

Tips for Success for Structured Active Play

<p>Preparing for Active Play</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider the space available and what activities work well for the space • Determine an appropriate group size <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consider dividing the class into two smaller groups • Select 3-4 games to choose from during a structured active play session <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Having extra games planned will give you a backup if one game does not go smoothly • Set up the active play space ahead of time to make issuing directions easier • When playing indoors, ensure that the space is clear of objects that children could run into or trip over • Minimize distractions within your play space • To prevent children from running into walls, place cones two feet in front of the walls (depending on the size of your play space) and instruct children to stop at the cones • Identify a home base for each child using spots or markings on the floor
<p>Explaining Rules of Games</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gain student attention before issuing instructions • Be clear about expectations (acceptable/unacceptable behavior) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If in a small space, it may be safer for children to walk briskly rather than run during activities ○ Model appropriate behavior that promotes safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Tagging another child lightly on the back or shoulder – Slowing down when running toward a wall – Standing in a hula hoop with another child – Running the same direction as other children – Keeping a safe body with hands and feet to oneself ○ Ask children to repeat important safety instructions after teacher explanation • Provide clear instructions for gameplay <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Model how to engage in the activity • Establish and clearly explain the boundaries of where it is safe and not safe to play, using cones or other materials that clearly indicate the parameters of the play space to children • Check for understanding of rules of game and behavioral expectations. These should be crystal clear so that children know exactly what to do to be safe and engage appropriately in the activity • Reinforce children for listening to instructions • Clearly signal the beginning and end of a game
<p>Keeping Children Engaged in Game Play</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize wait time during active play. Avoid “elimination games” where children “get out” and sit on the sidelines. • Praise children for following the rules, participating, and making an effort to do their best during the game • Sportscast (i.e., narrate) children’s play. For example, “I see Mateo running really fast, look at him go!” • Participating in play with children

- Take on a role in a game that involves multiple roles
- Move throughout the play space to monitor behavior and engage with children using praise, sportscasting, etc. during gameplay
- Ignore attention seeking behaviors when you can (i.e., when the behavior is not unsafe) and use the “go to the good” model to provide attention for expected behavior
- Redirect students when necessary and then praise them when they follow redirection
 - Remind children of appropriate behavior
- Develop a group reward system (e.g., bucket fillers) and reward children for following the rules
- Use cool down activities between games to help children maintain appropriate behavior
- Use calm music if children become overexcited
- Keep structured active play brief (10-15 minutes)
 - Monitor early warning signs of frustration and adjust game length accordingly
 - Transition to a new game if children show signs of disengagement
- Reset the session by sending children back to home base if children are overly excited or not engaging in game play appropriately.
- If introducing a new game, include familiar games in the session so that students are not overwhelmed by new information and remain focused on being physically active



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