

SAFE AND HEALTHY PLAY TOOLKIT

Let's Get Games Going!

What kinds of games make a great recess? Recess is all about everyone playing games so when setting up your playground, you want to make sure you have a variety of games for students to choose from to keep them engaged in safe and healthy play. Three types of games that should be found at every recess are: Rotational Games, Large Group Games, and Independent Activities.

Rotational Games: Games that have fast turn over and students move in and out in a organized fashion. Rotational Games are great because they engage a variety of students across gender, skill level and age. Examples of Rotational Games are:

- [Switch](#)
- [Foursquare](#)
- [Wall Ball \(Hand Ball\)](#)
- Tetherball
- [Three Lines Soccer](#)
- [Three Lines Basketball](#)
- [Knockout](#)

Large Group Games: Games that engage large group of students in a contained space. Large group games give students an opportunity to engage with new people and meet new friends.

- [Kickball](#)
- [RoShamBo Relay](#)
- [Castle Ball](#)
- Tag Games:
 - [Band Aid Tag](#)
 - [Watch Your Back Tag](#)
 - [Hungry Fox](#)
 - [Hula Hoop Tag](#)
 - [Magic Tag](#)

Independent Activities: Games that can be played by an individual or with a small group of people. These games when given a defined space keeps your playground organized. Independent games also provide an opportunity for students who are not ready for larger, more intense games or students who want a more “mellow” recess.

- Hula Hoop
- [Jump Rope](#)
 - [Helicopter](#)
 - [Snake](#)
 - [Cat and Mouse](#)
 - [Zero 1, 2, 3](#)
- [Hopscotch](#)
- Chalk coloring

When to play these games:

Recess:

- ❑ At recess you want to make sure that there is a wide variety of games from which your students can choose
- ❑ Make sure that you have a good mix of games on the playground: rotational games, large group games and independent games will help engage all students on your playground.

Classroom:

- ❑ Great for Brain Breaks - when kids or adults need time to allow their brains to get ready for the next activity - take your class outside and play a game.
- ❑ Add educational prompts into your games - [Category 4Square](#) is a great example.

Why do we want positive options for our kids at recess? Giving our students safe and positive games at recess will help create a space for everyone on the playground. When thinking about the playground games you want as a school community, here are some things to consider:

1. Is everyone engaged on the playground?
2. Do you have a good mix of Rotational, Independent, and Large Group Games? At least one game from each category?
3. Are games inviting and accessible to everyone? Can anyone join a game at any point in recess, regardless of gender, skill level or age?
4. Are games in contained spaces? Are games bumping into one another?

Next Steps: Try these this week!

- ❑ Come up with a plan with your staff. Who is going to teach the games? What are the rules? What is your timeline?
- ❑ Teach your students the new rules/games.
- ❑ Post the rules near the games so students can reference if needed. We have created a poster template to help get you started.
- ❑ Map your playground, need help - check out <http://www.playworks.org/guides/maps>
- ❑ Start small, begin with one game at a time, or one recess at a time; don't introduce several new games or change all the games on your playground in the same day.
- ❑ Make a "Recess Rule Book" with all the recess rules for each employee of the school. Make sure new employees get a copy too! Need rules to new games, check out playworks.org/games
- ❑ Play with the students. This gives you, as an adult, a great opportunity to: model the rules, show good sporting behavior, build rapport with your students and get some energy out yourself!