Street games vs. sports vs. races
  (e.g., hopscotch, jumprope, hula hoop, jacks, tag, hide & seek)
  vs. basketball, tball, hockey, soccer, bowling, etc.
  vs. relays, obstacle courses, etc.)
- Whole body vs. hand games (e.g., clapping games)

SKILLS
- Strengthen eye hand coordination via game play, including board games, computer games, etc.
- Strengthen fine motor control and tool use via game play and related writing, drawing, etc.
- Practice clapping, snapping, and other team support actions
- Strengthen large motor control via games, obstacle courses, etc.
- Coordinate actions with others during relays
- Move to rhythm during dancing games

DISPOSITIONS
- Strength / Coordination / Agility …

6) Artistic Expression & Appreciation Objectives to Target via Games

CONCEPTS (depends on the specific game)
Creative Communication games (e.g., charades, pictionary)
  vs. songs, fingerplays, dancing games
Player vs. Spectator

SKILLS
- Do role/dramatic play during charades
- Use representational drawing for pictionary
- Learn songs/rhymes for games
- Pay attention while others are performing/sharing their games
- Learn to be a supportive spectator

DISPOSITIONS
- Respectful / Engaged …
Carnegie Mellon University  
Children's School  

Key Opportunities for Exploring GAMES  
January / February, 2007

**Greeting and Dismissal Games**  
*(largely verbal, played while sitting, short duration)*

Transition Time ideas:  
I Spy Games (color, shape, starts with, rhymes with, etc.)
Mystery Blanket (observe a small number of objects, cover with a blanket and secretly remove one, ask what’s missing?)
Tick Tack Toe

Staff Ideas:  
Telephone
Color & Shape Matching with the Postcard Display Board
Shoemaker, Shoemaker (Child holds a small object in one fist, pounds fists on top of one another and says, “Shoemaker, Shoemaker, make me a shoe. Make it ready by half past two. Is it white or is it brown? Sometimes up, sometimes down?” Others guess if object is in right or left fist.)
Hide the Object (one person hides a small object somewhere on their body and the others try to guess where)
Pass the bean bag, mitten, etc. (like hot potato)
Police Officer – One child is the officer, another says she is looking for a friend who is wearing … The police officer tries to guess which friend.
Which comes first? Ask about sequences of activities when dressing, at school, when eating, etc.

Car Games to share with families *(1 per week)*  
*(easy, minimal equipment, etc.)*

Transition Time ideas:  
Going on a Picnic (theme objects, number of x, alphabetical list)
Staff Ideas:

Would you rather … or …? Be creative – anything goes.
(play basketball or soccer, eat an apple or a pear, etc.)

Community Game
Call out an object and see who can find it first (gas station, traffic light, etc.)

Rainbow Game
Call out a color & have child find something that color (older children might find more than one). Purple & Pink are the hardest.

Animal Game
One person thinks of an animal and give a clue. Others take turns guessing. If no one guesses, another clue is given, etc. This could also be played more like 20 questions, where the guessers have to ask for particular information.

Staring Contest (whoever blinks first loses)
Rock, Paper, Scissors – SHOOT!
This is not a … (Choose any object, for example, a string.
Describe and demonstrate the object as something else – “This is not a string; it is a long river.” Let everyone have a turn with the same object before changing objects.)

Lots of fun car songs, especially ones that involve adding, such as:
My dog Lima Loves to roam.
One day Lima left his home.
He came back, quite unclean.
Where, oh, where has Lima been?
Lima been, Lima been,
Where, oh, where has Lima been?
Lima been, Lima been,
Where, oh, where has Lima been?
Lima been, Lima been,

Repeat with Kidney, Pinto, etc.
Circle Time Ideas

Introductory Books

• Games (Scholastic)
  Simple, multicultural introduction to street / backyard games, including hoops, ropes, bubbles, balls, jump rope, jacks, balloons, boats, marbles, and hand games (See attached summary.)

• Come Out and Play (It’s a Kid’s World)
  Simple, multicultural introduction to the actions involved in children’s games, including swinging, jumping, running, climbing, tossing, catching, hitting and kicking balls, plus toys, imagination, creating. Also notes indoor vs. outdoor play, playgrounds & amusement parks, water play, different types of games, in many places, alone or with friends. (See attached summary.)

• Let the Games Begin (Shakti for Children)
  Introduction to the joy of sports and encouragement for children to get involved. Multicultural emphasis on values of confidence, courage, persistence, practice, coaching, sportsmanship, teamwork, etc.

Other book ideas:

Flip and Flop, Dawn Apperley
Let’s Go, Froggy! Jonathan London
Five Little Piggies, David Martin
You Can’t Catch Me, Charlotte Doyle
One, Two, Three, Oops! Michael Coleman

It’s Mine, Gina and Mercer Mayer
See you Later, Mashed Potater, Anna Dickson
Playing with Others, Joy Berry
I’m Not Your Friend! (Dinofours), Steve Metzger
I’m the Boss (Dinofours), Steve Metzger
No Girls Allowed, Stan & Jan Berenstain
Go Out for the Team, Stan & Jan Berenstain
The Littlest Leaguer, Syd Hoff

Jumanji, Chris Van Allsburg

LOTS of resources for Circle Time Games

Games Suggested by Teachers:
“Doggy, doggy, whose got the bone?”
(See Mystery Games descriptions)
“Penguin packets”
“Duck, Duck, Goose”
“Put the Baby to Sleep”
Nursery Rhyme cube
Signing games
Guessing games (plus sharing bag & guessing jar)

Transition Time offers a whole set of very short circle time games.

Games for Whole Language has a similar set.

Games section from Positively Kindergarten includes more than circle time games, but the majority can be played in a large group.

Rainy Day Activities from Creative Resources includes a similar set.

Beth’s Top Ten PE Extensions for Circle Time handout is also included.
Learning Centers for Activity Time

Theme Specific

Game Center: The Game Center could possibly be located where the dramatic play center currently is, simulating game play at home. Shelving units within the dramatic play center could have numerous board games, card games, etc. for the children to choose to play. In the center of the ‘Game Center’ could be a table for children to sit at and play games with each other. Materials for score-keeping, shelf labels, etc. could also be included. In order to introduce the Game Center, the teacher might show the children the various games and explain how the center can be used.

A game inventory for the Green Room and the Kindergarten is included.

Ideas for Memory Games, Charades Games, Scavenger/Treasure Hunts, and Exploration Games are included as well. These could be played in a variety of areas.

Games with Books, Peggy Kaye might be helpful, especially for Extended Day planning.

Existing Centers

Library (in classroom or beside the office)
Add I Spy books, Riddle books, etc.

Block Area
Add Construction Sets
Include board games, such as Rivers, Roads & Rails
Include building games (e.g., Jenga, Pick Up Sticks, etc.)
Writing Center
   Play Draw-a-Person
   Play Start with My Line
   Add Scrabble board for arranging tiles, Boggle set for practice finding & writing words

Computer Center
   Exploration Games (I Spy, etc.)
   Skill Games (Math House, Book House, etc.)

Kitchen
   Guessing / Mystery Games

Science Center
   Memory / Lotto games
   Specific Content games

Snack Time Ideas

   See games for greeting & dismissal / car games (primarily mystery games, I Spy, etc.)
Key Opportunities for Exploring GAMES
January / February, 2007

Extended Project Possibilities / Advanced Activities

General Instructions for Making Games
• Board Games (K working in groups to make board games)
• Dominoes (Jean B. & Donna coordinating 4’s and K domino production – clay / wood and foam core respectively)
• Tic Tac Toe
• Memory Games
• Theme Checkers
• Bingo Games

Idea for large games using permanent markers on flannel-backed plastic tablecloths

Specific Instructions for Making Games
• Scoop Catch (cut plastic jugs & a tennis ball)
• Following Footsteps (life-sized board game with footsteps & a large die)

Other ideas:
Office games, perhaps using the new games board?
Library games?
Games between classes (like a mini “field-day”)
Key Opportunities for Exploring GAMES
January / February, 2007

Multicultural Resources re: Games

Article re: Cultural Influence on Children’s Play

Cultural Awareness for Children
   African & African American Cultures
   American Indian Cultures
   Chinese & Chinese American Cultures
   Japanese & Japanese American Cultures
   Korean & Korean American Cultures
   Mexican & Mexican American Cultures
   Thai Culture

   NOTE: Additional multicultural games are interspersed as appropriate, plus there are games from Sweden, Italy, Switzerland & Denmark

Web Site re: Traditional Children’s Games from Around the World

Games Books with a Multicultural Emphasis
   (The best examples have been copied in the appropriate sections.)

   Games from Many Lands, Anita Benarde
   Hopscotch Around the World, Mary D. Lankford
   Galimoto, Karen Lynn Williams
Gym Games

LOTS of favorites!! Beth has lots of books!!

A section on Dancing Games is included. Related books are:

- Dancing Games for Children of All Ages, Esther Nelson
- Dancing Rhymes, Dorothy Taylor
- Skip to My Lou
- The Hokey Pokey

Directions for Walk My Walk and Stoopball are also included.

Playground Time Ideas

Relays
Obstacle Courses
Sidewalk Games
  Hop Scotch
  Hula Hoop
  Jump Rope
Add Board Games to the Tree House
Play Winter / Snow Games – if there’s any snow 😊 !!

The Games section from 365 After School Activities is included.

Beth’s Top Ten Rainy Day Games handout is included.

Related Books:

- A Rocket in My Pocket
- 101 Hula Hoop Games for Kids, Joe Dinoffer
- Hoop - La
Key Opportunities for Exploring GAMES
January / February, 2007

Family Involvement Ideas

Director’s Corner & Positive Discipline Pointer in January ’07 Newsletter, with invitation to submit memories & experiences via survey (attached) -> Selected Quotes will be posted in the common spaces throughout the unit (Tim, Char & Sharon)

February Director's Corner Reports on Unit Beginning
Invite Families to contribute photos of game playing for huge bboard with a tic tac toe background (Tim, Char & Sharon)
Invite Families to rate favorite games of different types each week on large graphs posted on the K bboard between the K and Office – including card games, board games, outdoor games & sports (Tim, Char & Sharon)

Other ideas
Collaborative Alphabet Book of Games
Games “Buzz Words”

Family Festival Ideas

Children’s School Game (Erlina Mae and Jean S.)

Get a Map with a Sticker Design on the back.
Roll a large die to determine where to start (red room, blue room, green room, discovery area, kindergarten or office).
Go to the area & play games. For each area, get a sticker.
When you’ve earned all the stickers, return to the entry to get the completion sticker. You WIN!
Game Ideas:

Games Memory (Estelle & Beth)
Games Bingo (Gina & Alexa)

Dominoes
  4’s making them out of clay and wood
  K making Friends Dominoes out of foam core
Kindergartners will be working in groups to make board games.

Other possibilities:
  Bean Bag Toss
  Matching Game
  Snail’s Pace Game
  ABC Snake Game
  Catch a Fish (blindfolded) – Discovery Area

Use games the children have chosen as their favorites.
Three’s Games Newsletter

When the music stops in “Musical Dots”, what do you do?

Name two games that you played at the Family Festival.

What’s the most important thing to remember when playing a game?

The Children's School has just finished its unit on Games, and the Red and Blue room friends had a wonderful time learning how to take turns and how to play some really fun games. We played board games like Hi-Ho Cherry-O and Snail’s Pace Race. “Reverse Jenga” challenged us to add blocks to a tower instead of take blocks away, while keeping the structure standing.

In the Red Room, friends enjoyed doing puzzles together and in the Blue Room they got the chance to kick off their shoes and play Twister. In the Discovery Area, we could dig in the “I Spy Sandbox” or use the game easel to play Chutes and Ladders or Tic-Tac-Toe.

We also had fun constructing different marble runs at the light table and playing the Fishing Game in the water table.
**Movement Game Songs**

**The Farmer in the Dell**

The farmer in the dell.
The farmer in the dell.
  Hi-ho, The derry-o!
The farmer in the dell.

*(each following line is another verse)*

The farmer takes a wife…
The wife takes a child…
The child takes a nurse…
The nurse takes a dog…
The dog takes a cat…
The cat takes a rat…
The rat takes a cheese…
The cheese stands alone…

**The Hokey Pokey**

You put your right leg in.
You put your right leg out.
You put your right leg in,
And you shake it all about.
You do the Hokey Pokey,
And you turn yourself around.
That’s what it’s all about!

You put your left leg in…
You put your right arm in…
*(Continue with other body parts)*

**Answers to Questions:**

Stand on a dot as quickly as possible.

Dominos, Musical Dots, Bingo, Go Teacher, Matching Game and Tic-Tac-Toss are some games we played at the Family Festival.

Always remember to have fun!!
During the games unit, we also took the opportunity to read some of our favorite books, dress up and be silly with friends, work together to build a tower and try different games and sports with Ms. McMichael.

We were excited to see all of the families who attended the Family Festival, and we missed those who couldn’t make it. Here are some of the highlights of the night!

“Go Teacher” in the Blue Room. *(left and right)*

“Musical Dots” in the Red Room *(below)*

“Matching Game” in the Green Room *(below)*

“Fishing Game” in the Green Room *(above)*
The whole school spent the month of February exploring the wonderful world of games. The kindergarten focused on the creation of games; both those that already exist and new inventions. This allowed them to work on their skills of cutting and writing, and it prompted critical thinking and discussion.

Willow, Madeleine, Ally and Gino trying a Hullabaloo move.
GUESS THE PICTURE
Do you know what these pictures are? The kindergarten does! This game was one of the children’s favorites. Every day Mrs. Perovich and Miss Bowers would show the children a new photo of something in or around the school. They were never able to stump the children. It was a fun way to improve their observation skills and attention to detail.

Clockwise from top left: The children’s mailboxes, Newel post on the stairs down from the rotunda, Vent in the classroom, Fish tank rocks
KINDERGARTEN GAMES

The kindergartners worked together to create several games. They began by decorating and gluing their photos onto dominoes to create a set that the class can play with together by matching faces instead of numbers. They used their photos for a Funny Face Memory game, too. The children also created the targets for a bean bag toss.

As the children’s knowledge base grew and they began to understand the requirements of game creation, they were able to create the Kindergarten Game. The game has players move through a day in the kindergarten, rolling a die and drawing cards to move. Each card has a child or teacher’s picture on it and directions for a move. The children were required to use their critical thinking to write directions that would keep the game moving. They enjoyed sharing it at the Family Festival.
100 DAY CELEBRATION

February 22nd marked our 100th day of school. We celebrated this eagerly anticipated milestone by making a 100 day chain, patterning with 100 pieces and measuring 100 inch snakes. We built 100 piece puzzles and made a snack containing 10 pieces of 10 different foods for a grand total of 100!

This is an opportunity for the children to practice their counting skills, by ones and by tens. They read books about 100 and played Hop to 100.
LUNAR NEW YEAR

We were visited by Inhae Yu for an explanation and celebration of Lunar New Year. The children enjoyed learning about the Chinese Zodiac and the Year of the Pig. They learned about Korean traditional dress and made sushi.

Madeleine and Maggie trying on hanbok.

The children are great at trying new things and exploring each other’s traditions and customs. Thank you to Inhae!

PIZZA!

Michael Staunton brought a pizza party to our class. He taught the class how pizza is made and brought dough for them to work with. They learned a song about the steps of pizza preparation and then tried it themselves. They discovered that it takes a lot of practice to throw the dough to stretch it. Everyone enjoyed sharing their favorite toppings and how they make pizza at home. Then, we were treated to a delicious pizza lunch. Thank you to the Stauntons!

The whole class singing the Pizza Preparation song.

Jack, David K., Skylar and Maggie try pizza tossing!
Happy New Year to our Children’s School family and friends!

Much of my holiday experience involved enjoying time with extended family and friends playing games. Our current favorites are *Apples to Apples*, *Sequence*, *Buzz Words*, and *Catch Phrase*. Though the games have changed, some of my best memories of childhood involve hours spent in similar pursuits. I come from a family of *Bridge* players, so my grandparents were always ready for a hand of cards. *Kings in the Corner* and *Rummy* were our favorites. During my childhood in Delaware, my family favorite was *Yahtzee*, especially when we vacationed at the Chesapeake Bay or the Southern Delaware shore. The neighborhood children on Majestic Drive played frequent rounds of *Kick the Can* and *SPUD*, while the swim club friends played *Sharks & Minnows* and *Marco Polo*.

Games are always a part of our program at the Children’s School. *Snails Pace Race*, *Uno*, and *Checkers* are some of the classroom favorites, while *Balloon Volleyball*, *Relay Races*, and *Parachute Games* are frequent parts of our gym time. In all cases, we play games to have **FUN**, increase **FITNESS** (both mental and physical), and interact with **FRIENDS**.

As with exploratory play, game play has many benefits for all aspects of young children’s development. Game play invites children to master skills in all domains, which enhances both self-esteem and independence. Game playing fosters interaction and cooperation because many games involve direction following and turn taking. Team games involve cooperation and peer support, as well as a chance to learn sportsmanship. The more children play together, the better they understand other children’s points of view, demonstrate empathy and caring, and develop conflict resolution skills.

As children interact during game play, they learn communication skills to describe their play, negotiate rules, plan strategies, etc. Their vocabulary increases as they learn words for new objects and actions in a variety of games, including those that relate specifically to our themes. Children’s game play provides many opportunities for strengthening cognitive skills that support discovery and exploration. Attention, observation, memory, and problem solving are enhanced as children develop and test game playing strategies.

During game play, children’s physical capabilities are often challenged, which builds both small and large motor skills naturally. Increasing physical prowess builds self-esteem and enables greater independence in play. There are even games that support the growth of artistic expression & appreciation because they involve acting, drawing, etc.
Beginning at the end of January and continuing through most of February, we will extend our exploration of GAMES by focusing our whole school unit on that theme. This unit is designed to begin by exploring children’s existing concepts re: games, to broaden their experience to include diverse forms of games that originate from different cultures and strengthen skills in all domains of development, to encourage game play among school friends and family, and to pique children’s interest in designing their own games. We invite you to participate by sharing your childhood game playing memories and current experiences, by trying new games with your children at home and in the car, and by participating in our Family Games Festival on Thursday evening, February 15th.

May you and your family find new types of FUN, experiment with varied avenues for developing FITNESS and have wonderful experiences with FRIENDS in 2007!

Positive Discipline Pointer (after the director’s corner)

Children are often challenged by expectations for appropriate behavior while waiting. At the Children’s School, the issue arises most frequently when a child finishes eating snack or lunch before the others and while children are sitting on the hallway benches during greeting and dismissal. During those times, we typically invite children to listen to stories or use small handheld toys, such as an Etch-A-Sketch. Such options are less often available to families during car rides, delays in restaurants, or long lines in stores, but there are a wide variety of verbal GAMES that require no physical involvement and no materials. The most widely known of these games is I Spy. One player locates an object of interest in the visual field of all players and then provides one descriptor as a clue. “I spy with my little eye something that is green (or round or striped or …).” Other players then take turns guessing the object. The player who makes the correct guess then gets to start the next round. During the whole school GAMES unit, we will explore and then share several similar games, so watch for them. In the meantime, give I Spy a try!
Family Game Playing Memories and Recent Experiences

Please share your childhood memories and recent experiences by completing this form and returning it to the Children’s School by Friday, January 19th.

Family Name:

1) Describe your childhood memories related to game playing, with family members, other caregivers, and/or friends. Feel free to write sentences, a list, or use any other format that works for you.

2) Describe your current game playing experiences with your children. What do you play? What do you enjoy? What challenges do you face? What would you recommend to others? Again, share whatever you would like in whatever format works for you.

Let’s play games together at the Family Festival on Thursday, February 15th!
Game Playing Memories from the Children’s School Staff

Games have always been a part of my family life. Charades was the most frequently played game, and we always called it, “No Mercy Charades.” Mrs. Bird

We owned and played all the typical board games. Clue and Chutes & Ladders were the favorites. Mrs. Bird

My earliest memory of games was from my dad’s grandparents who loved to play Pokeno. We also played games to see who had to do the dishes. Miss Williams

My friends and I played every sport or action game imaginable (Release, Hide & Seek, Football, … Parking Lot Golf, … Homerun Derby, …). Mr. Salinetro

My mother and her friends played Mah Jong weekly or monthly. My father and grandparents played Pinochle, Bridge, and Rummy. Mrs. Solomon

Growing up on a farm, we played a lot of outside games – Hide & Seek, Jump Rope, Jacks. One very favorite was rolling a large barrel while standing on and turning it. Miss McMichael

My family played Spoons every Christmas. The older generation shared their stories of crazy Spoons games each year, while we added more memories as well. Ms. Broughton

We always play cards and games at the beach (no TV). My children’s first game was Pretty, Pretty Princess. Mrs. Perovich

Our family plays games at home and at the beach. When the children were little, we played Go Fish and Candyland. Corn Toss is a game that’s becoming popular in Ohio. Mrs. Tomer

I have good memories of game playing at Thanksgiving and Christmas. I liked Parcheesi so much as a child that I made my own board. We played lots of car games, like License Plates, on the way to Beaver Falls. Mrs. Simpson

I come from a family of Bridge players, so my grandparents were always ready for a hand of cards. Kings in the Corner and Rummy were our favorites. Dr. Carver

During my childhood in Delaware, my family favorite was Yahtzee, especially when we vacationed at the Chesapeake Bay or the Southern Delaware shore. Dr. Carver

We still play lots of games with family and friends – Dominoes, dice games, card games, board games, outside games, sports, and games in the pool. Some favorites were Memory, Hungry Hungry Hippo, Connect Four, Simon Says, and Dutch Blitz. Play lots of games! Miss Bowers
During the past week, Children’s School friends have played many new games. We’ve tried several variants of I Spy, including locating treasures in the preschool sand table, discovering the site where close-up photographs were taken, and finding objects on the new I Spy Mobile in the hallway.

The kindergartners have learned Tic Tac Toe and Mancala, and they made their own versions to share with their families. They worked collaboratively to make kindergarten face dominoes and a funny face matching game. They are also enjoying riddles and sharing games from home.

This week, the preschoolers will begin the Games Unit. The 3’s are focusing on the basics of taking turns in simple games like Snail’s Pace Race and Hi Ho Cheerio. They plan to make a card game called “Go Teacher” (a variant of Go Fish). The 4’s will emphasize learning more complex game rules, particularly for games involving numbers. They will play many dice and domino games, as well as making their own class set of wooden dominoes. Our Extended Day friends are learning the games described in the “Francis” books, most of which are outdoor games such as hopscotch and jump rope.

It’s been fun to read the family memories and current experiences with game playing. Thanks for taking the time to contribute them. There’s still time if you haven’t written yours yet! Look for anonymous quotations around the school at the Family Festival. Also, we invite you to record your game favorites on the graphs in the main hallway. The options will change weekly, from board games to outdoor games to card games, so feel free to add your input each week. Also, each Monday, you will receive a new Car Game Card with an idea for a verbal game to play while driving or stuck in traffic.

We look forward to playing games with you at the Family Festival!
**Positive Discipline Pointer**

At the Children’s School, we emphasize the development of cooperation skills as the foundation for healthy competition, so we focus on doing your best, playing fair, and playing safely. We also start with games that are well within the developmental reach of the children so that they have a reasonable chance of winning. Nonetheless, many children have trouble *dealing appropriately with winning and losing*. Perhaps you’ve had similar experiences with game playing at home.

Psychologists who study motivation have found that emphasizing learning more than performance increases children’s motivation to persist on tasks (i.e., not quit after they lose). One approach is to discuss strategies and ways to improve play, rather than the actual winning or losing. Rather than being tempted to lose on purpose, consider coaching your child to the extent possible in the game to help maximize both her chances of learning and of winning. Most of all, be a positive model of gracious winning and losing so your child has ideas of what to say and do in both situations. The outcome is not so important if everyone is having fun in the process!
**Car Game #1: I’m going on a picnic …**

This memory game involves progressively lengthening the list of items to be taken on the picnic (or to the park, on a hike, etc.).

The first player says, “I’m going on a picnic, and I will take a ____.” The second player then follows with a statement that she is going on a picnic and taking whatever the first person said, plus something else. The third player includes the first two items and adds one more. The game continues in this way.

For the youngest children, just choose items related to the trip destination and play until you hit the memory limit. As children’s capability increases, play with numerical cues (1 blanket, two cups, three oranges ...), use alliteration (a blanket, a basket, a banana ...), or for a real challenge follow the alphabet (an apple, a blanket, a cake ...). Have FUN together! Enjoy the laughs!

**Car Game #2: I’m thinking of an animal …**

This mystery game involves one person thinking of an animal and giving clues one at a time to see if others can guess. The best clues narrow the search somewhat but still allow for multiple possibilities. For example, “I’m thinking of an animal that is black and white” is a better clue than an animal with legs (though the latter is more typical of young children before they’ve had much experience). Others take turns guessing after each clue. If no one guesses, another clue is given, etc.

Take turns thinking of an animal, or have the person who guesses take the next turn. This game could also be played more like 20 questions, where the guessers have to ask for particular information (e.g., “Does the animal live on land?”).

**Car Game #3: Would You Rather …**

This game of choices can easily be adapted to the age and interests of the players. One person starts by asking a simple “Would you rather …” question, such as play Uno or Go Fish, eat an apple or a pear, take a bath or a shower, have a picnic with an anteater or a raccoon, wait in the car or wait in line, etc. You can play with each individual answering for him or herself, or you can have the whole group try to reach consensus on one answer by stating initial preferences and then trying to convince those with different opinions to change their minds.

**Car Game #4: The Rainbow Game**

This observation game involves one person choosing a color and everyone else trying to find something outside the car that is that specific color. Once the first color is found, choose another color, without repetition, and keep playing until you can’t think of any more color names. Feel free to play with shapes, numbers, or letters as well. You could also limit the objects searched by counting only colors on vehicles, houses, etc., depending on your surroundings.

**Car Game #5: This is not a …**

This creativity game starts with the choice of any handy object, such as a string, a tissue, etc. Take turns describing and demonstrating the object as something else. For example, wiggle the string and say, “This is not a string; it is a long river.” Or, fold the tissue and wrap it around a finger, saying “This is not a tissue; it is a bandage.” Let everyone have a turn with the same object before changing objects.
Fun, Fitness, and Friends
Playing Games with Preschoolers

Sharon M. Carver

Playing games is fun, increases mind and body fitness, and connects children with friends. Game playing helps preschoolers build skills in all areas of development.

Social and emotional. By playing games, children learn to follow directions, use self-control, be patient, and take turns. The more children play together, the better they understand other children’s points of view. Children playing games may disagree about the rules, providing ideal opportunities to practice conflict resolution skills.

Communication. During games, children describe their play, negotiate rules, and discuss strategies. They also learn new words for objects, actions, and concepts (for example, dice, spin, match, clue).

Cognitive. Games often involve concepts such as number, shape, and color and may teach science, social studies, or math knowledge. For example, Uno involves learning both color and number recognition. Children learn to pay attention and build skills for observation, memory, logical thinking, and problem solving as they play the same games again and again and try new strategies.

Physical. Children use their small muscles when playing card and board games, and they strengthen large motor skills when playing tag, running relays, or playing hide and seek. They become more nimble and physically fit. When children build their physical skills, they gain self-esteem and are eager to do things on their own.
Promoting game play

Here are some ways to encourage preschoolers to play and learn from games.

Introduce new games at circle time. Explain the rules and demonstrate some successful strategies. Children are more likely to choose a game they know how to play. Most games can be adapted for large group play so that every child gets at least one turn. Two games that work well with large groups are:

**Snail’s Pace Race.** This noncompetitive dice game is a race of six different colored snails on a short, straight track (shown below). Each player rolls two dice with a colored dot on each side. If a player rolls one yellow dot and one orange dot, she advances the yellow snail one space and the orange snail one space. Thus, if the orange snail wins, many players have contributed to advancing that snail (as opposed to one player being the orange snail, as happens in most board games).

**Uno.** Adapt this beginner card game so that each child has only a few cards or so that players lay their cards on the table rather than holding a “hand.” Each player tries to match one of his cards to either the color or the number of the card in the center. A variety of special cards allows for switching colors, reversing the play order, or forcing other players to draw extra cards. The goal is to play all of one’s cards.

Play games with the children at first. Support from a teacher during the first week of playing a new game helps children become comfortable with the rules, taking turns, persisting to the end of the game, and coping with winning and losing. Preschool favorites include Hi Ho! Cherry-o, Candyland, Chutes and Ladders, and Don’t Break the Ice.

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Research on the Impact of a Number Board Game

Researchers conducted a study with 124 children in Head Start classrooms, who played a simple board game with an adult (Ramani & Siegler 2008). They played a single-path game (10 numbered spaces in a row, with the 1 on the left and the 10 on the right) during four 15-minute sessions over two weeks. The children increased their scores on four different numerical tasks: counting, recognizing numerals, locating numbers on a number line, and knowing which of two numbers is larger. They maintained these increases when tested again nine weeks later. Classmates who played a similar game, with colors instead of numbers, did not improve on any of the numerical tasks. The fact that playing simple number games yields significant increases on school readiness skills shows the importance of playing such games in preschool.

Resource ideas

Introductory books about games

*Come Out and Play (It's a Kid's World)*, by Maya Ajmera and John D. Ivanko

Simple, multicultural introduction to the actions involved in children’s games, including swinging, jumping, running, climbing, tossing, catching, hitting and kicking balls. Also notes indoor versus outdoor play, playgrounds and amusement parks, water play, different types of games, in many places, alone, or with friends.

*Games*, by Samantha Berger and Daniel Moreton

Street and backyard games from different cultures. Includes hoops, bubbles, balls, jump rope, jacks, balloons, boats, marbles, and hand games.

Books on large motor noncompetitive games

*101 Hula Hoop Games for Kids*, by Joe Dinoffer

*Dancing Games for Children of All Ages*, by Esther Nelson

*Great Games for Young Children: Over 100 Games to Develop Self-Confidence, Problem-Solving Skills, and Cooperation*, by Rae Pica

Games books with a multicultural emphasis

*Games from Many Lands*, by Anita Benarde

*Hopscotch Around the World*, by Mary D. Lankford and Karen Dugan

*Galimoto*, by Karen Lynn Williams, illus. by Catherine Stock

Computer games for building skills and solving problems (all produced by Edmark)

*Thinkin’ Things*, *Bailey’s Book House*, *Millie’s Math House*, *Sammy’s Science House*, and *Trudy’s Time and Place House*

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**Create games to go with learning centers.** Children may soon begin to adapt or invent new games on their own.

**Block-stacking game.** Play this game with any set of blocks of different colors or shapes. For example, for a set with five colors of blocks, you will need 15 tongue depressors. For each block color, use a marker to color one end of three depressors. Place these sticks in a cup with the colored ends down (so that the players cannot see the colors). The first player selects a stick, and she places a block of that color on the floor or table. Play continues with each player choosing a stick and adding a block until the stack tumbles.

**Sand Table I Spy.** Select about 20 small objects from around the classroom. Arrange them on the sand and take a digital photo, then bury them. Hang the photo above the sand table. Challenge individuals or small groups of children to dig up all of the objects. For older preschoolers, add a clipboard with a copy of the digital photo so they can mark each object as they find it.

**Make new versions of familiar games.** Make bingo, lotto, memory, and domino games using a digital camera. To build community, early in the year, use photos of the children’s or teachers’ faces. Later versions might highlight seasons, curriculum themes, field trips, or other shared interests.
Play large motor games indoors and out. Children have fun completing obstacle courses and can play tossing games with rings, beanbags, or balls. Groups enjoy parachute games, Twister, and circle dances and games.

Try different versions of games from around the world. There are cultural variations of most sidewalk games, such as hopscotch and jump rope, as well as basic strategy games, such as tic tac toe. Talk with children about who makes the rules for games and which features of a game can change.

Encourage families to play games with children too. Sign and make copies of the Message in a Backpack on page 16 to send home. It’s available online (in English and Spanish) at tyc.naeyc.org.

Learning to win and lose

Start with games that are well within children’s abilities, so they are likely to succeed. At first focus on children doing their best, playing fair, and staying safe. Emphasize learning how to play the game, rather than how to win. This can motivate children to keep trying, even when a game or task is difficult. Talk about successful strategies and ways to improve play. When you play strategy games with children, avoid the temptation to lose on purpose. Instead, model and explain your strategies so children can learn how to improve their game play. Most of all, be a positive model of gracious winning and losing so children learn what to say and do in both situations. Try, “Good game. That was fun. Thanks for playing.”

Web resources

Body Mind and Child is driven by the philosophy that “the key to a child’s success in life is a healthy mind in a healthy body, and that the two are connected.” www.bodymindandchild.com

FamilyEducation.com provides rainy-day indoor activities for preschoolers on this page: http://fun.familyeducation.com/preschool/early-learning/33390.html

Topics (online magazine) highlights information on traditional children’s games from around the world in one issue. www.topics-mag.com/edition11/games-section.htm

SUPPORTING DUAL LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Games can have many benefits in a mixed language classroom. They help maintain the focus of a small group of children so you can check the dual language learner’s understanding and help him to learn from his peers. Encourage your English-speaking students to be patient with their DLL friends so they can all enjoy the game together. Show them how to demonstrate the game to their less-experienced peers. Strengthen learning benefits by teaching the rules to one game, then repeating the same game with different playing pieces. Once dual language learners know how to play, they can focus more on learning new words and knowledge.
Play Games while Waiting with Young Children

Waiting can be hard for children and adults. What can you and your child do to have fun and learn while waiting for your food to arrive in a restaurant, for the bus to come, or in a long line at the store? Try playing one of these word games. It can make the time pass more pleasantly and help your preschooler build valuable skills. Your child can learn how to focus on and describe objects, make decisions, solve word problems, persist at a task, and recognize colors, shapes, numbers, and letters. They will also learn that different people can see things in different ways.

I Spy. The first player looks around and chooses an object that all players can see and then provides one clue: “I spy with my little eye something that is green [or round or striped . . . ].” The other players take turns guessing the object. The player who guesses correctly starts the next round.

The Rainbow Game. One person chooses a color, and the others look for something of that color. When everyone spots something of the first color, another player chooses a new one. Keep playing until you run out of colors. Try playing with shapes, numbers, or letters as well.

Would You Rather? One player starts by asking a simple “Would you rather . . . ” question, such as “Would you rather play Uno or Go Fish?” “. . . eat an apple or a pear?” “. . . take a bath or a shower?” or “. . . have a picnic with an anteater or a raccoon?” Add explanations for the choices, if you wish.

I’m Thinking of an Animal. One person thinks of an animal and gives clues so others can guess what it is. The best clues narrow the search but still allow for multiple possibilities. “I’m thinking of an animal that is black and white” works better than “an animal with legs” (although the second option is typical of young children’s first clues). If no one guesses correctly, give additional clues until someone does.

You can change any of these games to fit your child’s age and interests. For younger children, make clues simpler or choose more obvious items. Adjust your play times to match your child’s attention span or the length of wait. Playing games makes the waiting fun!

A message from your child’s teacher
Fun, Fitness, and Friends: Playing Games with Preschoolers
by Sharon M. Carver (pages 12–15)

This article encourages playing games as a way children can build relationships and skills in all areas of development. It offers suggestions for introducing new games, inventing game variations, integrating games throughout the curriculum, and inviting families to engage in more game play.

Note: Prior to the session, collect the materials needed to play a variety of preschool games. Include commercial and homemade games, competitive and noncompetitive games, indoor and outdoor games, small group and whole group games. Collect games that could be played in several different learning centers and that focus on a range of content areas. Participants can explore the games as they arrive or during breaks, plus the games can serve as examples for the activities described below.

Key points to reinforce during staff development sessions:

- Teachers can support relationship and skill building by integrating games that focus on different content areas in a variety of learning centers.
- Once children are familiar with a particular game, teachers can gather valuable assessment data in the context of natural play.
- Offering families opportunities to play games in the classroom can welcome them into the center and build home-school connections.

Let’s Talk

1. Consider the types of games you enjoy as an adult. Would you rather play a game using words, numbers, trivia, or creativity? Would you rather play alone, with a partner, on a team, or in a relay? Do you play to socialize, to improve, for fun, or to win?

   If the session includes a large group of participants who do not know each other, you might begin with a movement-oriented get-to-know-you version of answering the questions above. Ask participants to move to the area of the room that you indicate for each answer to the “Would you rather . . . ?” questions above. Individuals who choose the same area will naturally begin talking about why they chose their answer. Forming different groups in response to each question highlights the fact that most everyone has something in common with each other person. Try the questions offered here or create your own to suit your group.

2. What do you remember about playing games as a child? Which games were your favorites? What did you learn from playing? Which did you avoid playing? Why?

3. What games do children play in your center? Which do they most enjoy? What skills are they building while they play?

4. Look at the photos on pages 12–15. What might the children be feeling, learning, or thinking? How are adults supporting the children’s play?

For Further Thinking

1. Identify the potential benefits of game play. Ask participants to form small groups. Give each group a piece of chart paper with a different developmental domain written at the top. Each group should discuss and record on the chart paper the skills in their assigned domain that children can build while playing games. Prompt for additional responses as needed so participants can see that there are many possibilities in all domains. Next, lead the whole group in creating similar lists of games that could be played in different learning centers (for example, block area, library, writing center) and areas of the outdoor playground. Alternatively, have the group focus on content areas, including science, social studies, creative arts, technology, health and safety, literature, and math. Note ways to vary other properties of the games (number of players, competitive versus noncompetitive, timed versus open-ended) so that teachers can provide games that interest all children. Highlight games that are particularly accessible to dual language learners.
2. **Use games to conduct authentic assessments.** Taking a few of the ideas listed on the pieces of chart paper, offer several diverse examples to highlight the ways games can be used to assess children’s skills. For example, a teacher might have a child be the caller in a bingo game and stack the deck so that all the cards will be called before anyone wins. The teacher can determine which letters, numerals, shapes, and so on, the child can name. An indoor or outdoor obstacle course can be designed so a teacher can quickly observe a variety of gross motor skills. Remind participants that children will enjoy the experience and want to play repeatedly, so teachers can monitor their skills over time. Games can often be played with existing materials and are easily modifiable to target particular skills of interest. Teachers can design simple checklists or data sheets for easy documentation. Return to the lists of games generated earlier and ask participants to suggest skills that they could assess objectively while children played each game.

3. **Develop a plan for promoting family game play.** Ask participants to work individually or in pairs to consider options for including families in games played at the program and for encouraging game play at home. For example, game-sharing days, center game nights, and game-playing opportunities during greeting and dismissal times all offer interactive home–school connections. Participants can copy the Message in a Backpack (p. 16) to give to families. They can provide materials and guidance so children can make take-home versions of games they play at the program. Invite participants to share their ideas with the group, and list them on chart paper.

### In the Classroom

1. **Implement and document.** Encourage participants to try introducing several new games to the children, playing them over the course of several weeks and then using them to gather objective assessment data.

2. **Connect with families.** Suggest that teachers try one way of involving families in playing games at the center and one way of supporting game play at home. They can invite the families to share their game play experiences, offer feedback on the options teachers provided, and recommend their own ideas.

3. **Follow up.** At the next session, invite participants to share their experiences playing games and gathering assessment data in the process. Also, ask them to report on the ways they promoted family game play.