play day

GAME

SCAVENGER HUNT

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
Unlimited!

Materials:
Pencil, paper, camera (optional)

Description:
A scavenger hunt is a fun way to get kids excited about all there is to explore and find in your local park, while at the same time teach them about the natural world.

Steps:
Create a list of 10 exciting natural objects that can be found in your local park. Your list could include anything from a dandelion, to a grasshopper, a rock, an oak tree or a feather.

Make sure everybody writes down the same list of items to find. Depending on the number of people in your group, divide into small search teams.

Once everybody is ready, start the hunt!

As you search for the items you could simply cross them off your list and collect them (as long as your list doesn't include living things), or use a camera to take pictures of what you find.

Another option is to set a time limit and see which team finds the most objects, or see which team can finish the entire list first!

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Exploring nature helps kids learn and care about the world around them.

Take action

Consider creating a sensory garden or other area featuring natural elements in your playspace as a way for younger children to explore.

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

BUILD A BENCH

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
2-3 people

Materials:
9d nails, 12d nails, 2 hammers,
six 2 x 4 x 12s per bench

Cut to:
8 - 2 x 4 x 72", 2 - 2 x 4 x 65",
4 - 2 x 4 x 18", 4 - 2 x 4 x 14.5"

Description:
Building a bench can encourage parents to come to the playground and supervise kids at play. For more visual step-by-step instructions, including diagrams of how to cut the wood and assemble this bench, download the full PDF instructions to accompany this card at kaboom.org/playday.

Steps:
Legs are built up using the shorter pieces. For each bench leg, use 9d nails to attach one 18" piece and one 14.5" piece face to face so they are flush on one side, and the 18" one overhangs on the other side.

Seat boards are made by nailing the eight 2x4x72"s together face to face, creating the butcher-block appearance. When attaching boards, you should use 12d nails every 6 inches in a zigzag pattern.

Next, add the two shorter 2x4x65"s on either end, centered, so that the gap leaves room to attach the legs at the corners. Make sure the 2x4's are level and even on the top seating area.

Sand the entire bench, paying special attention to coarse edges and seating areas.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Even the simplest improvement project can reinvigorate a park and lead to bigger things.

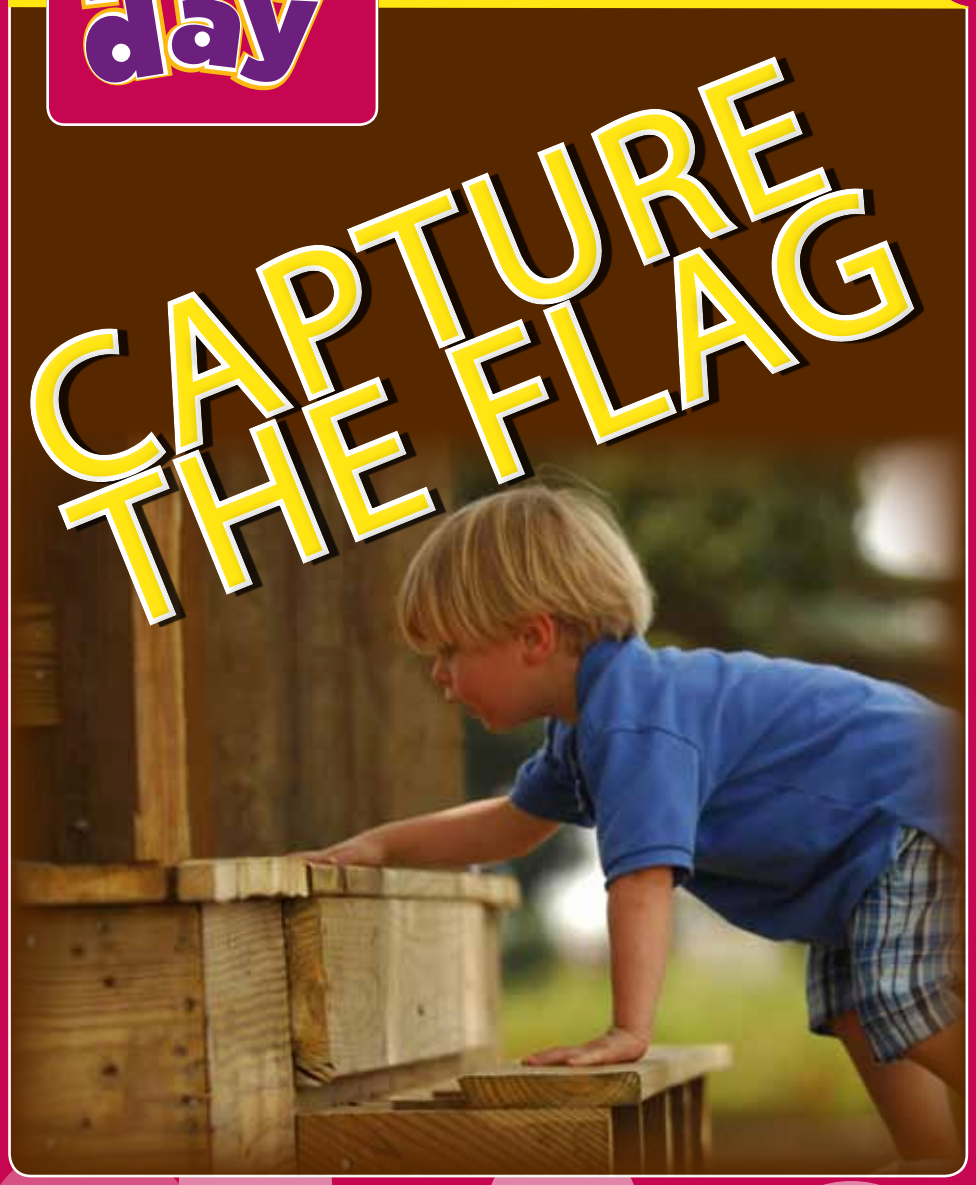
Take action

If fixing up your park inspires a bigger playground project, visit kaboom.org/projects to find out how.

play day

GAME

CAPTURE THE FLAG



INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
10+ people

Materials:
2 flags, 8 cones to set up the jail, and something to separate the teams with

Steps:

Split the children up in to two teams and provide them with an equal amount of space on each side of the playing area.

Give teams five minutes to hide their flag on their side of the playing area.

As one team is hiding their flag, make sure the other team cannot watch them (e.g. front & back yards, opposite sides of the school, inside vs. outside).

Optional: During this period team can send out spies to see where the flag was hidden as well as look-outs to catch the spies.

When the flag is hidden, call out that the team is finished.

Have the children line up, and say "Go!" to start the game, allowing them to search for the other team's flag.

If a child is caught and tagged by an opponent on their territory, the child must go to jail and can only be freed by a teammate who tags them.

The first team to capture the flag and bring it back to their side wins!

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Increases in structured play (little league, swimming lessons, etc) and programming have led to a decline in children's free playtime by 25% between 1981 and 1997.

Take action

Help kids learn how to negotiate rules and resolve disputes by encouraging unstructured play.

play day

ADVOCACY

BEACH BALL PETITION

Play matters

68% of the lowest income parents reported that their children did not have access to a playground in their local community.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
Unlimited!

Materials:
Beach ball, permanent felt-tipped pen or marker

Description:
Gather as many signatures as possible on a beach ball (or beach balls) and send them back to KaBOOM! so that we can deliver them to Congress.

Steps:
By signing the petition, you're telling the world that you believe that every child, regardless of income or geography, needs a great place to play within walking distance, and they need at least 60 minutes each day devoted to play.

Once the beach balls are signed and returned to KaBOOM!, we'll deliver them to Congress and municipal leaders.

Please ask everyone at your Play Day to take a moment and sign their names to your beach ball petition with a permanent marker. How many signatures can you get on your beach ball?

Send your beach ball to:

KaBOOM! National Headquarters
4455 Connecticut Avenue, NW, Suite B100
Washington, DC 20008

Take action

Help increase play opportunities by finding simple steps you can take at kaboom.org.

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

CHESSBOARD TABLETOP

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
3-4 people per tabletop

Materials:
1 picnic table, 1 piece of plywood as big as your table, 9d nails, hammer, 2 pints outdoor paint (any color), paintbrushes, rulers, pencils, painter's tape (optional)

Description:
A chessboard table is an easy way to update your existing picnic tables and encourage community members of all ages to gather in the park to have fun. For more visual step-by-step instructions, including diagrams of how to cut the wood and assemble this bench, download the full PDF instructions to accompany this card at playday.kaboom.org.

Steps:
First, you will draw out the chessboards directly on the plywood using pencils and rulers (or a similar straight-edge). It's best to draw out two chessboards.

Next, paint the chessboards in two alternating colors (see photo). Before you begin, either write in each square with a pencil what color it will be, or put a dab of that paint color inside the square. It's easier to get the squares mixed up than you'd think, especially with more than one painter!

You may decide to use painter's tape along the edges of the squares, or to paint them by hand. Either way, be sure to let the first color squares dry completely before moving on to the next.

If time (and paint supply) allows, you may decide to paint the area around the chessboards as well. Feel free to add your own artistic expression to the tables!

Attach your chessboard to the picnic table, using the hammer & nails.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Parents indicate that a safe location (away from crime) is the most important factor for outdoor public play spaces.

Take action

Encouraging adults to hang out and enjoy the playground while their kids are there makes it a safer place for everyone to play.

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

DIRECTIONAL POST

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
3-5 people

Materials:
Twelve 1" x 4" x 24" wood arrows, one 4" x 4" x 8' wood post, 4-8 pints paint (assorted colors), 4 assorted size artists' brushes, post-hole digger or shovel, 1 lb. 8d nails, hammer, level, primer.

Description:
A directional post is a great way to put your playground on the map and teach kids how far away their neighborhood playground is from famous places. It's also a quick and easy project to bring color to your playground. For more visual step-by-step instructions, including diagrams of how to cut the wood and assemble this directional post, download the full PDF instructions to accompany this card at kaboom.org/playday.

Steps:
Using a post-hole digger, dig a hole two feet deep and about eight inches in diameter.

Be sure to prime the post and arrows before painting. Write on the post and arrows what color to paint, alternating the colors on each side. Next paint the signs and the post. Be sure to let everything dry!

On each sign, write a different landmark. Decide with your friends which direction each sign will be pointing by laying them on the ground before you start writing the landmarks. You don't want the landmark written upside down when you finally point the arrow in the right direction!

Use the hammer and two nails per board to secure the signs to the post.

Once the entire post is painted and dry, set it in the hole, make sure it is plumb, and pack the hole tight with dirt.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

58% of adults report that they don't have a playground within walking distance of their homes. How far is it to your nearest playground?

Take action

Check out kaboom.org/playspacefinder to find out, and make sure your playground is on the biggest map of playspaces in the country.

play day

GAME

KICK THE CAN

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
4-12 people

Materials:
Can

Description:
Kick the Can is a simple game closely related to hide and seek; however, you don't actually have to tag people to catch them.

Steps:
Designate a jail area. Choose someone to be "it." Choose someone else to kick the can.

After the kicker kicks the can, all the kids scatter and hide. The person who is "it" retrieves the can, counts up to 50, runs back to the jail, and yells, "freeze!"

"It" then goes out to find the players. If "it" sees someone, he or she goes back to the jail, picks up the can, taps three times and calls out, "I see Joey behind the blue car," for example. If "it" got it right (name and hiding place) the person hiding must stay in the jail area.

Caught players may be freed from the jail if one of the other payers not yet caught rushes to the jail and either (1) tags the players to set them free, or (2) kicks the can before "it" can return to the jail and call out the can-kicker's name. When the can is kicked, "it" must run and pick it up, count to 50 again, and go out searching for the other players.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Play is an old-fashioned solution to a host of modern problems. In partnership with KaBOOM!, New York Street Games is helping everyone discover the origins of street games played by children across the nation.

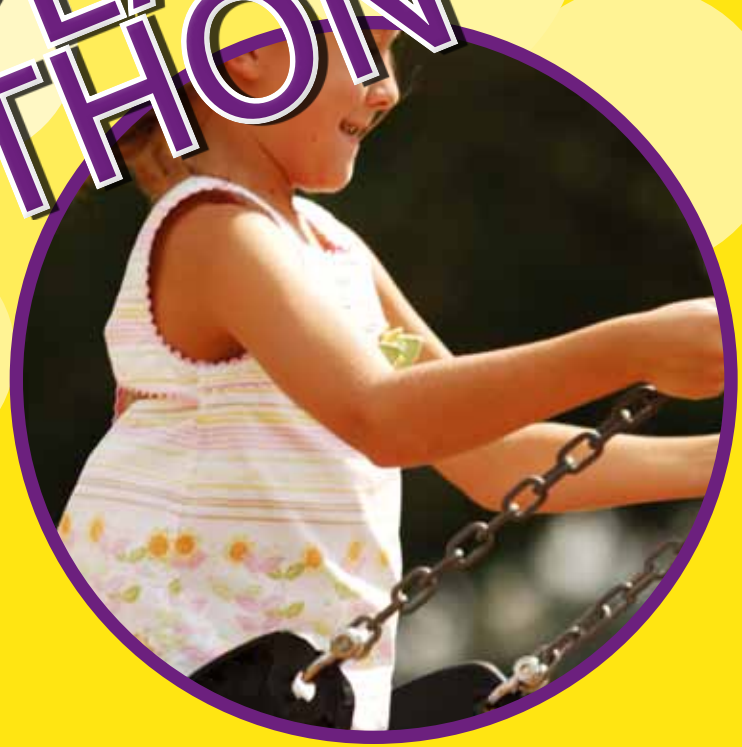
Take action

Visit www.newyorkstreetgames.com to get more great old-fashioned games, and your purchase of the recently released DVD can help benefit KaBOOM!.

play day

GAME / FUNDRAISER

PLAY-A-THON



Play matters

Encouraging unstructured play is an exceptional way to increase physical activity levels in children, which is one important strategy in the resolution of the obesity epidemic.

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
Unlimited!

Materials:
Pick one or all of the following: swingset, seesaw, jumpropes

Description:
Spotlight the importance of play by including a Play-a-Thon in your Play Day. Similar to a walk-a-thon, a Play-a-Thon is an event where kids and adults choose an activity, like playing jumprope, swinging on the swings, or playing on the seesaw, and try to keep playing for as long as possible! You can also turn your Play-a-Thon into a fundraiser by having participants pledge to jumprope, swing, or seesaw for a set amount of time in exchange for donations they collect from friends and family willing to sponsor their time.

Steps:
Decide what kind of Play-a-Thon you want to have. Depending on what type of equipment is available, you may decide to have a jumprope-a-thon, a swing-a-thon, a seesaw-a-thon, or a combination of all three.

Find participants (adults and kids!) to sign up for a time during the Play Day they'll be engaging in the Play-a-Thon.

Optional: Ask participants to support the KaBOOM! Save Play campaign by raising money from friends and family. After the Play-a-Thon, send contributions here:

save play

KaBOOM! National Headquarters
4455 Connecticut Avenue, NW
Suite B100
Washington, DC 20008
www.saveplay.org

KaBOOM!

Take action

By raising money for the cause of play through a Play-a-Thon, you can help KaBOOM! Save Play for over 1 million children this year.

play day

ADVOCACY

PLAYGROUND WATCH

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
10 parents

Materials:
Calendar & Pen

Description:
A Playground Watch is a great way to give the kids in your neighborhood more time and opportunities to play. By creating a playground watch schedule together with other local parents, you can ensure the kids in your community enjoy a safe and fun play experience at the local playground.

Steps:
Create a blank schedule with room for parents to sign up for certain days. You can either create a new schedule each month together, or let people sign up for "every Friday at 6" and switch with someone if they can't make it one Friday.

Collect phone numbers for each parent participating, so that you can easily contact each other to switch shifts, or to notify of any problems at the playground.

Connect with local law enforcement and your Department of Parks and Recreation to let them know what you're doing. They may be able to help!

If possible, come up with a recognizable shirt or hat you all can wear so that kids and other parents know who to go to with questions. Monitor the area while you're there, and watch for any safety concerns.

Talk to new parents in the neighborhood who visit the playground with their kids, and get them involved. You can also advertise the watch schedule on your neighborhood email list, or community bulletin board, so parents and kids know when the playground will have a parent there.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

58% of parents believe that organizing a neighborhood supervision group would be very helpful in increasing the time or space for outdoor play in their communities.

Take action

By visiting www.kaboom.org/playspacefinder, you and your playground watch group can become fans of your playground, and use that page to exchange information online about the park and your schedule.

play day

GAME

SHOE GOLF

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
2+ people

Materials:
Shoes, change of socks

Steps:
Choose what type of shoe golf you'd like to play: accuracy, distance, or least kicks to the goal.

Have the children unlace their shoes so that they rest loosely on the foot.

For accuracy, have the children kick their shoes towards hard-to-reach objects such as "on top of a picnic table" or "directly under park bench."

For regular golf, children take turns kicking their shoes towards the "hole" beginning with the child who had the least amount of strokes on the previous "hole" and as they move on, based on whose shoe is currently the farthest from the hole.

For distance, have the children stand behind a line or area on the grass, then have them flip the shoe as far as possible. Whichever child has the longest "drive" wins.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

The act of play in a collective setting can increase levels of cooperation, negotiation, conflict-resolution and other interpersonal skills necessary to succeed as an adult.

Take action

Be sure to take pictures of kids playing and acting silly during your Play Day, and come back to the online planner to share them!

play day

GAME

SIMON SAYS

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
3+ people

Materials:
None!

Description:
Simon Says is a game of imitation that can be played with kids of all ages, and always results in peals of laughter.

Steps:
Pick one person to be "Simon." Simon's job is to tell the rest of the players what they should do.

Players must only obey commands that begin with the words "Simon says." So if Simon says, "Simon says touch your nose," then players must touch their nose. But, if Simon says "Jump!" (without the "Simon says"), then the players shouldn't jump.

Standing in front of the group, Simon starts to give instructions, trying to trick the players into following commands when they shouldn't.

Players that get tricked into following commands that don't start with "Simon says" are out for the round.

The last person left after all others are out is the next Simon.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Kids learn by imitating adults, but also by playing and exploring on their own. Unstructured play leads to healthy brain development.

Take action

The next time you walk to your nearest playspace with your child, let them lead the way! They'll learn the safe routes to and from the park, and will someday be old enough to walk there on their own.

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

TREE PLANTING

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
3-4 adults

Materials:
Tree(s), peat moss, landscape fabric, shovels, rakes, garden hose, mulch

Steps:

Get rid of any weeds, loosen the soil with a rake, and mix in peat moss.

Cover the area with landscape fabric to prevent weeds. Cut a hole in the fabric where you want the tree to grow.

Dig a hole that's twice as wide as the container and deep enough so that the top of the container sits slightly above ground level.

For potted trees, remove the pot and loosen the soil around the roots. For trees wrapped in burlap, loosen the burlap once the tree is in the hole and cut away as much as possible.

When the tree is standing straight, fill the hole 1/3 of the way with dirt and pack down around the roots. Repeat twice until the hole is filled. Make a shallow collar of soil around the tree to hold water.

Water thoroughly, for about 30 minutes.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

96% of parents believe that spending at least one hour outside each day is beneficial to a person's health (not just for children).

Take action

Visit kaboom.org for more simple ways to improve your park or playspace.

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

LANDSCAPING

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
4-5 adults and children

Materials:
Plants, flowers, seeds or bulbs, peat moss, landscape fabric, shovels, rakes, garden hose, mulch

Description:
Landscaping is an easy way to improve your local park or playground and to make it an appealing community gathering space. Be sure to choose perennials so the flowers and plants come back for next year's Play Day!

Steps:
Remove all weeds and loosen up the soil with a metal rake. Mix in the peat moss.

Cover the area with landscape fabric to prevent weeds.

Now comes the fun part! Take each of the plants and place them (still in their pots) in the location where they will be planted. Once all plants are in good locations, cut holes in the landscape fabric where the plants will go and begin planting. It's best to start with the largest plants and work towards the smaller ones.

Pat down the soil around the plants and water thoroughly after planting.

If mulch is available, mulch around each plant. A good 3" layer of mulch saves water by insulating and protecting the soil, reducing the evaporation caused by sun and wind.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Studies indicate that children with ADD and ADHA showed fewer symptoms after playing outside in "green" environments.

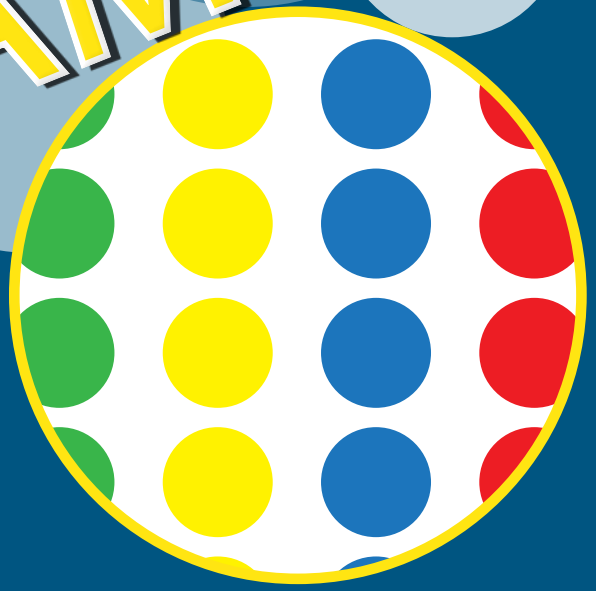
Take action

By encouraging kids to play outside for at least 60 minutes a day, you'll be helping them grow up healthy.

play day

GAME

LIFE SIZE GAMES



INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
Unlimited!

Materials:
Your favorite board game, depending on which game you choose: chalk, giant dice

Description:
Your Play Day is a great time to break out some old favorites and bring them outside, like Twister, Chess, or Monopoly. Play them on a large scale and instead of having a game piece, each player is a game piece!

Steps:
First, recreate the game board outside. If you have an asphalt area, you may want to use chalk. If you have a game like Twister, you can simply attach multiple boards together.

If you're playing a board game with "teams" like chess or checkers, a set of matching shirts will help. If you're playing a game where each individual plays on their own, like Monopoly, a bunch of different colored hats can add to the fun!

Continue to follow the rules of whichever game you are playing, until one person or team wins.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

In the book *Last Child in the Woods*, one child explains, "I like to play indoors better 'cause that's where all the electrical outlets are."

Take action

Dust off some of your favorite indoor board games and bring them outside for kids to rediscover the fun!

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

ASPHALT GAME PAINTING

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
4-10 adults and children

Materials:
Painter's tape or duct tape, tape measure, chalk, 4-6 pints of paint (assorted colors), paint brushes

Steps:

Decide which game you want to paint. Four square, hopscotch and twister are all great ideas! The only limits are space and imagination.

Outline the games on an asphalt or concrete surface using a tape measure and chalk. Use tape to mark off the areas that will be painted different colors, so that they'll have straight edges once the tape is removed.

Paint any outlines, and big blocks of color first, and then paint any numbers or symbols required by the game. Use a small paintbrush to do any touchups at the end of the day.

Allow the paint to dry for 24 hours before playing.

Consider allowing the kids to draw games using chalk, and play them for awhile; then, the parents can come in and make them permanent with paint towards the end of the play day.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Youth between the ages of 8 and 18 spend an average of 6.5 hours a day with electronic media – more than 45 hours a week!

Take action

Painting fun games on the sidewalk or driveway is an easy and inexpensive way to get kids to play outside.

play day

GAME

SACK RACE

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
Unlimited!

Materials:
One potato or coffee bean sack for each participant, and a way to designate a start and finish line

Steps:
Give each participant in the race a sack, and help them step into it.

Line everyone up on the starting line, and say, "Ready, Set, Go!"

The participants will hop, waddle, and stumble toward the finish line, and anyone who falls or loses their sack is disqualified.

The first person to make it to the finish line wins!

Variation: try setting up a sack race as a relay—the fun of trying to get teammates to step in and out of the sack always makes for some great laughs.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

"It is paradoxical that many educators and parents still differentiate between a time for learning and a time for play without seeing the vital connection between them."
-Leo F. Buscaglia

Take action

Does your school allow for 60 minutes of play a day? Find out, and if your kids aren't getting enough play time, let your school know how important free play is.

play day

GAME

BIG BASE KICKBALL

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
2 teams of 9 players

Materials:
Kickball, 4 bases

Steps:

Select a field or an open asphalt area. Lay out home plate, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd base 60 feet (20 paces) apart. The pitching mound should be 42 feet (14 paces) from home plate.

Divide your group into two teams.

On the field, you'll have a pitcher, 1st, 2nd, and 3rd basemen, 3 outfielders, a shortstop, and a catcher.

The kicking team determines the "kicking order" before the game starts and it remains the same for the entire game.

Batting rules: 4 balls means kicker "walks" to 1st base; 4 fouls means you're automatically out. Instead of counting outs, let everyone on the team get a chance to bat.

In Big Base Kickball, you are allowed to have an unlimited number of players on the base at one time.

The pitcher must pitch underhand, with no spinning or throwing, and the ball must be rolled below the kicker's knees.

In addition to tagging the base, you can get someone out by tagging them with the ball below the neck.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

90% of teachers and 86% of parents believe that physically active children are better able to learn and are better behaved in the classroom.

Take action

Write a letter to your school principal telling them that time for kids to play outside during recess is important to keep them learning.

play day

GAME

SEAWEED TAG

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
10+ people

Materials:
None!

Steps:
Mark off a large area to serve as the "ocean."

One child, acting as "seaweed," stands in the middle of this area, with the rest of the children (the "fish") lined up on end of the ocean.

At your signal, the fish try to cross the ocean.

If tagged by the seaweed, they also become seaweed and must keep one foot planted on the ground at all times.

Those fish who make it to the other side try to cross again.

The game continues until all the fish have become seaweed!

The last fish tagged is the first to act as seaweed for the next round.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Tag is being eliminated from recess across the country due to overly protective school districts.

Take action

Share the importance of unstructured play with your local school board at their next meeting.

play day

GAME

RED ROVER

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
Unlimited!

Materials:
None!

Steps:

Split up into two teams of equal size and line up, holding hands with your teammates and face the other team.

One side starts by choosing someone on the other team (who we'll call Jessica) and saying, "Red rover, red rover, let Jessica come over."

Then Jessica lets go of her teammates' hands and sprints toward the other line, and tries to break through between two people on the opposing team, where they are holding hands, by getting them to let go.

If she gets through, she chooses one child from that team to join her team, and they both go back and join Jessica's line. If she doesn't make it through, she becomes a member of the other team.

Each team takes turns calling over a member of the other team until one line has all the players.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Kids who play regularly are better able to develop and sustain friendships, to cooperate, to lead, and to follow.

Take action

Check out the Improvement Projects to see what you can do to make sure your kids have a great place to play these classic games.

play day

GAME

CRAB SOCCER

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
10–30 people

Materials:
Soccer ball, and 4 cones for a goal

Steps:
Divide the group into two even teams. Then, mark the field of play and set-up two goals using cones.

This game is played the same as regular soccer, except that the kids use their hands and feet to support them.

Everyone must be sitting down, with feet and both hands on the ground. Once the game starts, the players can lift their bodies and walk in a crab-like position.

While walking this way, each team must try to score a goal.

Remember, no hands are allowed in soccer, so players may only move the ball with their feet.

One goalie is permitted for each team and they are allowed to use their hands to protect the goal.

The first team to five points wins the game!

KaBOOM!

Play matters

59% of parents say that it is important that outdoor public play spaces and facilities make their children physically active.

Take action

Sometimes you have to be crabby! Call your Park and Recreation Department when you see unsafe conditions on the playground.

play day

GAME

SNAIL

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
2-6 people

Materials:
Chalk, pebble

Description:
Snail is a fun variation of hopscotch.

Steps:
Draw a large spiral on the ground using chalk.

Split the spiral into squares so the children can hop from one to the next. There can be as many squares as you like! It's also fun to add antennae and legs to make it look more like a snail.

Each player should take a pebble and toss it onto the snail to mark the squares that players will have to skip over.

Then each player takes turns hopping through the squares toward the center of the spiral, skipping over any squares that have a pebble in them.

If a person steps on a line, or hops onto a square that had a pebble, the person's turn ends or they lose that game.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

The area outside of the home where parents feel comfortable letting their children play unsupervised has shrunk by 90% since the 1970s.

Take action

Sometimes the best way to save play is to simply sit on a bench in your local park, to help make it a safe place for people to send their kids.

play day

GAME

RUNNING BASES

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
4–12 people

Materials:
Bases, ball, baseball gloves (optional)

Steps:

Set up two bases about 30 feet apart. Depending on the number of players you could use cones, small sections of carpet, shirts, or real bases.

Select two players to serve as the throwers. They will guard the bases. The other participants can divide themselves between the two bases.

The throwers toss the ball back and forth while the other kids run from one base to the other. Each runner gets three "outs" and the last one standing wins. If a player is tagged with the ball they get an "out." The last two runners can be throwers for the next game!

Variation: To increase the difficulty for the runners, require the kids to run at least once every throw, or use a tennis ball instead of a baseball and allow throwers to get an "out" by hitting a runner with the ball below the shoulders.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

80% of parents say it is important that outdoor public play spaces and facilities are within walking distance for their children.

Take action

Take videos and pictures of kids playing fun games and share them on your Play Day page!

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

MAP PAINTING

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
4-7 people

Materials:
Map stencil from www.usmapstencil.com, 4-8 pints of paint in assorted colors (including white), paintbrushes, duct tape, and spray paint

Steps:

First, lay out the map stencil and tape it down. Use the spray paint along the holes in the stencil to mark the lines between the states, and then remove the map stencil.

Outline each state in white so they stand out. Then, paint a small color swatch in each state before you start to fully paint them in, so you can make sure that each state is a different color from the ones around it.

Next, paint each state in the color it's been marked. Start in the middle of the map so you don't get stuck reaching over wet paint to paint those states at the end.

Let the map dry for 24 hours before allowing people to play on it.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

"Children learn as they play. Most importantly, in play children learn how to learn." -- O. Fred Donaldson

Take action

What else on your playground could use a new coat of paint?

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

PEACE POLE

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
Unlimited!

Materials:
4"x4"x8' post, 4-8 pints of paint in assorted colors, paintbrushes, pencil, post-hole digger or shovel, and a level

Steps:

Dig the hole for your post about two feet into the ground and eight inches around.

Draw a line around the 4"x4" pole at 2' from the bottom to mark what part will be underground. Then find the middle of the section that will be above ground and mark that with a line too, so you can have two different colors and two different messages on each side.

Use the pencil to write what color to paint each side, and then start painting. Make sure to let each side dry properly.

Write the message "May Peace Prevail on Earth" in eight different languages. Decide which languages you would like to see represented on the Peace Pole ahead of time, and research how to write them on the internet. Use smaller brushes to paint the messages.

Let the post dry and set it in the hole, make sure it is level, and fill in the dirt around it.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Children will be smarter, better able to get along with others and healthier and happier when they have regular opportunities for free and unstructured play outside.

Take action

Write a letter to the editor of your local paper to share your experience at your Play Day and show the rest of your town how important play is for kids.

play day

GAME

RED LIGHT GREEN LIGHT

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
Unlimited! Age 5+

Materials:
None!

Steps:
Choose one child to play the "Stoplight." The other children should line up in a row about 10 paces behind the Stoplight.

The Stoplight stands in one place, and the other children try to be the first to tag him or her.

When the Stoplight says, "green light", the other children can move forward. At any time, the Stoplight can say "red light" and turn around, and any kids caught still moving are sent back to the starting line.

The children can move as fast as they want when there's a "green light", but the faster they go, the harder it will be to stop in time when the Stoplight says "red light"!

The first child to tag the Stoplight earns the right to play the Stoplight in the next round.

Variation: If there are a lot of kids, you can draw a line they need to cross instead of making them tag the Stoplight, to avoid giving an unfair advantage.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

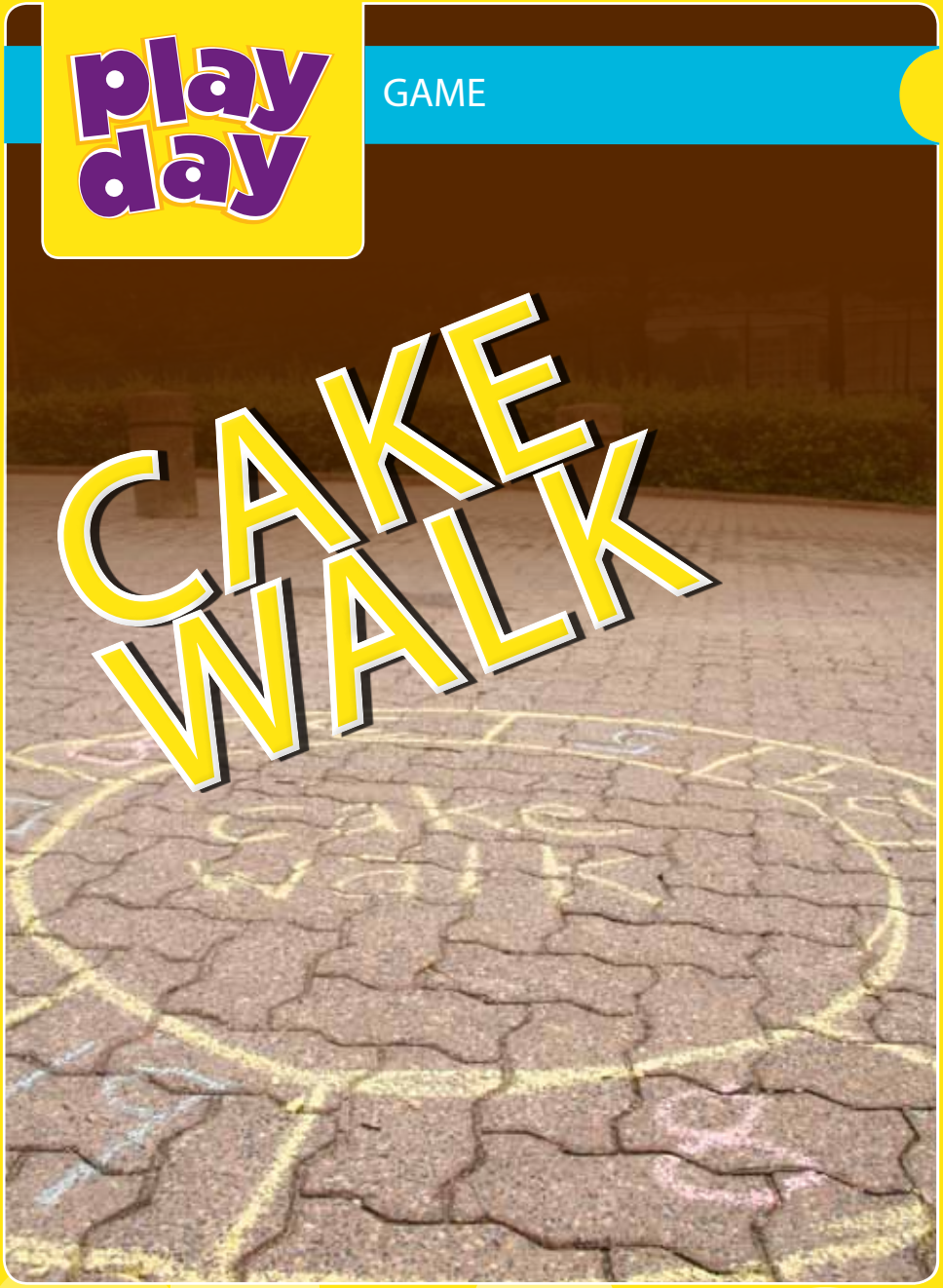
As adults focus more on ensuring children master more academic skills, children's lives become more hectic and overscheduled. For some children, this hurried lifestyle is a source of stress and anxiety, and may even contribute to depression.

Take action

Make sure the kids in your life have time to stop and be kids, by encouraging unstructured free play.

play day

GAME



CAKE WALK

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
Unlimited! Age 5+

Materials:
Chalk, donated prizes, music, paper, pen, table, and a hat to draw numbers out of

Steps:
About a week in advance of your Play Day, talk to the adults in your community and get them to donate baked goods for the Cake Walk.

On the morning of the Play Day, use chalk to draw numbers on the ground, and connect all the numbers into a circular path with arrows. Use the pen to write each number on a piece of paper, and then put them all into the hat. Display the cakes and other baked goods on a table nearby, and set up the music.

Have participants stand on a number, and then play the music. As the music continues, players should walk from one number to another along the route. When the music stops, draw a number out of the hat and announce it. The player standing on that number wins their choice of the baked goods on the table.

Variations: Depending how many kids want to play, you can have everyone who didn't win stay in for the next round, or have them get back in line if others are waiting (consolation prizes help!). You can also make some spaces have no numbers in them, but a "stay for the next round!" message instead.

If your group is fundraising for a playground project of your own, or to help KaBOOM! save play, you can have participants buy tickets in order to play.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

80% of parents say that it is important that outdoor public play spaces and facilities are within walking distance for their children.

Take action

Do you need a crosswalk, a stop sign, or sidewalk put in to help kids in your neighborhood visit the playground? Contact your local representative to make your playground as piece of cake to walk to.

play day

GAME

PARTNER TAG

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
10–30 people, age 7+

Materials:
None!

Steps:

Have all players pair up, and pick one pair to be the first runner & chaser.

Have the rest lie face-down in pairs in a circle with heads toward the middle.

There should be enough space between each pair so that another person can lie down in the space.

The chaser chases the runner around the outside of the circle of pairs, until the runner lies down next to a pair of two other players to escape from being tagged.

By lying next to a pair of other players, it will become a group of three; and as soon as this happens, the person on the other side of that group of three has to jump up and continue running from the chaser.

If someone is tagged, they become the chaser for the next round.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

"When children pretend, they're using their imaginations to move beyond the bounds of reality." – Fred Rogers

Take action

Partner up with some friends to create a committee to care for and improve your park throughout the year.

play day

GAME

CATCH THIS!

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
2 people, age 6+

Materials:
Socks, or small soft foam balls

Steps:
The two players should stand about 10 steps away from each other, and one of them should have all of the soft foam balls (or socks rolled up into balls).

The player with the soft foam balls should throw one to the other player and see if they can catch it. After they catch it, they should keep hold of it, and have the other player throw another one, and another and another one. The catcher should see how many they can hold and catch.

When they drop one, they become the thrower and the other player becomes the catcher. The person who catches the most wins!

KaBOOM!

Play matters

96% of parents say that outdoor play is important for keeping their children physically fit.

Take action

Plan a day for your kids with no TV or video games, and see how much fun they have playing outside instead!

play day

GAME

ON TARGET

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
2-6 people, age 8+

Materials:
Football, target drawing, duct tape

Steps:
On Target is a game that will test how well you hit a central target when throwing a football.

First, create a "target drawing" on poster board or cardboard with a center point (25 points) and four lower levels (20, 15, 10, 5 points) where other point totals can be earned. Players that do not hit the target at all will receive 0 points.

Next, use duct tape to mount the "target drawing" on to a wall or a fence, so it will be able to withstand the impact of a thrown football. Decide on a line for the players to stand behind when throwing the football. Consider letting younger players stand closer to the target than older players.

Each player tries their best to throw the football at the target from behind the line, while another player or an adult keeps track of how many points are being accumulated. Players should take turns, making one throw each and passing the ball around until each has had three to five turns trying to throw. The player with the most points at the end of the game wins!

Tip: If the kids in your neighborhood have lots of fun playing this game, consider creating a permanent version by painting your targets on a plywood board and attaching it to a fence! It can be even more exciting for the kids if you use a jigsaw to cut actual holes in the plywood of different sizes for different point levels (the smaller the hole, the more points it is worth).

KaBOOM!

Play matters

76% of parents say that children should spend AT LEAST an hour a day playing outside.

Take action

Print & bring all your favorite Play Day cards to the park to make sure you have enough ideas to keep kids active for as long as possible! Consider making them a permanent fixture on your park's community bulletin board.

play day

GAME

FOOTBALL TOSS

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
2-10 people, age 8+

Materials:
3 cones, 3 small balls, and 1 football

Steps:

First, set up three cones in a line and balance one small ball on top of each cone. Then, set up a starting line for players that is about 15 feet away from the cones.

The first player throws the football from behind the line, and tries to knock one of the round balls off of a cone. That player then runs to retrieve the football, bring it back to the line and pass it off to a teammate, who tries to knock another ball off the cone (and repeat). The group of players tries to knock all three balls off the cones in two minutes.

Alternatively, if you have a lot of players, split them into groups and simply time them on how long it takes to knock all the balls of the cones. The group that takes the least amount of time wins.

Tip: to make the game more challenging, increase the distance from the cones, or the number of cones; or decrease the amount of time players have to knock the balls off the cones.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Research on play suggests that "selectively adding touches of novelty to the mix of materials can help maintain children's interest in the activities offered in play areas stimulate their creativity and, draw children into play areas they typically do not play in."

Take action

By introducing cones and balls and other loose parts to your park or playground, there are countless games and variations that kids can come up with to keep themselves challenged and entertained for hours. Consider creating a bin to keep these kinds of loose parts at your playground all the time.

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

CREATE YOUR OWN IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:

Materials:

Description:

Is your community doing an improvement project on your Play Day that isn't listed here? Print this card and write in your own description, instructions and materials list. You can share your great Play Day project idea with other members of the community by adding it to kaboom.org/playday.

Steps:

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Sometimes, even when big changes are needed in your park, fixing the small stuff can make all the difference.

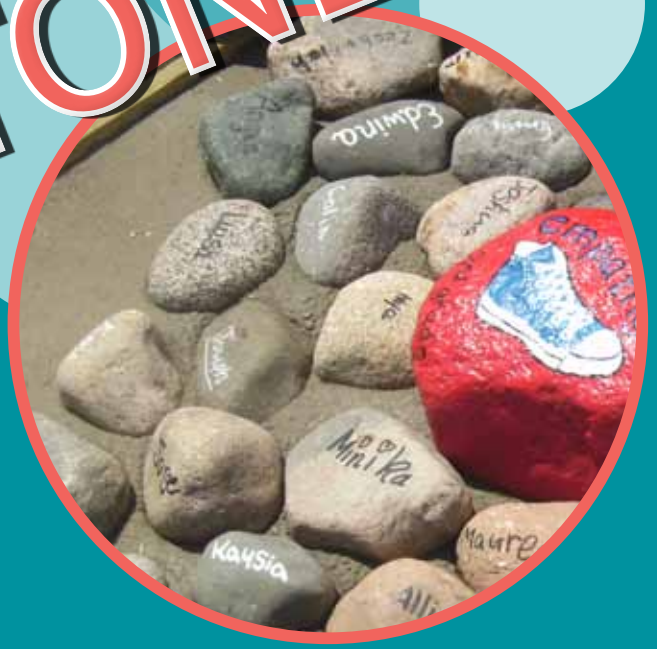
Take action

Get together at your park or playground with some other parents and neighbors, and start to dream big about what would make it a better place. Then you'll have a great plan to start a conversation with the school, PTA, or park district.

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

STEPPING STONES



INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
4-10 people

Materials:
Square or round 12" pavers, mortar, mosaic tiles, grout, sponge

Description:
Having each child create a stepping stone helps give them a sense of ownership over the play space or garden where they will end up.

Steps:
Give one blank paving stone to each child or adult who will be making a stepping stone. Spread out the mosaic tiles and any other decorative stones within reach.

Mix up the mortar (an adult should do this part!) and spread it on the stones. Allow the children to place the tiles in the pattern they want onto the paver, pressing each into the mortar.

Let the mortar dry, and then have an adult grout in between the tiles and wipe away excess with the sponge.

Determine a permanent place in your park where the stepping stones can be placed into a border or a path; or if you don't have permission to make changes to the park, send the stepping stones home with the children.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

According to a 1998 study, older park users (bikers, joggers, walkers) were found significantly healthier than non park users and reported feeling "renewed after using the park, with greater frequency of use linked to better health."

Take action

By sprucing up the area surrounding the playground, you'll encourage people of all ages to use the park, making everyone healthier and building the relationships in your neighborhood.

play day

GAME

DOWN DOWN DOWN

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
2 people, ages 8-12

Materials:
1 tennis ball

Steps:

Down Down Down is a variation on the game of catch, with penalties for dropping the ball.

The two players should stand facing each other about 8-10 steps apart. The one with the ball tosses it to the other player, who tries to catch the ball, and throws it back.

The players continue the game of catch, each trying to catch the ball cleanly without dropping it, until one of them drops the ball.

When a player drops the ball, they need to touch one knee to the ground and continue playing like that, catching and throwing from that position.

The second penalty is to have both knees down, then adding one elbow, then two elbows, and then the player's chin!

Tip: If play proceeds for awhile without anyone dropping the ball, have the players take a step back each time they make a clean catch.

Variation: On a hot day, try playing with a water balloon!

KaBOOM!

Play matters

According to studies in 2005 and 2007, children most at risk for obesity—low-income and minority children—also have fewer opportunities for play and fewer minutes devoted to recess.

Take action

If you're going to the playground with a grownup who can supervise, knock on some doors first to see if other neighborhood kids want to come along, whose parents might be too busy to take them there.

play day

GAME

FOUR SQUARE

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
4+ people, ages 7-15

Materials:
Kickball, chalk or tape, pavement or hard surface

Steps:
Use chalk to draw a giant square and divide it into four equal squares. Each small square should be roughly 5' x 5'. Draw a number (1-4) in each of the squares outside corners.

Each player occupies one of the squares, and the squares each have a rank order, the top being the "Ace" (or "King").

At the start of the game, the Ace serves the ball by bouncing it in her square once and then hitting it towards one of the other squares. The receiving player then hits the ball to any other player and play continues, until... a player loses the round by hitting the ball before it bounces once in his square, or by not hitting the ball before it bounces twice, or by hitting the ball out of bounds.

Once a player is out, she moves back to the lowest ranking square. The other players then move up to fill the vacancies. If there are more players than squares, that person goes to the back of the line, and the person at the front of the line gets to move onto the lowest square and play.

Variation: If the Ace remains in the top square for 3 or more turns, it's common to let them introduce a new rule or variation to the game.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

According to a 2010 study, out of 1,951 principals surveyed only 50% reported that students at their schools receive between 16-30 minutes of recess per day.

Take action

If you have fond memories of playing four square at recess, call up the principal at your nearest elementary school and tell them how important recess is for kids.

play day

GAME

CREATE YOUR OWN GAME!

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:

Materials:

Description:

Is your community planning to play a game on your Play Day that isn't listed here? Print this card and write in your own description, participants and materials list. You can share your great Play Day game idea with other members of the community by scanning or photographing your card and adding it to adding it to kaboom.org/playday.

Steps:

Play matters

According to a 2003 study, most moms grew up playing imaginative made up games (78%); however today , only 57% said their children play creatively. Instead, the only outdoor activity children today play more of is organized sports.

Take action

Let kids invent their own games, or variations on games, to help them develop creativity and negotiation skills. Then share what you all come up with so the rest of the country can play your games!

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

COMMUNITY GARDEN

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
10-20 adults and kids

Materials:
Shovels, soil, untreated lumber (4x4 posts, and 2x6 walls/edging), nails, hammer, plants (annual produce plants plus perennial herbs), garden hose

Steps:
Before your Play Day, decide what kind of garden will be best for your site:

A. All-in-One Garden: All the food will grow together in one plant bed and everyone will share it equally.

B. Plots: All the food will be divided so that each individual, group, or school class, will have their own plant bed.

Map out where the plant beds will go. Find a sunny area if you're growing produce, and keep the beds narrow to reach the middle from the paths! If you want to frame the beds with lumber to make them raised, measure the perimeter of each bed and count the number of posts needed, before your Play Day.

On your Play Day, dig each bed to loosen the soil so that the total depth will be 18-24". Mix in additional soil and any other materials needed to correct the pH and nutrient balance.

If you're adding lumber to frame each bed, dig a hole for each post. Set the posts in the holes and add the 2x6 walls/edging to frame the perimeter of each bed. Fill the frame with more soil.

Now you're ready to plant! For individual beds, ask each community member to bring their own plants, or have them take turns choosing plants from your selection. Or if everyone is planting and harvesting in the same area, you can place each plant where it will thrive the best. Don't forget to water them at the end of the day.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Getting kids excited about nutritious local produce is a great way to keep them healthy.

Take action

When you put a community produce garden in a local park where kids can run and play, you're fighting childhood obesity in two ways at once!

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

MURAL

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
8-20 adults and kids

Materials:
Paint, brushes, permanent marker, painter's tape, drop cloth

Description:
A mural is a great way to reflect the culture of your community at your favorite play space.

Steps:
Before your Play Day, invite an artist to draw a mural design on an empty wall using a permanent marker. To make it really easy, label each area with the color that it should be painted. Alternatively, you can either purchase mural designs online, or help transfer a design to the wall by using a projector and tracing the outlines.

On your Play Day set up a drop cloth under the painting area. Open and stir the paint. Using painter's tape, mark off the edges of the mural area on the wall and tape anything else that should not be painted (like outlets or light switches). If you're painting indoors, open all the windows.

Volunteers should paint the mural according to the colors written in the different areas on the wall. Be sure to start with the larger areas and then move on to the smaller ones. Use a small artist's brush for the details.

Finally, remove the painter's tape and let the mural dry!

KaBOOM!

Play matters

The more physical fitness tests children are able to pass, the better they perform on academic tests (Academy of Pediatrics, January 2009).

Take action

Invite kids to help with painting. Painting a mural allows children to use their own creativity and it increases their personal attachment to the play space.

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

REPAINT AMENITIES

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
5-10 adults and kids

Materials:
Wire brush, sand paper, primer, paint, brushes

Description:
Find a bench, fence, or any rundown amenity and make it look new again! It's incredible what a fresh coat of paint can do to transform and brighten any old space.

Steps:
Visit a local paint store and buy the correct primer and paint that are necessary for the surface you're working with.

Start by scraping, sanding, or stripping the exiting surface so that you have a smooth surface to work with. If there is rust, use a wire brush to smooth that surface as much as possible.

Next, wash the surface with a pressure washer or hose and make sure that there's no dirt or grime on the surface.

Once the surface is completely dry, apply primer to the surface. When primer is dry, apply paint. Add a second coat if necessary.

Congratulations, you now have a beautiful newly painted amenity!

KaBOOM!

Play matters

More than 31% of all children in the U.S. are obese or overweight. (Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, January 2010)

Take action

Getting kids involved with painting can be fun and physically engaging. Kids will also have a personal attachment to the amenity after they helped update it.

play day

GAME

DOCTOR DODGEBALL

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
8+ people, age 5+

Materials:
Eight bowling pins, an even number of foam balls (as many as you'd like), and two jerseys

Steps:

Divide the group into two evenly matched teams. Each team gets half of the field. Setup four pins on each side of the divided space. Designate a player from each group to be the doctor and give them a jersey to wear. Both doctors should have an "office" setup where they can stand without getting hit.

Give each team an equal number of balls to knock down the pins. If a pin gets knocked down, the doctor must set it back up. While the doctor tries to return the pin to its original location, the opposing team tries to hit the doctor below the waist (unless the doctor is bending down). If the doctor gets hit they must take off their jersey and become a regular player.

The game is over when the doctor is hit and all four pins are knocked down or both doctors get hit, creating a tie.

There can be more than one doctor in each group. With two doctors, when one gets hit they take off their jersey and become a regular player, and the other doctors continue to perform their duties. The teams cannot cross half-court line and they cannot "guard" the pins, but they can deflect the balls from hitting the pins. Other than the doctor, players should be instructed not to hit other people on purpose, since the object of the game is to knock down the pins, not to hit players with the balls.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

89% of pediatricians believe play helps kids from becoming overweight.

Take action

Bring a beach ball to your Play Day and have all the participants sign it with a sharpie marker, to help KaBOOM! save play.

play day

GAME

GA-GA

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
8+ people, age 5+

Materials:
Ball (volleyball, soccer ball, kickball)

Description:
Ga-Ga is a popular game played with a ball in a wide, enclosed space. The object of the game is to use only your hands to hit the ball at the other players, while avoiding getting hit yourself. The ideal game site should be an enclosed space clear of any debris.

Steps:
Start the game by having a designated person yell "Ga" and everyone else yell "Ga" back, to signal they are ready to start the game. The designated person should throw the ball against one of the walls or up in the air. Once the ball has bounced once, it is live and the game begins.

If a player is hit by the ball anywhere from the waist down that player is eliminated. Eliminated players should stand to the side of the playing area and remain stationary. If the ball bounces off of the eliminated players by accident, the game should continue as if the players represented walls.

When there are only two players left, it becomes a showdown. In the showdown, the remaining players are only allowed to touch the ball three times in a row. Last one standing without being hit, wins the game!

Variation: If you have boards enclosing the area, ask eliminated players to crouch outside the boards (they are free to move around outside of the boards). In this version, the eliminated players can try to hit the ball and get other players eliminated. If they do so, they can replace the player they successfully eliminated.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

82% of parents believe that children today do not spend enough time playing outside.

Take action

One flyer or well-written article could catch the attention of key city officials and other public figures who can help take your advocacy efforts to a whole new level.

play day

GAME

DUCK DUCK GOOSE!

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
8+ people, age 5+

Materials:
None

Steps:
Have all the children sit in a circle facing each other.

Designate one child as "It" and have that player skip or walk around the circle. The player skipping around the circle should gently tap each player's head and yell either "Duck" or "Goose."

Once one player is designated as "Goose," he or she has to jump up and try to tag "It" by chasing that player around the circle.

The goal of the game is for "It" to quickly sit down in "Goose's" spot before getting tagged. If the "Goose" doesn't catch "It" before that player sits in the open spot around the circle, then that player becomes "It" for the next round.

If the "Goose" tags "It," then the person tagged has to sit in the center of the circle until another person is tagged and he or she is replaced and the "Goose" becomes "It" for the next round.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

A recent UNICEF report found that British and American youth are the unhappiest children in the developed world, most likely due to the decline over the last 15 years in outdoor, unstructured play.

Take action

Support unstructured playtime for kids! Visit kaboom.org for new ideas and ways to support free, unstructured play.

play day

GAME

ULTIMATE FRISBEE

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
8+ people, age 10+

Materials:
Frisbee, cones or other object to mark end zones, and a large field

Description:
This game is a fun non-contact version of football, combined with Frisbee throwing. It's fun for adults and kids to play together!

Steps:
Mark the end zones with cones on a field that is 40yds wide by 70yds long, Typically the end zones extend an additional 25yds past the 70yd length of the field, on both sides of the field, but adjust them proportionately to the size of your field and to the number of players.

Divide players into two teams. To start the game, line up both teams in front of their end zones. The team that starts with the Frisbee (the defense) throws it to the other team (the offense) and the game begins.

To score points teams must throw the Frisbee into each other's end zones. Players throw the Frisbee back and forth to try to make the point while the opposing team tries to block them or get the Frisbee for their own team.

If, during the play, the offense drops the Frisbee or it lands out of bounds, the teams switch and the offense becomes the defense, and the defense becomes the offense.

Between every point and play, the players line up, just like they did in the beginning and the game resumes when the defense throws the Frisbee to the offence.

The game can go on as long as you want it to and whoever has the most points when you decide to end the game wins!

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Structured and unstructured play help kids burn lots of calories!

Take action

Team sports teach kids cooperation skills that benefit them for a lifetime.

play day

GAME

EGG AND SPOON RACE

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
2+ people

Materials:
1 egg and 1 spoon for every participant

Description:
This game is a classic version of a relay race! Play with individual racers or in teams.

Steps:
Designate a starting point and a finish line.

Line up all the participants in a row and distribute an egg and a spoon to each. Once everyone places the egg on the spoon, the moderator should say "Go!" to start the race.

Participants should try to walk as fast as they can to the finish line without letting the egg fall off the spoon. They cannot use their free hand to balance the egg. If the egg falls off the spoon, the participant can pick it up and start the course over at the starting point.

Whoever makes it to the finish line without dropping their egg first wins the race!

Variation: This game can also be played in teams as a relay race. Each participant should pass the egg and spoon to the next racer when they get back to the starting line. The first team that has all the members complete the race, wins the game!

KaBOOM!

Play matters

59% of parents report that their children usually get to the outdoor play spaces in their area by walking, but only 13% report that the children usually walk by themselves.

Take action

Think about posting lawn signs in front of your house. They could say "Ask Me About Play!" This is a cost-effective advertising technique that can help you spread the "buzz" fast among your neighborhood.

play day

GAME

BLIND MAN'S BLUFF

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
8+ people, age 5+

Materials:
Blindfold

Steps:
Blind Man's Bluff is played in a spacious but clearly defined area, such as outdoors or in a large room. One player, designated as "It," is blindfolded and moves around attempting to tag the others. The players scatter and try to avoid the person who is It, hiding in plain sight and encouraging It to change direction.

Blind Man's Bluff should be played in an area free of dangerous obstructions so that the It player will not suffer injury from tripping over or hitting something.

There are several versions of the game:
In one version, the first player tagged by It then becomes It, and another round of the game is played.

In another version, whenever any player is tagged by It, that player is out of the game. The game proceeds until all players are out of the game, at which point another round of the game starts, with either the first player or the last player to be tagged becoming the next It player.

In yet another version, It feels the face of the person tagged and attempts to identify the person, and only if the person is correctly identified does the person become It.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Tag is being eliminated from recess across the country due to overly protective school districts.

Take action

Share the importance of unstructured play with your local school board at their next meeting – make sure that your voice is heard!

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

GRAFFITI REMOVAL

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
Unlimited!

Materials:
Soap, water, rags, paint, brushes, drop cloth

Description:
Removing graffiti from park or playground equipment is a great way to reclaim the park with the kids!

Steps:
The process for graffiti removal will vary slightly based on the type of surface that was damaged. For metal or plastic surfaces, it is best to start by using soap and water. You'd be surprised at how much graffiti can be rubbed off with a little bit of elbow grease.

If graffiti still remains, try to remove it with a wire brush or steel wool. Another option is to use a power washer. Check with your local Parks and Recreation Department, as they may have additional resources to help remove graffiti at your Play Day.

Create a community mural to cover or replace the graffiti on walls and other surfaces. A paint-out is a valuable way to show pride in your park. (When selecting the paint at your hardware store, make sure to tell them what type of surface you will be working with.)

Lay down the drop cloth to avoid dripping paint on the sidewalk near your playspace. Wipe the surface with a rag to remove any dirt and to make sure you have a dry surface to paint on. Go ahead and paint a mural!

Last year, the kids at the Kenmore Play Day in Kenmore, Wash. completed a service project to remove paint from their play structure, slide, and park benches.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Over 64% of parents believe that cleaning up a play space would be very helpful in increasing the time or space for outdoor play in their communities.

Take action

Setup a Playground Watch to build community pride and ensure that the playspace equipment stays graffiti free.

play day

GAME

OBSTACLE COURSE

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
Unlimited!

Materials:
Cones, lawn chairs, cardboard boxes, bean bags, jump rope, other found objects, stopwatch

Description:
An obstacle course can work in play spaces of all shapes and with groups of all sizes. This is a great activity to do in teams, where each person can do a different obstacle. You can make this a family game and challenge parents to join.

Steps:
Use cones, lawn chairs, cardboard boxes or other items to set up an obstacle course in your park. A stopwatch can be used to see which racer makes it through in the best time.

Be creative with the types of obstacles you set up. Think of all the adventures you can encourage kids to do—climb, jump, crawl, wiggle, throw. Here are some ideas of easy-to-make obstacle stations.

- Ladder Run: Lay the jump rope in a zigzag pattern on the floor. Have the children run through the jump rope without actually touching it.
- Army Crawl: Set up the lawn chairs and let the kids slither underneath them.
- Target Practice: Use cardboard boxes of varying sizes and ask racers to toss bean bags in each before going on to the next obstacle.
- Scarf Walk: Give the kids three scarves. They must be standing on one for every step they take.
- Tricycle Slalom: Take the cones and put them down in a pattern that weaves. Then, with tricycles, see who can go through fastest without missing a cone.

This playful game idea was suggested by hosts from Oldsmar, Fla. Last year at the Oldsmar Play Day, the kids loved all the activities including the Obstacle Course.

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Nearly 1/4 of respondents say that there are no outdoor play spaces within a five-minute walk from their homes. A Play Day helps bring attention to real obstacles like this.

Take action

Create obstacles that are age appropriate, but offer kids the opportunity to maneuver and find their own way.

play day

GAME

PAINTED CASTLE

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
Unlimited!

Materials:
Cardboard boxes, scissors, paint, paint brushes

Steps:
This activity works best with different sizes and shapes of cardboard boxes. To start, have a few adults help by cutting openings in a variety of spots on the boxes. Let the children pick what type of structure they would like to make. If the kids decide they would like to create a castle, assist by making a door, windows and a drawbridge!

Gather all of the boxes and designate an area where the children can paint. Spend the first half of the Play Day painting and decorating the boxes. After the boxes are dry, setup the giant castle and let the imaginative, free play begin!

To add extra fun to this game, add loose parts and found objects (empty cereal boxes, bed sheets, a paper towel roll, etc.). What castle would be complete without a crown and some fancy clothes?

In 2009, the most popular activity at the La Madera Park Play Day in Tucson, Ariz. was building, painting and playing with the castle. The 15' x 15' structure featured a courtyard, mini-doorways, a moat and towers!

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Pretend play is related to the development of abstract thought, problem-solving, and even early literacy and math skills.

Take action

Let kids direct their own play and allow them to explore and interact with their environment.

play day

GAME

WALL BALL

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
2+ people, age 8+

Materials:
Tennis or rubber ball (1 per pair)

Steps:
The game requires an area near a wall that is open and doesn't have any windows. Mark a short-line (about 15 feet from the wall) on the ground. Form a pair with another player.

Player A has the ball and is the thrower. Player B is the fielder. Player A throws the ball against the wall, letting it bounce once on the ground before it hits the wall. Player B attempts to catch the ball in the air after it leaves the wall. If Player B makes a successful catch, he or she becomes the thrower.

If a successful catch is not made, the thrower gets a point and continues throwing. All throws must hit the ground before hitting the wall and must also clear the short-line. If a throw does not hit the ground first or clear the short-line, a fault is called.

A thrower's turn is over after two faults occur during the same turn (not necessarily in a row).

KaBOOM!

Play matters

92% of parents say that children today spend less time playing outside than they did when they were growing up.

Take action

Rather than watching television or playing video games, play outside!

play day

IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

1' X 1' SQUARES

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
10 - 20 people

Materials:
One square of plywood for each participant, tarp, 4-8 pints of paint in assorted colors, paintbrushes, plastic cups, water, drill and zip ties (optional)

Steps:

Before your Play Day, take your plywood and cut it into 1'x1' squares. If you want to attach the mini-murals to a fence after they're painted, you can drill a hole in the corners so that they can be easily attached with zip ties or wire.

On your Play Day, have the children sit around the tarp and place a blank 1'x1' square in front of each child. Give each child a paintbrush and a cup of clear water to rinse it between colors, and put the paint cans in the middle. Be sure to supervise the kids if you don't want them covered in paint! For young kids, have the supervisors keep the paint cans and bring them around to the kids as requested.

Let the kids each draw their own original design on their 1'x1' square. When you put them all together, you'll have a mosaic of interesting and individual designs. Remember to let the 1'x1' squares dry before trying to attach them to a fence!

KaBOOM!

Play matters

Playgrounds are a neighborhood hub for diverse communities to come together around a common cause.

Take action

By creating a mural of 1'x1' squares at your playground, you'll have a great visual representation of the diversity of your community.

play day

ADVOCACY

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

INSTRUCTIONS:

Number of Participants:
Unlimited!

Materials:
Pen and paper

Description:
This is a great way to get the word out to your community about play!

Steps:
Get the contact information of the editor of your local newspaper. This information can be found online at the newspaper's website or sometimes it can be found in the print newspapers themselves.

Once you have the contact information for your local editor, write away! A letter is a way to get your message out about the importance of play.

Write about what means the most to you! Possible topics include:

- Ask about opening the school playground after hours so that everyone has a place to play even after school is over.
- Does your community need a new playground? You could write about the need for one and bring awareness to the idea.
- If your kids or other kids in the community are not getting enough recess during school, this would be a great opportunity to get the message out!
- Your Play Day itself is also a great topic. Tell your local paper about your Play Day before and after it takes place, to share with them how important play is in a child's life and for their development. This is also a good way to generate publicity around the event.

When you have finished your letter, send it in!

KaBOOM!

Play matters

"Play is often talked about as if it were a relief from serious learning. But for children play is serious learning. Play is really the work of childhood." - Fred Rogers

Take action

By writing a letter, you can play it forward to make sure every kid has a great place to play nearby.