

STRAND UNIT: OUTDOOR CHALLENGES

Outdoor challenge activities include trust or co-operative activities and group problem-solving exercises. They also involve physical challenges such as those presented by rope courses and adventure play apparatus. These challenges encourage children to think about what they are doing and to work as a team. The challenges require the children, as a team, to interact with each other so that each child becomes an important part of the group. Children therefore need to listen to each other for ideas and must praise and encourage one another.

These challenges provide children with great opportunities to develop skills in communication, decision-making, conflict resolution, risk taking and affirmation. Team building through outdoor challenges gives each team-mate the joy of individual success, but more importantly reinforces the joy of the group accomplishing a task through each child helping and depending upon one another.

The activities below include co-operative challenges, team building activities and parachute activities

Blindfold activities:

- a) Children in pairs – **A** has eyes closed. **B** is giving instructions i.e. walk forwards, turn right etc.
- b) Do the same as a above except in an open area **B** is blindfolded and **A** gives instruction i.e. we are going to cross an imaginary stream – jump.
- c) **A** leads **B** blindfolded along a trail i.e. **B** has hand on the trail cord (reverse roles in a, b and c)

Pass the hoop

In groups of about eight make a circle by holding hands. Put a hoop in on one persons shoulder. The group has to step through the hoop without breaking the chain. Later try two hoops.

Stepping Stones.

Each group is given 7 stepping-stones to cross the “river”. The entire group must cross from sideline to sideline of the hall without touching the ground. The entire group and the stones must reach the opposite bank. If anyone touches “water” the group starts again from their original position.

The Rock

Each team must balance for a specified amount of time on an object – the rock. The group must help each other to find ways of maintaining the balance. Use a mat or a tyre as a rock.

The Snake

These documents were originally compiled by team members of the previous support services that are now part of PDST.

Using a tug-of-war rope each team makes a snake shape. Then they must cover the whole rope with their bodies. Use different shapes i.e. letters, numbers etc.

Obstacle Course

Teacher lays out obstacle courses which involves stepping over mats, crawling under nets, jumping over cones etc. Each team completes their course to find an object at the end i.e. pencils etc. The first team to reach the treasure is the winner.

Shuffle Pack

Children stand in groups on a raised plank or bench. Each group is asked to re-arrange themselves into alphabetical order according to their names, surnames, month of birthday etc. The children must do so without touching the ground. If the ground is touched they go back to their original starting position. Undertaking the activity in silence and in a given time increases the difficulty (may use carpet tiles)

Farmyard

The teacher whispers the name of one or two or three different animals to different children i.e. cow, sheep, dog. The children then scatter themselves around the room. The object of the activity is to find all the members of your specific animal group and to link arms with them. The only means of communication allowed is your animal sound. Make it harder by saying each group must be complete within a given time.

Scenarios

Read the story to the class. Divide them into teams of 4 and they solve the problem. It may help to 'label' the characters;

“ A farmer has to get a fox, a chicken and a goat across the river. The fox cannot be on his own with the chicken or the goat as he would eat them. The farmer can only take one across the river at a time”. Solve it.

Pipe line: Each team has a pipe (with tiny unseen holes in it) stuck to a square of timber and is steady in the ground. 5/6 yards back is a bucket of water and plastic cups.

Challenge – fill the pipe with water without moving the pipe or the bucket. How will children do this as a team? How do they cope when the water starts coming out of the pipe?

Turn the sheet

Lay a sheet flat on the floor. Everyone in the group stands on the sheet. Can the group turn the sheet over on its other side with out any one stepping off it, or the group must begin again!

Further team building activities

Ref.: Team-building Activities

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Survival of the Caterpillars

Focus: Co-operation
Communication



Number of players: 2-6

Equipment: Large balls, assorted objects (quoits, beanbags, benches, hoops, etc) Aim: For group to move from one end of the yard to the other without the balls falling and the caterpillar breaking up

1. Create an obstacle course using equipment
2. Group needs to form a human caterpillar by placing a ball between each person
3. Caterpillar should attempt to move without breaking up. Sections of the caterpillar need to remain tight so the balls do not fall to the floor.
4. Caterpillar must attempt to reach its destination.

Landslide

Focus: Problem solving

Number of players: 3-5

Equipment: 4 yellow hoops, 4 blue hoops, 3 red hoops, set of rules (see below) Aim: To construct a bridge that spans the playing area whilst adhering to "the rules".

1. One child is nominated jigsaw expert. This person becomes Keeper of the Rules
2. Remaining children must attempt to build a bridge from the hoops whilst adhering to "the rules". No one is allowed to see the rules apart from the Keeper.
3. The rules are as follows:
 - No reds are to be placed next to each other
 - A yellow must be followed by a blue
 - Two consecutive blues must be followed by a red
 - You cannot start or finish the bridge with a yellow

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- The sequence blue-yellow-red is forbidden!
4. Each child may carry only one single hoop in a single turn
 5. Children must place the next hoop in the line by travelling along the extending bridge, placing it in line and then returning back along the bridge to allow the next person with the next hoop to take their turn

6. Once the bridge is complete all children may travel along the bridge, providing that
it is completed within the rules

Tip: Adding an extra red hoop will make the task much easier

CodeBreaker

Focus: Agility
Problem-solving
Communication



Number of players: 3-5
Equipment: Calculators, Number sentences (resource 1)

Aim: To correctly relay a numerical message as quickly as possible

1. The class will need to decide upon a codebreaker. This player will move to the opposite side of the playing area and switch on the calculator
2. Upon the teacher's signal, the remaining players can look at the numerical message to send
3. Group must now decide how to efficiently send the message to the codebreaker.
They may cross the playing area only one at a time.
4. As each player arrives with a part of the message, the codebreaker enters it into their calculator
5. When the codebreaker has all of the message, they press = to reveal the answer
6. The codebreaker then takes the answer to the teacher to discover if it is correct and whether the code has been broken

Tip: If children feel they are capable of remembering sets of numbers rather than single digits, then they will complete this task much quicker. However, this also increases the risk of making mistakes with the code

Extension: This activity can be made harder by introducing longer and more complicated number sentences. Also, you can try using a larger area where the codebreaker is a long way from the rest of the class. For groups especially skilled at maths, try omitting the calculator.

SuperglueUndo

Focus: Co-operation
Problem

solving Number of players: 3

or more Equipment: Quoits

Aim: For players to untangle their crossed arms and form a circle without letting go of the quoits

1. Players need to form a circle with each child holding a quoit in their right hand

2. Each child must cross their right arm over their left arm
3. Using their left hand each child must now take hold of the quoit available on their right-hand side
4. Children must work together to uncross their arms whilst maintaining a firm grip on the quoits

Extension: This task can be made more difficult by increasing the number of players

Jailbreak

Focus: Co-operation
Balance
Problem-solving

Number of players: 3-7

Equipment: Bench
Beanbag

Aim: To pass the beanbag from one end of the line to the other without using your hands, stepping from the bench or letting the beanbag touch the bench or floor

1. Children form a line standing on the bench
2. The first child in line places the beanbag under their chin
3. All children, including the one with the beanbag now need to place their hands on their heads. These cannot be removed until the challenge is completed
4. The children must now devise ways of passing the beanbag to the end of the line without using their hands or letting the beanbag touch the bench or floor
5. Once the last in line has received the beanbag they can drop it off the end of the bench, "releasing" their team

Hint: Chins, knees or feet could all be used to pass the beanbag

DetectiveSquad

Focus: Problem-solving
Agility
Communication

Number of players: 4-30 players divided into teams of 2-5

Equipment: 20-30 cones or markers



Crime details (on separate pieces
of card) Detective report (resource
2)
Pencil

Aim: For each detective squad to compile a full report with all crime details complete before the other detective squads do so

1. Six crime details need to be written on separate pieces of card by the teacher. These should include: criminal's name, age, occupation, crime location, type of crime and weapon used.
2. Pieces of card should be stuck under six separate cones. These must be mixed up with the other cones
3. The cones are then scattered in a large area
4. Squads should decide on a number of runners as only one team's detective may leave their station at a time
5. When the teacher instructs that the search can begin, the first detective can leave their station. As soon as they have looked under one cone, they must return to their station, successful or not, ready to tag the next detective
6. If a detective finds a clue to the crime, they should write down the detail on the squad's report at their station
7. When the report is complete the squad together shout "you're nicked!" and their report can be checked by the teacher

Hint: Successful teams should observe which cones have been tried already

Extension: This can be repeated over a larger area

IslandSOS

Focus: Co-operation
Balance
Problem solving

Number of players: 4-7

Equipment: Bench
Letter cards (resource 3)

Aim: For the group to put themselves in order without falling off the cliff(bench)

1. All of the children in the group need to stand on the bench
2. The teacher provides each child with a letter card
3. The children must work out what the word is
4. To complete the task they should help each other move into the correct place on the bench without touching the floor
5. Children are not allowed to simply exchange letter cards

Resource1

a. $2743652 / 598258 = b.$

$$7645399 / 628122 = c.$$

$$5633233 / 332232 = d.$$

$$6343456 / 132132 = e.$$

$$3232323 / 233233 =$$

f. $7432 \times 321 - 50000 + 123321 = g.$

$$65324 \times 44 - 40024 + 321132 = h.$$

$$100000 - 100000 + 10000 / 20 =$$

i. $101010 - 10101 + 1010 / 1 =$

Resource2

DETECTIVE REPORT
Criminal's name:
Age:
Occupation:
Location of crime:
Type of crime:
Weapon used:

ISLAND SOS

H	E	L	P
---	---	---	---

Q	U	I	C	K
---	---	---	---	---

R	E	S	C	U	E
---	---	---	---	---	---

T	R	A	P	P	E	D
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Co-operative Team Games & Relays

Touch the Ball

You will need a variety of objects in a variety of sizes, eg, a soccer ball, a soft ball, a tennis ball, a golf ball, a coin.

Ask the group to stand in a circle and place the largest object in the middle of the circle and tell the group they must all touch the object without touching each other. Once they can figure out how to arrange themselves so that they can do this for ten seconds, give them a smaller object. Work all the way down to the coin.

Co-operative Sitting Circle (Lap Sit)

“Please arrange yourselves so that someone about the same size as you is on either side of you... We can do many things as a group that we cannot do as individuals, and this game, called Lap Sit, is one of them.. Everyone turn to your right. Step in closer to the centre and put your hands on the waist of the person in front of you. In a moment, we are each going to sit on the knees of the person behind us keeping our own knees together as we do. Concentrate on guiding the person in front of you to sit comfortably on your knees, and trust that the person behind you will guide you, too. First we will have a trial run. On the count of three we are going to bend down, touch bottoms to the knees and come right back up to make sure we are all standing closely enough together. Ready? 1, 2, 3...” I then ask them to readjust their positions if necessary. “Now we are going to sit down and then clap our hands... Again...” *At a festival in New Zealand, 1,700 people once did this at the same time This activity usually amazes people by what they can do in solidarity. The game was originally called Empress Eugenie’s Circle, because the soldiers of that Austrian empress did this to keep dry while resting in a wet field waiting for a royal visit.*

Who am I?

Ask the children to name one celebrity or famous person each and record their answers on individual stickers or post-its. Pin the name of a different famous person to each pupil’s back, so that they cannot see it. Then ask pupils to walk around the room, asking each other questions about the identity of their famous person. The questions can only be answered by “yes” or “no”. The game continues until everyone has figured out who they are.

As and Bs

Ask everyone to choose silently someone in the room that is their 'A' person and another person who is their 'B' person. There are no particular criteria on which to base their choices – selections are entirely up to individuals. Once everyone has made their choices, tell them to get as close to their respective 'A' person as possible, while getting as far away from their 'B' person. People can move quickly but should not grab or hold anyone. After a few minutes, pupils stop and reverse the process, getting close to their 'B' persons and avoiding their 'A' persons.

Smaller Group Games

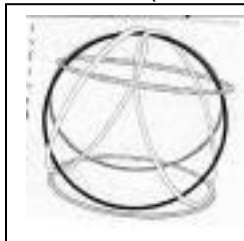
Shape Chains

Groups of about 6 hold hands in a circle and are asked to change their circle to a square, rectangle, triangle, star shape... can they change the level or size of their shape without letting go of the hands???

Circle Soccer

Divide the class into groups of 4-6 with each group forming a circle holding hands. Their group task is to keep a ball (balloon) up in the air using any part of their body except their hands .i.e keep holding hands in their circle. Then each group dribbles the ball within their circle around a target cone and back, keeping the balloon within their circle or huddle without using their hands, If the balloon escapes, they must come back to the start.

Hula Hut (6 same-sized hula hoops)



Each group gets 6 hula hoops and is shown how to build a hut. They then create their own, placing one on the ground (foundation). Place two hoops on the opposite sides of this base and lean them together at 45 degree angles. Place two more hoops on the opposite sides and lean them over the first pair. The 6th hoop (roof) is put on top, over the others to hold them in place. The challenge is for each child to get through the structure from one side to the other without knocking it down. Each should try to find a unique route. All the team mates can assist by holding the hut or pupil. Variation: How many pupils can fit in the hut at once ? Can we get out without breaking it???

Hoop Circle

Ask the children to hold hands in a circle with a hoop hanging on one, (or each) pair of joined hands. The children try to move the hoop around the circle without releasing their hands. Some older children can try this blindfolded. If possible, try two different sized hoops moving in alternate directions simultaneously!

Tangle Twister

Each person in the group (of 6, 8 or 10) places their right hand into the centre of the circle at a high level, and takes hold of one person's hand, but not the person next to them. They now place their left hand into centre of the circle at a lower level and take hold of another person's hand but not the person standing next to them. The challenge for the group is to untangle and form a ring without letting go of each others hands. Some may face outward while others face inward. **Clue:** Don't forget that the people whose hands you are holding should end up either side of you!!

Frogger

The class are divided into groups consisting of at least three children. They line up at one sideline facing into the court area. Each group has two same coloured floor spots. The object is for one member of the group ('sad frog' – can't swim) to move across the 'pond' without getting wet. The helpers (tadpoles) are to continually move the lily pads forward so the frog has a place to jump. The two tadpoles can swim so they are allowed in the water. Once across, they must come back again from the opposite side with a new frog until all have had a go at being the frog. If a frog puts a leg into the water, that frog must start again from the edge of the pond. Remind the tadpoles to place the lily pads within jumping distance, but not too near...this can be a co-operative race!!!

Turn the Sheet

Place the sheet flat on the ground. Each group of 6-8 stands on their sheet (plain side up).

The group must try and turn the sheet over to finish with the other (patterned) side facing up, without stepping off the sheet. **Clue:** Start at one corner of the sheet. **Variations:** Turn the sheet without using hands, or in silence.

Non-verbal Birthday Line-Up

The following instruction is given: "Without talking, line yourselves up according to the month of your birth and possibly even the day and date". The players themselves must work out the beginning, end and order of the line, by mime or any other non-verbal communication. Other suggestions for order of line up include alphabetically, numerically or by letters making up a word. Younger kids can do this by size of animals on cards etc

Paper and Straws

Pupils split into teams. Each team forms a line and places a piece of card at the beginning of their line. Each member of the team has a drinking straw or reed.

When the game starts, the first person has to pick up the piece of card by sucking on the straw. The card then has to be passed to the next team member using the same method. If the card drops, it goes back to the first person and the whole sequence has to start again.

Ball Relay

Divide the group into smaller groups where they must arrange themselves into lines, (6-10 children per line). Each line is given a ball and the group must pass the ball from one end of the line to the other without the ball touching the floor. This can be done in a number of ways, using their backs, from side to side, through their legs, from chest to chest, or giving the group an opportunity to make up their own way.

Quoit/ Ring Pass

The group must pass a quoit by foot to partner's foot without it touching the ground. Once passed, that player moves to end of line to receive it again in turn. (Sender needs to raise foot higher than receiver's who keeps heel on ground with their toe pointing up)

Hold the Rope Relay

Class in groups of no more than five. Each group has a rope. All children must have both hands on rope. Each group face five beanbags, 10-15 metres away. On the signal teams must race to the beanbags keeping all hands on the rope. They must pick up one bean bag and put it on the head of one group member BUT teams cannot use their hands as they are still holding the rope. They race back to the finish line, drop the beanbag and repeat for each team member. If they drop the beanbag on the way back they must replace it without using their hands.

Bull Ring

Divide the class into groups of four. Each group has a curtain ring, four pieces of string 1m –2m in length and a ball. Task is to transport the ball from one end of the hall/yard to the other using the string and the curtain ring. Once moving they can only touch the string. Allow children to improvise. Eventually share methods between groups. Best method appears to be as follows: Each child doubles his/her piece of string around the ring. The four children are holding the string equal distance away from the ring. They keep tension on the ring so it stays horizontal and the ball balances on it.

Co-operative Parachute Games



Teach the grips

- thumbs-up (thumbs above the chute, fingers underneath)
- thumbs-down grip (thumbs under the chute and fingers above)

Practice spatial awareness of the circle and of other pupils

Vary the different levels –holding parachute at ground, waist high, shoulder and overhead levels

Practice moving around and stopping without bumping....

- Spin the chute round and round
- Pass the parachute along
- Making Waves

The Sea

The parachute in effect becomes the sea. Five words are introduced to describe the movements of the sea: still, gentle, breezy, windy and stormy. The teacher or any group member can call numbers from one to five, one = still and five = stormy, and the group must move the parachute as appropriate. Hand signals can then be introduced for the five words and one member of the group uses hand signals to indicate how the parachute should be moved.



Making a mushroom

This is a basic starting point for parachute games. Get everyone to spread out evenly around the chute and hold the edge. Pull the chute taut and crouch down. On the command MUSHROOM, everyone stands and pulls the chute upwards causing the chute to fill with air and rise like a giant mushroom.

- Place swap.....run under and swap places when called by name.
- Stop and shake...as they swap under the mushroom they shake hands or high five.
- Oranges and lemons...swap when your fruit /number etc is called....

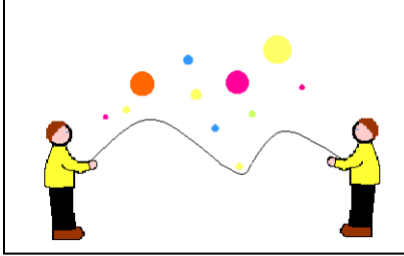
Making a tent

They create a mushroom and step inwards, sitting on the edge. A nominated child can stand in the centre as the 'tent pole'. This child can call another in who must take their place before the tent collapses and call another and so on.



A variety of co-operative games/circle work activities (see P.5-6 above) can be undertaken inside the tent.

Popcorn



Start with everybody holding the chute stretched
Then see how quickly they can throw them off.

Divide into 2 teams – one team keeping them
them off.

Bucket ball..place a bucket next to one child
and see can the class manoeuvre the
balls into the bucket.

Solar System

The parachute becomes the solar system. A ball (representing the planet) is introduced onto the parachute and the group must work together so that the ball travels all around the edge of the solar system.

Cross Ball

Using a larger ball, can they send the ball to a nominated child and that child then nominates another target...

Presents

Wrapped box is placed on the chute and the 'present' is sent to a designated child who then pickes another recipient (try girls pick boys and vice versa in a mixed class)

Parachute Golf

Can they co-operate to send a tennis ball into the hole in the centre of the chute...?

Heads and Shoulders

Use the thumbs down grip, the children perform *Heads, shoulders, knees and toes*, moving the parachute to levels .

The Boa Constrictor

The parachute is held at ankle level, and the children sing...(to the air of *Here we go round the mulberry bush*)

The boa constrictor eats me up, eats me up, eats me up.

The boa constrictor eats me up – all the way to my ankles

Song progresses to 'knees', 'waist', and 'neck' and the parachute is lifted higher on each verse until last verse when they sing 'The boa constrictor swallows me whole' and on the final phrase they pull the chute right over themselves.

The Weather Today

Children hold the parachute at waist height, imagining it's a pond, choose a child, and chant a rhyme...

*(Child's name, (x2), tell us all
Is it calm or is there a squall?
Is it sunny or is it grey?
What's the weather like today?*

The child chooses the weather and the children show this effect on the parachute (pond)..another child is chosen...