



101 fun-filled children's games

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Introduction

The key to game confidence

Children love to play games. But coming up with new and exciting games to play with your children is often frustrating, and collecting game equipment can be costly and time consuming. Not any more! *Instant Games for Children* is a collection of fast-paced, fun-to-play games for every child in your group. And with the handy game bag, all playing pieces are at your fingertips any time, anywhere.

The key to successfully playing games with children may be summed up in two words: *game confidence*! When you are familiar with a myriad exciting games and have the equipment to play them, games can be an enriching time of fellowship for everyone.

Why play games?

No children's programme can be built on games alone—yet the effective use of game-time helps nurture many positive benefits, including:

- ❖ Community building
- ❖ Getting to know each other
- ❖ Burning excess energy to help children refocus
- ❖ Strengthening teamwork and cooperation
- ❖ Creating a welcoming, positive atmosphere

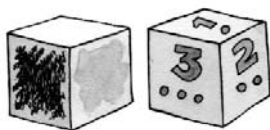
Games that foster cooperation, instead of competition, help children feel accepted and successful with peers and leaders. The games included in *Instant Games for Children* are cooperative and not based on 'winners' and 'losers': everyone is a winner in the good-time department!

How Instant Games work

Each game in *Instant Games for Children* uses an item from the handy game bag, which is quickly assembled by ‘shopping’ your home, discount stores, garage sales, other church members, or closing-down sales. Here are the simple items you’ll need to play 101 different games:

- ❖ A roll of masking tape
- ❖ Two ping-pong balls
- ❖ Two rulers
- ❖ A playground ball
- ❖ A foam ball
- ❖ Six plastic tumblers or cups
- ❖ Six circular foam coasters (or discs)
- ❖ Two skipping ropes
- ❖ A bag of balloons
- ❖ Two cotton headscarves
- ❖ A kitchen timer
- ❖ A colour cube and a number cube
(which will be explained later)

Assemble these simple, inexpensive items in a pillowcase, laundry basket, box, or bin bag, and you’ll be ready any time you or your children say, ‘Let’s play a game!’



To make the colour and number cubes, simply cover two small square boxes with white self-adhesive shelf paper. For the colour cube, use permanent markers to colour the sides red, yellow, green, and blue. You’ll use two colours twice. For the number cube, use a marker to add numerals and dots to represent numbers from one to four. Again, you’ll use two numbers twice.

Have fun!

That's all there is to it! You are now ready to energize your children by offering them a wonderful selection of games that are sure to become group favourites. And best of all, these games will travel with your group inside, outside, to the large hall, on picnics, and to away days.

So go wild. Be daring. And have fun playing games with your children as you all share in the joy of friendship and fun!



Taxi! Taxi!

Get ready...

Group size: Eight or more

Best for ages: 5–11s

Playing time: 15 minutes

Energy level: Medium

Items needed: The number cube and a cup

Get set...

Aim of the game

Find a matching taxi and be the first pair to snatch the cup.

Go!

How to play

Set the cup at one end of the playing area and gather children at the opposite end. Form two groups and designate one group as the taxis and the other as the passengers. Have the two groups stand a few feet apart. Direct the taxis to secretly number off by fours.



What to say

It's a rainy day, and there aren't many taxis for people to ride in! I'll roll the number cube and call out, 'Taxi number two!' (or whatever number is rolled). Passengers, race to find a taxi that matches that number by asking taxis their numbers. Then taxi and passenger can lock arms and rush to pick up the cup.

After each round, have the taxis secretly renumber themselves. When you have played a few rounds, swap roles so the passengers become the taxis and vice versa.

Inside tip

For an exciting twist, have each passenger choose a colour from the colour cube. Then roll both the number and colour cubes to find matching passengers and taxis.



Walk the line

Get ready...

Group size: Eight or more

Best for ages: 6–11s

Playing time: Ten minutes

Energy level: Medium to low

Items needed: The playground ball and two cotton headscarves

Get set...

Aim of the game

As your partner deflects the ball, safely deliver a headscarf from one end of the line to the other.

Go!

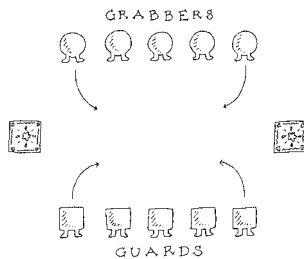
How to play

Form two lines and stand facing each other, three feet apart. Lay the scarves at the two ends (see diagram). Hand the playground ball to a child in the middle of one line. Designate one line the ‘guards’ and the other line the ‘grabbers’. The children opposite each other at the ends of the lines are partners.



What to say

When I say 'go', the partners from the ends of each line will go to the headscarves. The grabbers will each pick up a scarf and walk between the lines while you try to tag them with the ball. Guards can block the shots to keep their partners safe.



If the grabber makes it to the opposite end of the line without being tagged, he or she sets the scarf down and both partners go to the middle of the lines to wait for their next turn. If a grabber is tagged, the grabber and guard aren't eligible to walk the line again, but they can return to the line to help tag others. Then the next partners on the ends walk the line.

Have pairs take turns walking the line until there's only one pair that hasn't been tagged.



Panic pass

Get ready...

- Group size: Any
- Best for ages: 6–11s
- Playing time: 15 minutes
- Energy level: Medium
- Items needed: All game items

Get set...

Aim of the game

Don't get caught without an item when the passing frenzy stops!

Go!

How to play

Sit in a circle on the floor. Choose one child to be the 'roller' and give him or her the colour cube. Instruct the roller to sit in the centre of the circle. Let each player choose one game item to hold.



What to say

This is a speedy passing game! We'll start passing the items around the circle to the right. Be sure you're holding only one item at a time. The roller will roll the colour cube and call out the colour rolled. If the colour is blue, we'll reverse the passing direction; if the colour is yellow, we'll slow down; if the colour is green, we'll speed up the passing; and if the colour is red, we'll stop. If we stop, and you're caught without an item or with more than one item, come to the centre and help the roller. We'll remove an item for each person who comes to the centre. Let's play until there are only two players left in the circle.

Begin passing items to the right. Be sure to remove an item each time someone goes to the centre of the circle. (There should always be one item for each person in the circle.)

Inside tip

Help children remember the colour code by comparing it to traffic lights. Red is stop, yellow is slow down, and green is go, or speed up.



Tightrope toss

Get ready...

Group size: Six or more

Best for ages: 5–11s

Playing time: Ten minutes

Energy level: Medium

Items needed: The foam ball, the playground ball and the masking tape

Get set...

Aim of the game

Walk the 'tightrope' while throwing and catching the balls.



Go!

How to play

Create a five-foot square 'tightrope' on the floor using masking tape. If you have six to eight children, make a triangular tightrope. Direct the children to line up around the tightrope. (Make sure there are children on every side of the tightrope.) Hand two children the balls.



What to say

In this death-defying circus act, you must walk the wobbly tightrope as you throw the balls to each other! If you drop a ball or step off the tightrope, come and sit in the centre. Centre people may call out directions such as 'hop', 'change direction', or 'walk backward'. Tightrope walkers must follow those directions. We'll play until there are only two tightrope walkers left.

Inside tip

Older children may enjoy walking the tightrope in pairs. Have partners link arms and walk sideways around the tightrope.



The pits

Get ready...

Group size: Eight or more

Best for ages: 7–11s

Playing time: 15 minutes

Energy level: High

Items needed: The masking tape, two skipping ropes, six cups and the playground ball

Get set...

Aim of the game

Work as a group to knock over your opponents' cups.

Go!

How to play

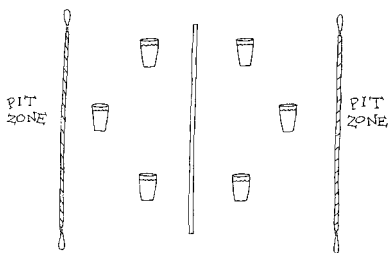
This game is best suited to a large hall or outside play. Divide the playing area in half with a five-foot line of masking tape. Lay each skipping rope 20 feet away from the centre line to create 'pit zones'. Set three cups at random on each side of the centre line (see diagram). Form two groups and have them stand on opposite sides of the centre line.



What to say

This game may be called 'the pits', but you'll have a great time playing! The object is to knock over the other group's cups. You may roll the playground ball with your hands to knock cups over,

and you may also block shots from hitting your cups. But each time a cup on your side is toppled, one of your players must go to the 'pit zone' on the other side. He or she stays there until someone in your group rolls the ball to him or her. Then that player may safely return to your side and set up a cup. We'll play until one side has all the cups knocked over.



Inside tip

Older children may enjoy using the foam ball and the playground ball simultaneously. For another twist, have children use their feet instead of their hands to roll the ball.