

INDIGENOUS GAMES

Indigenous Australian games differ from the more commonly-known western games such as chase, hide-and-seek, tunnel ball etc. Playing these games with your students allows for them to learn more about Indigenous children and how their childhood differs, and also gives them a chance to run around, let off some energy and learn new, fun games! Before beginning games, acknowledge and pay respect to the traditional custodians of the land, and have the students repeat after you, recognising that the Aboriginal people are the original inhabitants of this land.

Jillora

Materials:

A large, smooth ball for each student

On a smooth surface, such as tennis or basketball court, students line up with their balls. When the teacher says, 'Start', the students can throw or toss their ball with the aim of spinning it. They may use one or both hands. The aim of the game is to have your ball spin the longest; the student who's ball succeeds is the winner.

Alternative: Gather students into small groups and give each group a stopwatch. Using collaboration and teamwork, have each group try to have the longest-spinning ball. Encourage discussion of techniques and tips that might help the ball to spin for a greater period of time. The group with the winning time then shows the rest of the class how they achieved it.

Keentan

Materials:

- Throwing ball
- A marked area of grass (either a rectangle or a square)
- Bibs or tags for team members

This game is played in teams and mimics the movement of a kangaroo. Split students into even teams of 8 (or a similar small number; if there are more students, you could have two games). One team starts with possession of the ball. They must throw the ball to teammates while the other team tries to intercede and gain possession. When throwing and catching, players must have both feet off the ground (jumping). The player with the ball is allowed to pivot on one foot, but otherwise is not allowed to move unless releasing the ball. No contact is allowed, and defenders cannot block the opposing team.

This game encourages teamwork and communication, and improves motor development in young students.

Kai wed

Materials:

A small, light ball

Split students into groups of around 10 and give each group a ball. Students stand in a small circle. The aim of the game is to keep the ball from hitting the ground, using their hands to keep it in the air. Underhand hits and spikes may be used. (It may prove effective to teach students some simple volleyball techniques.) Have students count each hit as they go. The team with the highest number of hits wins.

Alternative: For younger students, you can have the groups sit in a circle and swap the ball for one or two balloons, and simply have them see which group keeps the balloons in the air without counting.

Tarnambai

Materials:

- Small balls, such as tennis or cricket balls
- An area of grass, marked with a starting point, and a line 20 metres from the starting point

Pair students up and give each pair a ball. Line up partners along the starting line. When the teacher says, 'Go', one student rolls the ball along the ground. When it crosses the 20-metre mark, their partner runs to collect it and brings it back. The partners then swap tasks.

The game can either be completed as a competition with a number of rounds to decided who the fastest pair are, or on an individual time basis, where pairs time their first attempt and then try to become faster and faster, finding a new personal best. To extend this even further, have students swap partners every few rounds, so they can work with others to improve their personal best.

Tabud nuri

All that is needed for this game is a open area sectioned into a square or rectangle.

Split students into groups of between 6 and 12 players. Students form a line and hold hands. The student at the front is the leader. The leader stands still as the second player wraps around them, followed by the third, and fourth and so on, until the line resembles a coiled snake. The line then unravels itself. The leader then detaches their hand and the rest of the snake has to chase him, maintaining their grip on each other's hands. When caught, all students must surround the leader, placing their hands on his arms/legs to signify that he is caught. The leader then goes to the back of the line and the game starts again with a new leader.

Turi furi

Materials:

A long skipping rope

In a large outdoor area, give two students the ends to the skipping rope and instruct them to swing it gently side to side (but not overhead). Other students form a line and, one at a time, run to the skipping rope and jump for a designated number of turns before running out and allowing the next student a turn. Regularly swap the students holding the rope.

This game is suitable for younger children as it improves their motor skills.