

# BACK POCKET GAMES

## ICEBREAKERS

### **Make Up a Story**

This one is an interesting and fun game which draws on the imagination of children and adds in plenty of laughter.

### HOW TO PLAY

The game is quite simple and yet needs a lot of creativity to be played; therefore, someone has to start with a good first line such as “once upon a time”.

The next kid adds four more words to the story, such as “there was a frog”.

The kid after that continues adding four more words, and the game progresses

The rule of the game is to make sure not to repeat what another says and no using sentences such as “long, long, long, ago”.

### **Token for a Thought**

This icebreaker activity gives a little incentive to the particularly shy kids who aren't willing to participate in games.

Things You Will Need:

6 -8 tokens such as candy, cereal puffs or stickers for every kid.

A list of questions to get to know each kid:

- What is your favourite toy?
- What is your favourite colour?
- What your favourite teacher's name
- What is your best friend's name?
- Which is your favourite book?
- How to Set Up and Play

Arrange all the tokens in boxes and ask questions to kids in an order

For each answer, they receive a token such as a sticker or a candy

Once the items have run out, they can ask questions to each other

These icebreaker games are suitable for kids of all ages, and they're a perfect way to get everybody acquainted with everybody else. The nature of the games is fun to help kids want to participate without any pressure.

## TAKE IT EASY

ONCE YOUR KIDS HAVE SETTLED IN and got to know you and each other, you can begin the real fun. The games in this chapter might require less physical energy, but they are by no means “easy” games. Many of them require thinking, strategizing or problem solving. Some of them are based on luck and require no specific skills. Some of them are quieter games, but many of them can get quite exciting and noisy.

On the whole, these games require little to no physical movement and are perfect for when your children need lower-energy games that aren't lower-fun games. We recommend playing

these games on hot days when the sun is highest, and at the beginning and end of the day when participants are just waking up or ready to go to bed.

These games are also great right after a vigorous and exhausting racing game, or immediately after lunch when the sugar high hasn't quite kicked in yet and since running on a full stomach is a bad idea.

Classics:

- Charades
- Pictionary
- 20 Questions
- 2 Truths and a lie
- Total Recall or Kims Game

## **Buzz**

### HOW TO PLAY

Have your group sit in a circle or rows. Players count off in turn to 100, each saying one number aloud. The trick is, they must replace the number 7 and all multiples of 7 (14, 21, 28, etc.), including any number with a 7 in it (27, 37) with the word "buzz" The number 77 will be "buzz buzz"!

You can play just for fun and not for competition. Or you can assess penalty points for players who miss a "buzz" or hesitate too long, and the player with the fewest points by the time you reach 100 is the winner. If the game is moving really slowly or you have a large group, eliminate players after two mistakes, and play until there is only one player left.

### VARIATIONS

To make the game easier, try Fizz. Substitute "fizz" for 5 and multiples of 5, since it is easier for most kids to count by 5. To make the game more difficult, try Fizz Buzz. Substitute "fizz" for 5 and multiples of 5, as well as "buzz"

for 7 and multiples of 7! Play begins:

• "1, 2, 3, 4, fizz, 6, buzz, 8, 9, fizz fizz, 11, 12, 13, buzz, fizz fizz, 16, buzz, 18, 19, fizz.." The number 57 will be "fizz buzz" and 75 will be "buzz fizz"!

### MODIFICATIONS

For kids who don't know their times tables at all, change the game so that they say "buzz" every time they have to say 7 (7, 17, 27), or every time they reach a multiple of 10 (10, 20, 30, etc.).

## **Crambo**

### HOW TO PLAY

Choose one player - for example, Amrit - to choose a word for the other players to guess. Amrit might decide that "rug" is his target word, but he must choose other words that rhyme with "rug" to play the game, for example, hug, mug, bug and lug. Amrit begins the game by saying, "I am thinking of a word that rhymes with hug"

The rest of the players ask questions to help them guess the target word. For example, Margot might ask, "Is it something that is eaten by a spider?" Amrit must then reply, guessing the word that Margot was thinking of when she asked the question: "No, Margot, it's not a bug" Or, "Is it something you drink coffee out of?" "No, it's not a mug"

If Margot asks a question for which Amrit cannot find a rhyming answer, he is considered "stumped" For example, Margot may ask, "Is it something that pulls other boats around the harbor?" If Amrit cannot say, "No, it's not a tug" then Amrit is out and Margot gets to choose the next word. Similarly, if Margot says, "Is it something you put on your floor and vacuum?" she has guessed the word correctly and gets to choose the next word

#### VARIATIONS

See Dumb Crambo for a variation that does not allow the guessing players to speak and instead requires them to act out the answers.

#### MODIFICATIONS

To decrease the difficulty level, allow the player with the target word (Amrit) more than one chance if he is stumped by the questions from the guessing player (Margot).

NOTE Make sure the questions being asked by the guessing players aren't too vague. If Margot asks, "Is it something you buy in a store?" the answers could be almost unlimited. Try not to eliminate a player because of a vague question; instead, ask them to be more specific.

### **Backwards Scavenger Hunt**

#### HOW TO PLAY

This game is like Scavenger Hunt, except backwards!

Announce to the players how many items you have on your hidden list of items, which you will have created ahead of time. (The items should be objects readily available in your area.)

Send players around an area to collect a certain number of items, to match the number of items on your hidden list. Players will have an allotted amount of time to collect items that they think are on your list.

When the time is up, players must return with their items. Then you will run through your list with them. Every time the group has an item that was on the list, they receive a point. If there are several groups, the group with the most points wins.

### **One Word Story**

#### HOW TO PLAY

Have the players sit in a circle and explain that the whole group is going to create a story, one word at a time. The word energy will travel clockwise around the circle, and each player gets to say one word for each pass of the circle.

The story will begin with "Once upon a time" and end a minute or so after the leader makes a "wrap-it-up" gesture. The only big rule is that each word must make sense with the words that came before it. So, for example, if Jonah begins a story about a whale, Jasper cannot change the story to be about a camel, unless the camel is going to go to meet the whale. Encourage players to be ridiculous, but remind them that they must work with their teammates to make the story as zany as possible.

#### VARIATIONS

If you are playing with lights out, establish an order or way of taking turns: alphabetical or clockwise both work. For younger players, try one-sentence stories.

NOTE -Make sure players keep the stories appropriate for their age and the group environment.

## GET ACTIVE

### SuperHeroes

#### HOW TO PLAY

Have players stand in a circle. Before beginning the game, have players practice the sending actions and receiving actions described below.

The game begins when one player performs a sending action to another, looking them clearly in the eye so the receiving player knows that he is the recipient.

The receiving player then performs the receiving action.

Then, the receiving player performs a sending action to a new player, and the new player performs the receiving action. And so on, and so on.

All actions should be accompanied by the appropriate ridiculous noise.

- Spiderman sending action: sender slings webs and makes the sound of the webshooters as if they are Spiderman catching a bad guy.
- Spiderman receiving action: receiver must whirl around as if they are being wound up in a web and make an appropriate surprised sound.
- Wonder Woman sending action: sender shoots imaginary super bullets, making the appropriate silly shooting noises.
- Wonder Woman receiving action: receiver deflects super bullets with their shiny super bracelets.
- Alien sending action: sender mimes baby Alien crawling up and exploding out of their stomach and flying toward the face of the receiver.
- Alien receiving action: receiver grabs imaginary
- Alien on face and howls with agony.
- Batman sending action: sender throws Batarang and makes appropriate boomerang noises.
- Batman receiving action: receiver gets bonked on the head with the Batarang and makes bird tweeting noises as imaginary birds circle their dazed heads.

The game ends when all players have been included or when the game is peaked.

## **Ship to Shore**

### HOW TO PLAY

Shout out various

"commands" that the players must quickly obey. The commands tend to be nautically themed. Some actions are sillier than others. Favourites include:

- "Starboard" -players must run to the right-hand side of the playing area,
- "Port"- they run to the left,
- "Bow" - they run to the front end of the playing area,
- "Stern" - they run to the back end,
- "Scrub the Decks"- players must get on their hands and knees and mime scrubbing,
- "Captain's Coming" - they stand straight at attention, hand ready to salute,
- "Climb the Rigging"- they mime a climbing motion,
- "Submarine"- players lie down on their backs with one leg straight up in the air (as the periscope),
- "Captain's Daughter" - they twirl their (invisible) hair and bat their eyelashes,
- "Sharks"- players scream as loudly as possible, but use your discretion in calling this one.

For maximum silliness, call out two commands at once and enjoy the actions.

You can play the game with elimination, so the last player to perform each activity is out, or simply peak the game.

### VARIATIONS

You can also play this game so that the leader also alternates as It when the command "Fish Gobbler" is called out. Players must quickly drop to the floor and find one another and attach arms, legs or bodies before being tagged. Players are safe as long as they are physically linked together.

If you are playing elimination, players tagged before linking up are eliminated from the game. Regular play is resumed by calling "Rescue!"

### MODIFICATIONS

Instead of using complicated nautical terms, play Here, There, Where. This game involves the same kind of actions as Ship to Shore but is simpler.

When you call "Here" children run to you. For "There" point in a direction and the kids run there. For "Where" kids stop and jump up and down.

## **Relay Races**

Classics

-Simple race

-Leap Frog

-Wacky themes (Zombies, animals, crab,

Bring up your Relay race game:

- Have players crawl, crab-walk, slither, bunny hop, hop on one foot, cartwheel or walk backward through stages.
- Have players place an orange or tennis ball between their knees.
- Have players wear a floppy hat.
- Have players act like an animal or famous person at different points in the relay (for example, when carrying the an egg on the a spoon, participants must advance forward like old-fashioned sword-fighters)

## **Dragon Tails**

### HOW TO PLAY

Divide the group into even teams with three or four players per team.

Appoint one person to be the dragon's head and one person to be the dragon's tail. The other team members are the dragon's body.

Give the player who is the dragon's tail the pinnie (Necker) or flag so that he can tuck an end of it into his pants. Most of the "tail" should be hanging out and it should come out easily when tugged at.

After setting boundaries, position the teams far apart from each other.

Have the teams form dragons by placing their hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. The dragon's head should be at the front of the line, and the dragon's tail should be at the end.

Dragons must move as a unit and attempt to steal the other dragons' tails.

Only the head of the dragon can grab at the other tails.

Once the tail of a dragon is stolen, that dragon unit is out. If a dragon unit breaks apart, they are "out."

If playing with elimination, the winning dragon is the last team standing.

### VARIATIONS

To play without elimination, have "out" teams count to 30, or some other number, before rejoining the game.

## **Bop!**

### HOW TO PLAY

Have the players stand in a circle.

Choose one player - for example, Sarah - to stand in the middle and be it.

Sarah must go around the circle saying "Bop" to the other players. In response, they must stay silent. However, if Sarah says "Bop-diddly-op-bop" the player being spoken to must say "Bop" before Sarah has finished speaking. Otherwise, that player is eliminated and has to sit down.

This game is more challenging than it seems!

## **Kitty Wants A Corner**

### HOW TO PLAY

Have the group stand in a circle with one player (Kitty) in the middle.

Kitty approaches one of the players in the circle and says, "Kitty wants a corner, a place to lie down."

The player approached then picks somewhere else for Kitty to look, saying, "Go three people to your left,"

or

"Go one person to my right" or whatever other arbitrary direction the player wishes to give Kitty.

The tricky part of the game comes when the other players try to annoy Kitty by switching places behind her back. For example, while Kitty is asking Vicki for a corner, Shannon and Nolan make eye contact and quickly run across the circle and switch places.

It gets even trickier when other players try to foil Shannon or Nolan! For example, if Bobby sees Shannon and Nolan make eye contact, he might slip into Nolan's spot while Shannon and Nolan are changing places. If Kitty then takes Bobby's place before Nolan gets there, Nolan becomes the new Kitty.

Peak the game when everyone is having fun.

#### VARIATIONS

If you like Kitty Wants a Corner, try Sword in the Stone: Supreme Master of the Universe, the more senior (and more awesome) version of this game.

#### MODIFICATIONS

Use hula hoops to ensure that two players don't try to slide into the same place. While we have seen this game played with chairs, we find that it can get pretty bumpy, and lessening the contact with pointy wood or metal can also help reduce injuries!

### **Speed Rabbit**

#### HOW TO PLAY

Have youth stand in a circle, and pick one player to go in the middle and be It. It chooses one player in the circle to give a command to.

The command will be to form one of several special positions to create a shape. If It says "Elephant!" to the player, that child and the two players immediately on either side of her must comply as quickly as possible, creating an elephant.

The last of the three players to get into position is out. The types of commands can vary, some groups create their own, but here are some of our favourites:

- Rabbit: The player in the middle pretends to chew a carrot, while players on either side hold their arms up in the air in bunny-ear shapes.
- Elephant: The player in the middle holds one arm straight in front of herself, looping the other arm around the first and holding her nose with her fingers.

This makes the elephant trunk, which she will wave about. The players on either side must create large circles with their arms and hold them out to the side to create the ears.

- Palm Tree: The player in the middle stands straight with arms in a V-shape. She is the palm tree. Players on either side must hula-dance, arms directed away from the palm tree.
- Elvis: The player in the middle must play guitar and knock her knees, like the King of Rock and Roll. Players on either side get on their knees and act like adoring fans.
- Television: One of the side players gets down on his hands and knees and creates a "couch" on which the middle player sits, eating a bowl of chips, and watching the third player pretend to be a television.

#### MODIFICATIONS

In smaller groups, Speed Rabbit should be played without elimination.

# Tag ! You are it!

## Ways to Choose It

- Counting off with eeny meeny miny moe or other silly rhymes
- the person who won the last game is It
- the person who won the last game chooses It
- choose the person who listened the whole time you explained the rules
- choose someone sitting/standing nicely and quietly with their hand raised
- choose the person who can scream the loudest
- choose the person with the best dance move
- choose the person with the best giraffe (bunny, lizard, etc.) face
- choose the person who answers the trivia question correctly

## Rhymes for Choosing It:

Eeny meeny miny moe,  
Catch a tiger by the toe,  
If he hollers let him go,  
Eeny meeny miny moe.

Ink stink  
Bottle of ink  
Someone let out  
An awful stink  
It was Y-O-U!

Ackabacka Soda Cracker  
Ackabacka boo  
In goes out  
And out goes you.

Each, peach, pear, plum  
Out goes Tom Thumb,  
Tom Thumb won't do,  
Out goes Betty Blue,  
Betty Blue won't do,  
So out goes you.

## **ManHunt**

Begin the same way as conventional tag. When It tags a player, that player also becomes It. Each time a player is tagged, the It team grows and the escaping team shrinks. The game ends when all the Its go on a Man-hunt to catch the last player. The last player tagged becomes the first It in the next round.

## **FlashLight Tag**

### HOW TO PLAY

This game is a version of Tag played at night. (See pages 118 to 125 for other games of Tag.) To keep things safe and fun, make sure you establish boundaries and ground rules with all your campers beforehand: for instance, no going into the woods, no going past the cookhouse, no going into the cabins, no going out into the lake, etc.

Choose one player to be It. While she counts to 50 (or more) with her eyes covered at home base, the other players run and hide. It then has to find and tag the other players. The trick is, she must tag them by shining a flashlight beam on them instead of physically tagging them and calling out, "You're It!" The first player tagged becomes the new It and everybody is called to go back to home base.

### VARIATIONS

Play the game so that It must correctly call out the name of the person she has tagged with her flashlight. You can also play so that anyone who is tagged goes to "jail" and has to be rescued by another player before they can run free again.



## **Werewolf Tag**

### HOW TO PLAY

Choose one player to be It. It is the Werewolf. Have the Werewolf close his eyes and count to 20 while the other players run and hide.

Then the Werewolf must try to find and tag the other players. If a player sees him, she can yell "Werewolf!" and all the other players can run to home base and be safe.

But if the Werewolf tags anyone, that player is now It and becomes the new Werewolf. Once the Werewolf has tagged someone, he has to howl out loud like a wolf, so all the other players know there is a new Werewolf and they have to come back to home base to start a new game.

## **Blob Tag**

Begin in the same way as conventional tag but within smaller boundaries. Choose one It to run around trying to tag other players.

However, when It tags a player, that player joins It by holding hands or linking elbows and also becomes It.

This continues, with more players getting tagged and being added on to the Blob of It. The Blob works together to catch the rest of the players, but it must stay together to retain its power; if the Blob is broken, it cannot tag players.

Eventually, the entire group save one or two members will be part of the Blob, and the game can end then, or after the Blob has cornered and caught all remaining members. This game works best in a playing field with distinct lines, perhaps even one with walls, so that players can be cornered by the Blob.

## **Slow motion tag**

Slow motion tag follows the same premise as high-speed tag, only instead of everyone running, everyone moves in slow motion. It takes a disciplined group of players to have a good game of Slow Motion Tag, but the hilarity is well worth the discipline.

Contain players to a space no larger than an average classroom. Appoint two or three people to be It and give them an item such as a pencil, marker, ruler or flag to signify that they are It. Demonstrate the speed level that you expect from your players. We recommend playing at about a quarter of normal speed. Using the metaphor of moving through peanut butter often helps children understand. Also explain that because gravity does not work in slow motion, one foot must stay on the ground at all times- so no jumping out of the way.

The game begins with all of the Its on one side of the space and all of the runners on the other. It goes after the runners in super slow motion. The runners can pivot, dodge and twist out of the way, but must do so in slow motion. If It tags a runner, It passes along their signifiers (pencils, flags) to the person tagged. We do this so it is easy to tell who is It, which is important in a game that focuses more on observation than reaction time.

After a few initial "role-modeling rounds, we recommend that this is the one game that you do not play alongside your campers. It is important here to have an outside observer encouraging participants to keep the pace slow. The plus side of all this slowing down is a game of tag that ends up looking like a kung-fu ballet in super slow motion.

Encourage players to pretend they are moving like the characters in a movie shown in slow motion and you will get groovy results.

## **Giants, Wizards and Elves**

### **HOW TO PLAY**

Establish boundaries for play in a rectangular area, around the size of half a basketball court. Two of these boundaries should face each other and should be visible to all players: when a player passes those lines, they are in the safe zone.

Divide the group into two even teams and have them line up along their safe line facing each other.

Explain that they are in a magic forest where ancient mystical Giants, Wizards and Elves battle for supremacy.

Explain that the Giants always defeat the Elves because they can step on them.

-The Wizards always defeat the Giants because of their magic powers. The Elves always defeat the Wizards because Elves are such tricky, scheming little creatures.

Then teach the players the actions that go with each of the creatures.

- To pretend to be Giants, players stand on their tiptoes with their arms above their heads.
- To pretend to be Wizards, players point their hands straight out and wiggle their fingers as if they are casting a spell.
- To pretend to be Elves, players crouch and hold their hands up to their ears to make pointed Elf ears.

After you have practiced making the various actions, and after the players have an understanding of who defeats who, have the two teams huddle up separately. Each team must pick a first action and a second action Giants and Elves, for example, or Giants and Giants. (We pick two actions in case the first actions of both teams are the same.)

The players move from their safe zone and line up facing each other a few feet apart in the middle of the playing area. When the leader calls, "Go" each team must perform their action. The winning team must chase the losing team back to the losing team's safe zone. For example, the Wizards would chase the Giants back to the Giants' safe zone, or the Elves would chase the Wizards to the Wizards' safe zone.

Any players tagged by the winning team cross over to the other side.

Between chases, allow between 10 and 20 seconds for strategizing in the huddle. If both teams choose the same first action, it is a stalemate and the second action is performed on the call of the leader.

## **Predator & Prey**

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