

Active Play Games



Play and children's physical activity

Physical activity, through play and other activities, is important for **children's physical health** as well as their **mental health** and **cognitive development**. There is also some evidence that if children are physically active when they are young they are more likely to **adopt healthy lifestyles** as they grow up.

Active play is the most common form of physical activity for children outside of school and children get more exercise from play than from time spent at clubs and organised activities. Children who walk and play a lot tend also to exhibit greater levels of activity in other areas of their lives. The aspects of physically active play most enjoyed by children include choice, fun, friends, achievement and the possibilities of competition. The element of fun tends to be the over-riding factor in encouraging physically active play.

It is easier for children to be physically active outdoors, where there is space and opportunity for them to move more freely. In Scotland, this may well mean playing outside in all weathers and even the dark.

Active outdoor play is essential for our children and young people to understand, value, enjoy and protect our natural world.



1 Balance beam

Use a long piece of wood or taped line and see if you can walk along it without falling off.

Great activity for balance coordination.

2 Dance party

Put music on and dance!

You can also play freeze where every time someone stops the music, you have to stand still.

3 Beans

There are different actions for each type of bean. Each time the name of the bean is called out, the child(ren) should do the correct action.

Runner Beans

run on the spot

String Beans

stretch up tall and be as thin as possible

Dwarf Beans

bend down and be as small as you can be

Chilli Beans

shiver

Broad Beans

hold arms out wide and stand with wide legs

Frozen Beans

everyone has to stand still

Jumping Beans

jump and down

Beans on Toast

lie on your back with arms across your chest

4 Capture the flag - outdoors

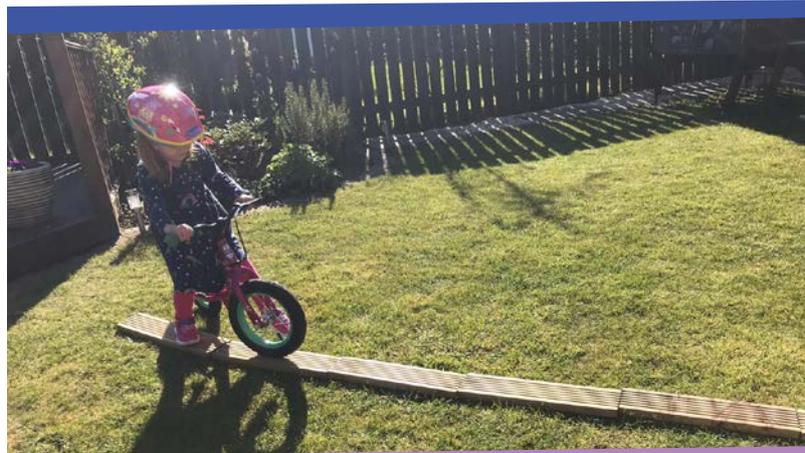
Grab a couple of brightly-coloured flags (these can be towels, fleeces etc).

Divide the players into two teams, each with their own territory of bushes and trees to hide behind.

The flags then get placed in a visible area within each team's territory.

The aim is to steal the other team's flag and bring it back to your base without getting caught.

If you're tagged, you'll have to wait in the other team's jail until you're freed by a teammate.



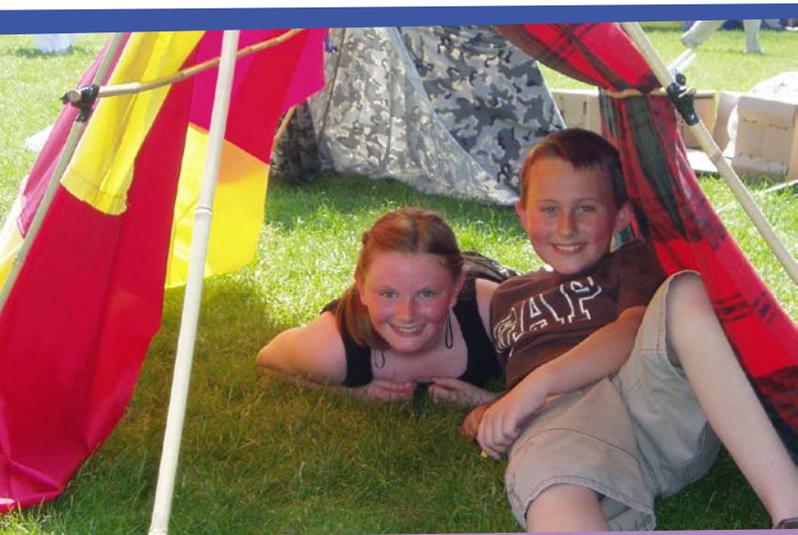
5 Down, down, lie down

Stand in a circle and throw a tennis ball to one another until someone doesn't catch it or drops it.

That person will then have to go down on one knee. Continue playing. If they drop the ball again they'll go down on both knees, followed by each of their elbows and finally lying down.

If they drop it again, they're out.

Last person standing wins!



6 Hide & seek

One person is the seeker and the others have to hide. The seeker will close their eyes and count to anything from 10 to 100 while the others go and hide.

The first person found becomes the seeker.

7 Jumping

How many jumps can you do in the count of 20? (You can also use an egg timer for this).

8 Basketball

Using a bucket and rolled up socks (or a soft ball), try and throw the ball into the 'basket'.

Great for hand to eye coordination.

9 Tag/Chasey

The group of children will decide who will start as being "it." That person chases the other people around, trying to tag one of them with their hand.

The newly tagged person is now "it." There is often the rule of "no tag-backs" where you can't tag the person who just tagged you. **The game ends when everyone is tired of playing.**

10 Freeze Tag/Chase

A variation of Tag where if the person who is “it” tags you, you have to freeze (stand still) where you are. Another person can run up and tag you to unfreeze you and you can join back in the game.

11 Blind man’s bluff

Another way to play tag. **The person who is “it” wears a blindfold** and tries to tag the other players.

Note: Ensure the area is safe to play, with any hazards removed. Not to be played near a road.

12 Monkey in the middle

You need 3 people to play this game. One person stands in the middle (the monkey) and the other two throw a frisbee or a ball back and forth to each other, above the monkey’s head.

The object of the game is for the monkey to jump and catch the frisbee/ball. When they eventually catch it, the person that threw the frisbee/ball becomes the new ‘monkey’ in the middle.

13 Excavate

Dig in the earth and see what creatures you can find. Treat them gently and remember to put them back.

Digging is good for building muscles.

14 Balloon tennis

Using your hands as the rackets, **bat the balloon for as long as you can or until it bursts!**



15 D.O.N.K.E.Y.

As many people as you would like can play this game. The object of the game is to throw the ball to each other and every time a person drops the ball, they spell out the word **D-O-N-K-E-Y**, letter by letter. The first person to spell the word is out!

i.e. first drop is **D**, second drop is **O**, third drop is **N** and so on. You can do this using any word – we used donkey growing up!



16 Obstacle course

Make an indoor obstacle course! You can use cushions, pillows, small tables, hula hoops etc.

Make a balance beam by marking a straight line on the floor with masking tape.

Add in the basketball (see above).

Jump in and out of circles (mark these using masking tape).

Climb high, lie low, jog on the spot, star jumps and lots more!

17 Lava floor

The object of the game is to get from one side of the room to the other without standing on the floor!

You can use cut up carpet tiles and cardboard, pillows or cushions as stepping stones.

You can also play this outdoors!

18 Simon says ...

One person is picked to be 'Simon', **you must then do everything that 'Simon' says.**

'Simon' must always start by saying "Simon says". For example, "Simon says touch your nose", then everyone must touch their nose.

But if 'Simon' just says "scratch your head" and you do the action, you are out of the game. Last person in will be 'Simon' in the next game.

19 Balls in the box

Ideal for younger children. Get a large box and cut holes in the top of the box the size of coloured balls, like the ones you use for a 'ball pit'. Then let them place the balls through the holes.

You could colour code each hole for colour learning fun.

20 Indoor hopscotch

Using electrical or masking tape, mark out the hopscotch on the floor and use rolled up socks for the 'peever'.

21 Indoor or outdoor bowling

You will need 6-10 same size 1 litre plastic bottles. Fill up with water and ensure the top is screwed on! Mark the start line with electrical or masking tape. Use a soft ball and have fun bowling. **Why not pop a glow stick in for glow in the dark bowling.**

22 Rainbow hunting

Find an item that matches every colour of the rainbow. This can be played anywhere.



23 Blow bubbles and catch them

One person blows the bubbles whilst the others try to catch them before they fall to the ground.

Good for family fun.

24 Balloon ball

Use balloons to replace balls for some indoor, ball activity fun! **Can you header it back and forth?**

Or why not tie a bit of string to two chairs and have a game of house volleyball?

Or come up with your own ideas!

25 Circuits

Make your own circuit class for your family!

Take a few sheets of paper, write a different activity on each one and place them around the room.

Everyone does the activity for a set amount of time, then move on to the next one!



Play Scotland is the lead organisation for the development and promotion of children and young people's play in Scotland. We work strategically to make the child's right to play a reality so that all children can reach their full potential and be able to confidently inhabit an inclusive public realm, as well as help shape child friendly communities.

Further information

For playful resources visit

www.playscotland.org/parents-families

Also, keep up to date on our website and social channels

-  playscotland.org
-  [playscotland](https://twitter.com/playscotland)
-  [nationalplayscotland](https://www.facebook.com/nationalplayscotland)
-  [playscotland](https://www.pinterest.com/playscotland)
-  [playscotland](https://www.youtube.com/playscotland)

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Committed to PLAY



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