Sainsbury’s Active Kids - Val Sabin’s Playground Games Resource

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Welcome to the Playground Games resource, devised by Val Sabin for Sainsbury’s Active Kids. This resource pack has been developed to share Val’s extensive expertise in children’s physical education, providing fun and engaging games in a safe environment. The resource is aimed predominantly at primary school aged children.

Val’s knowledge and experience in her field is unparalleled. She initially trained as a Physical Education Specialist at Bedford College and has worked with children of all ages, students and teachers for over 35 years on all aspects of Physical Education. Val is internationally known for the quality of her teaching and her ability to enthuse. Many children taught by Val have succeeded in team and individual competition at local, regional and national levels.

Val Sabin was a teacher, a Head of Department, and Advisory Teacher in Northamptonshire, a Senior Lecturer in Physical Education at De Montfort University in Bedford, is the author of over 30 teaching manuals and has been an OFSTED Inspector for both Secondary and Primary phases. Currently her main work is as Consultant, Advisor and Trainer in the delivery of gymnastics, games, dance, Athletics, Positive Play, PE Administration, Activate and Action Kids.
Preparation

Enjoyable, engaging and fun activities will encourage children to be more active in the playground, and consequently healthier and fitter. However, for example, free-running about a playground littered with small equipment will always present a danger, so if you have not already zoned your playground for safety, take a moment to consider it.

Zoning the playground area

School grounds most usually consist of a combination of surfaces, i.e. grass and tarmac, and in some cases, the addition of a soft surface.

In the Summer and Autumn months, children will generally have almost unlimited access to all of the different surfaces, (subject to any safety considerations due to weather conditions or environment). However, for several weeks before and after Christmas inclement weather will often restrict play to tarmac and soft areas only. When this occurs, it highlights the need for encouraging “zones,” to maintain safe, purposeful and interesting play in a more confined space.

Poor design of the environment, or simply lack of space, can be alleviated by “zoning” areas – should they be “activity zones” or “age zones.” Reception and Nursery children will certainly benefit from having their own outdoor play area and time to play and learn in the company of their peers without the fear of being knocked over by a larger, older child playing chasing games!

However, above this level, research suggests that strict segregation by age may remove the need to nurture smaller children, and sometimes indeed increase the degree of aggressive play amongst older children. Another benefit of mixed age play is the positive passing-on of games and skills to younger children.
Zoning the playground area cont.

Whether schools “zone” their playgrounds at playtime / lunchtime in an age-related way or not, it is entirely a decision to be made by themselves in the light of their children’s attitudes, and their level of social integration. Regardless of their organisation of their playtime and lunchtime by age or time, it will be absolutely necessary to designate certain areas of the playground for specific types of activities. “Area zoning” in this way will allow fewer opportunities for accidents to occur, and will also encourage all children to use the playground in a more meaningful way.

It is important to recognise at this point that zoning an area does not mean making rigid areas in which specific games only can be played – this is not the purpose of playtimes. Playtimes are for the children to engage in activities that interest them, (e.g. run freely, sit and talk, play games organised by themselves, play a more fun game, etc.). An over formalised playground will never engage the interest of all children, and may seriously harm all social and cognitive development. Whatever the size of the playground (and it does not necessarily follow that “big is beautiful”), the quality of the environment determines the quality of the experience, and the way the space is managed is also significant.

Broadly speaking, the provision of several basic zones can encourage safe involvement by all children in some way, e.g:

1. A free-running zone
2. A quiet zone
3. A small equipment zone
4. An informal games zone
5. A formal games zone

The exercise of labelling different areas of the playground will be rendered pointless unless the space actually supports the given purpose – or is subsequently designed to do so. For example, just because children hardly use one part of the playground because it is totally featureless, unattractive and has no sunlight, we should not make it into a “quiet” zone and expect it to become popular just because we’ve renamed it!

However, an analysis of how the grounds are currently used by children can help to identify the ways in which the nature of design of the space may be influencing its’ use, and guide us to positive development of the zone. In the same way, we also need to understand that patterns of activity may have developed in certain locations, either by tradition, or indeed by some groups claiming territorial rights, and obviously this may not result in the most effective use of the space.

Obviously some schools will have very limited tarmac space so will not be able to provide all the zones suggested. However, it could be possible, for example, to create one area as a formal games zone for half the lunchtime, and then it changes to a free-running / chasing area for the second half of the lunch hour. In a similar way, the small equipment zone and informal games zone could be combined into one. However you choose to zone or create rota’s, there should always be a quiet zone and somewhere for free-running.
Throwing Challenges
Can you throw the ball up in the air and ..........
(1) **clap** as many times as possible before you catch it again.
(2) **clap behind your back** as many times as possible.
(3) throw the ball from **under your leg** and clap as many times as possible.
(4) bend and clap your hands **on the floor** before you catch the ball.
(5) clap on as many **different parts of your body** as possible.
(6) **turn round completely** once before catching it.
(7) turn round completely **the other way**.

Stepping Stones
(1) Can you **cross the river** by walking over the stepping stones? (you mustn’t fall in or the sharks will catch you!)
(2) Cross over by **hopping** over the stepping stones.
(3) **Walking backwards** over the stepping stones.
(4) **Follow my leader** over the stepping stones, travelling in different ways.
(5) Follow my leader and cross over the river at three different **points** and travelling in different ways.
(6) Identify any **markings** on the playground or use **throw-down markers**.
(7) make a trail around the playground using existing lines and markers and some throw-down markers. Can you get all the way round the playground without getting your ‘feet wet’!!
Stepping Stone Pick-Up
• This can be a challenge for one child with 2 spot markers or feet shaped markers (feet) or 2 halves of a sheet of newspaper.
• You have to travel over a given distance (between 2 lines or cones) **always being on one** of the markers or sheets of newspaper.
• Stand on one marker (piece of paper) put the other one down in front of you, step onto it, pick up the piece you have just left and place that in front of you. Step onto that piece and so on.... to complete the course.
• N.B. This could also be played as a race between 2 teams as in a relay.

Statues Tag
• One player is chosen as a catcher. He chases the other players and if he touches them they must **freeze** and become **statues.** The last to be tagged becomes the next “tagger” or children take it in turns to be the tagger for 30 seconds then change over.
• The same game, but when someone is tagged, they must “freeze” with:–
  1. **a hand on the floor and one foot in the air.**
  2. **both hands on the floor.**
  3. **on one foot and stretch out wide.**
  4. **crouched down into a ball.**
• They can be released by any free player but only in certain ways:–
  e.g.  
  1. you must **touch the foot** in the air.
  2. you must **touch a hand.**
  3. you must touch both **the foot and hand in the air.**
  4. you must **run around them once and touch their back!**

For more games see “Action Kids” manuals at Val Sabin Publications.com
Hoop Circle
• Stand in a circle holding hands (at least 4 children).
• Place a hoop over someone’s arm before they hold onto the next player’s hand.
• The object of the game is to pass the hoop around the circle without breaking hands.
• If you can do this easily, can you change to a smaller hoop?
• If you have six or more players, can you try passing two hoops around at the same time (Start with the hoops on opposite sides of the circle).
• Can one hoop catch the other one up?

Pebble Dash
• Identify at least 2 different small areas as “home bases”.
• Children stand in a line and hold out hands, palms together leaving a small hole in top.
• One person moves along the line pretending to drop something through the small hole. As he goes, he secretly drops a small stone into someone’s hand.
• When he gets to the end of the line the person with the pebble makes a dash for it and has to get to a home base without being caught by anyone in the rest of the group.

For more games see “Positive Play” manuals at Val Sabin Publications.com
Relays

• Two teams of equal numbers are needed.

• The player at the front passes a ball through the open legs of the players behind him until it reaches the back player. He then picks up the ball, runs to the front of the line and repeats the process. (This could be made harder by dribbling the ball with your feet or bouncing it with your hand to run to the front)

• This continues until the original starter is at the front again. The first team to achieve this is the winner.

• Variations on this are to pass the ball overhead to the player behind until it reaches the back player or to alternate overhead and between the legs with each player. (Make it harder by standing on one leg only as you pass the ball)

• All the games can be extended by running/dribbling/bouncing from the back to a line or marker about 10m in front of the first player, then run/dribble/bounce back to the line to continue the game.

• Another relay game is for each child in turn to place the ball between his knees and run or jump round his team until he reaches his original position.

• The ball is then handed to the next player.

For more games see “Positive Play” manuals at Val Sabin Publications.com
**Even Shuttles**

- Two teams of equal numbers are needed.
- You require a start line for each team and three markers / lines at different distances away from the start line.
- ‘A’ runs to line 1 to touch with a **hand** and returns to touch ‘B’. ‘B’ runs to line 1 and returns to touch ‘C’ etc.
- When all the team members have touched line 1, ‘A’ runs to touch line 2 and return to touch ‘B’ etc.
- When all the team members have touched line 2 ‘A’ runs to touch line 3 and return to touch ‘B’ etc.
- The relay is completed when all team members have touched all 3 lines.
- Alternatively, A runs to touch line 1 and back, line 2 and back and line 3 and back before touching the next person. When all the team members have touched all three lines the relay is completed.

N.B. These could be played against another team, or the team can time how long it takes to complete, the relay and then try to beat their own record.

For more games see “Positive Play” manuals at [Val Sabin Publications.com](http://ValSabinPublications.com)
**Fox and Goose**

- Three (or four) children hold hands in a circle.
- One person stands outside the circle (the fox!) and the person in the circle opposite him / her is the “goose”.
- The “fox” tries to dodge around the outside of the ring of children to touch the arm of the “goose”. (You may not reach across the circle- you can only make contact from the outside of the circle)
- The ring of children “protect” the “goose” by watching the fox and dodging from side to side to prevent him making contact.
- THIS IS VERY ENERGETIC and should only be played for about 10-15 seconds before changing the “fox”.

N.B. Use a throw-down marker or painted spot as the centre of the circle around which the geese must dodge so children do not rush all over the playground!

**Pass the Tag**

- Have an object (possibly a bean-bag) that can be easily passed from one child to another. Appoint a “tagger”.
- The “tagger” has to try and “tag” the person holding the object. The person holding the beanbag has to pass it (or throw it) to other players when in danger of being tagged.
- Keep the tag (beanbag) moving.
- Anyone tagged carrying the object becomes the tagger.
- This can be a continuous game.
Danish Rounders

- Four posts placed approximately 10 paces apart in a square.
- 2 teams – one “batting” team, one fielding team.
- Bowler bowls the soft ball to the first batter who bats it with their hand (unless the game is supervised, and then a light plastic bat could be used and carried as the batter runs around the posts).
- After hitting the ball, the batter runs around all four posts without stopping and touches the fourth post to be “in” and score a rounder.
- In the meantime when the ball is hit, the fielders pass the ball to posts 1, 2, 3, and 4 in order and try to beat the batter to the fourth post.
- A batter is “out” if:
  1. The ball is passed round all 4 posts and beats him/her to 4th post.
  2. The ball is caught directly from a hit.
  3. A player intentionally hits the ball behind him/her.

Making Up A Game – Throwing Six

- You may collect:
  1. Coloured bands to distinguish teams.
  2. A large soft ball.
  3. Four markers to mark out the playing area.
- CAN YOU Make up a game to try and score 6 consecutive passes among members of your own team.
- When the ball is intercepted or dropped, the counting begins again.
- NO CONTACT – NO RUNNING WITH THE BALL.
- Decide how to start the game and what other rules are necessary as you play.
- Could you play this game by passing the ball with your feet?

For more games see “Primary School Games” manuals at Val Sabin Publications.com
Time Out

- One person has control of a stopwatch.
- Any others who wish to play stand by the “controller” who calls out a time (e.g. “20 seconds”).
- The “controller” calls “Go” as he/she starts the stopwatch.
- Everyone jogs or runs around and returns to stand by the “controller” when they think 20 seconds is up.
- The person who returns exactly on time is in charge of the stopwatch next time.
- This game can also be played in teams. The teams move off in a “follow-my-leader” formation and the timing is taken from when the last person in each team arrives back at the starting position.

Skipping Challenge

- (1) How many skips can you do without stopping – turning the rope forward or turning the rope backwards.
- (2) How fast can you skip?
- (1) Can you travel about as you skip?
- (2) How many two-footed jumps can you perform?
- (3) Can you cross your arms in front of your body while skipping?
- (4) Can you swing the rope to the side and then open it up to jump over it?
- (1) Can you skip for one minute without a rest?
- (2) How many consecutive skips can you perform with a partner in the same rope?
- (3) How many consecutive skips can you and some friends do in a long rope?

For more games see “Primary School Athletics” manuals at Val Sabin Publications.com
Jump to it

• Stand with your feet on the footprints at the start of the line.

• Can you jump from one side of the line to the other, landing on the footprints each time? Travel to the end of the line.

• Stand on the **right** foot at the start of the line. Spring from the right foot to the **left** foot on the other side of the line. Move in this way to the end of the line.

• Stand on one foot at the start of the line and hop across to the **same foot** on the other side of the line. Move in this way to the end of the line. (Can you do the same thing, but hop on the other foot?)

• Start on one foot on one side of the line and jump onto two feet on the other side. Continue in this way to the end of the line.

• Travel down one side of the line jumping from two feet to the next two feet. Can you stay on the feet all the way down the line?

(If you do not have these markings, “feet” markers can be set out on either side of a straight line or you can just travel down a straight line moving from one side to the other in the ways indicated).

Aiming Challenge

• You will need:-

  (1) 1 skipping rope.
  (2) 3 hoops (or circles made with ropes/markers or chalked circles.)
  (3) A beanbag for each person.

• Use the skipping rope as a throwing line and arrange the circles at various distances from the throw lines. The nearest circle will win the **lowest points** and the furthest circle the **highest points**.

• Set up the game and take it in turns to aim into the hoops to score. Make up any necessary rules. How can you make the game harder?

• To change the game, replace the 3 hoops with 3 skittles and aim with a quoit. Throw the quoit like it was a “frisbee” and win a bronze, silver or gold medal by hooking it over the appropriate skittle.

For more games see “Primary School Athletics” manuals at Val Sabin Publications.com
Parachute Golf

• Put two small balls on top of the parachute. Children work together to guide the balls down the hole. Count the number of “putts” needed to “hole the ball”.

• Children repeat the game and try to beat their number (i.e. have less putts!)

• To make it harder, place a number of balls on top of the parachute - how long does it take to “putt” all the balls. Try it again and try to do it in a faster time.

Round the World

• Depending on the size of the group, the supervisor/adult identifies 2 children on opposite sides of the parachute or several children holding the same colour panel of the parachute. Children hold the parachute ready, then on “1, 2, 3, Mushroom”, they mushroom the ‘chute high into the air and the chosen children run round the outside of the group to try and get “home” before the mushroom collapses.

NB* Safety points children should have plenty of practise running round the edge of the ‘chute so the direction is well established before the game. Children always run in the same direction.

• To make it harder - can the children hop, jump, skip or sideways gallop around the outside of the parachute?

For more games see “Action Kids Parachute” manuals at Val Sabin Publications.com
St George and the Dragon
• A child sits beneath the parachute and is St George waiting to slay a dragon.
• Children crouch down holding the edges of the parachute close to the ground, and recite...
  “The brave St George is hunting dragons. Who do you choose to chase?”
• St George names two children – the ‘chute is raised in a mushroom and the two named children immediately try to cross safely underneath the parachute without being caught by St George.
• If someone manages to cross without being caught they become St George next turn.
• If no-one crosses safely after 3 turns a new St George is chosen.
• To make it harder - St George can only hop or the dragons can only hop to cross over.

Rollerball
• Children hold the parachute taut. A large ball is placed near one edge. Children try to co-operate and make the ball roll all the way around the edge of the parachute. To do this, someone starts the ball rolling. As the ball comes towards you, you lower the edge you are holding and as it goes past you, raise your edge.
• When all the players manage to do this co-operatively it creates a sort of wave going round the edge of the parachute which pushes the ball round in a steady circle.
  THIS NEEDS CONCENTRATION AND CO-OPERATION AND IS NOT EASY!
• If children master this game they should then try changing direction or speeding up.
• If children become really competent, another ball could be added, starting on the opposite side of the parachute. (Could items be likened to a car race? The British Grand Prix)

For more games see “Action Kids 162 Parachute” manual at Val Sabin Publications.com