

## Parachutes

### PARACHUTE ACTIVITIES

#### **Cat and Mouse**

The parachute is placed flat on the floor with the children sitting around the edge. 2 children are chosen - one goes under the parachute (mouse) and one child goes on top of the parachute (cat). The cat crawls around on their hands and knees attempting to catch the mouse.

#### **Washing Machine**

Children sit around the parachute which is placed on the floor, all the children have their legs stretched out underneath the parachute. The teacher nominates a direction to circle the parachute - like a circular sit up.

#### **Bouncing**

Children hold onto all the handles of the parachute. The teacher throws one soft and safe low inflation ball onto the parachute. The ball bounces by the children making "small waves" with the parachute. Add more balls and try to keep them all "alive".

#### **Flying Parachute**

Each child holds onto a handle of the parachute while doing high full stretches above their heads. The teacher counts to three and then all the children let go and place their hands on their head so that the parachute flies into the air.

#### **Colour Recognition**

Place the parachute on the floor and ask the children to stand on the red, blue, green or yellow section. A variation on this is to play a twister type game where children are asked to place a foot on the red and a hand on the yellow.

#### **General Activity**

Little fast waves

Big waves

Trap the air within the parachute, like a balloon

#### **Mushroom**

This is not so much a game, more an essential starting point for parachute play. Get everyone to spread out the parachute and hold the edge, spaced out more or less evenly so they're standing in a circle. Pull the chute taut and lower it to the ground (or knee level). On the magic word (e.g. Mushroom!) everyone pulls the chute upwards (don't let go). It will fill with air and rise up like a giant mushroom - or igloo. To get it as high as possible everyone must take a couple of paces towards the center as the chute rises. It's good to practice this so that the group can learn to work effectively as a team and get the chute really high. It won't work without cooperation.

#### **Variations on Mushroom**

Once you've mastered the basic mushroom it's fun to experiment. See what happens if:

- Everyone mushrooms and then runs to the center, still holding the chute.
- Everyone mushrooms, then lets go, especially outdoors on a windy day!
- Everyone lets go at exactly the same time. If there isn't any wind, the chute will retain its perfect mushroom shape and rise straight up in the air. Indoors it may go up to the ceiling. To get this right it's best for someone to shout "One.. Two.. Three.. Go!", or similar, immediately after the "Mushroom!" instruction. For everyone to let go at exactly the right instant will take practice and concentration. Groups of children who haven't played with a parachute before will probably be delighted and fascinated by the effect for quite a while before you move on to any other games. It's particularly spectacular when the sun is shining down through the chute.

#### **Rollerball**

Everyone holds the chute taut. Place a large ball near the edge. Try to make the ball roll around the edge of the chute. To do this someone starts the ball rolling. As it comes towards you, you lower the edge you are holding, and as it goes past you raise your edge. When all the players do this in synchronization it creates a wave going round the edge, pushing the ball round in front of it in a smooth, steady circle. It can not be done without concentration and cooperation! However, it is very rewarding for the group to eventually achieve a smooth, continuous motion. Once you've done this try speeding up - or change direction

you've done this try speeding up or change direction.

### **Big Turtle**

Have the children get on their hands and knees under a large "turtle shell" and try to make the turtle move in one direction. As a cooperative game, children have to work together to get the turtle to move. Variation: Have the turtle go over a hill or bench or through an obstacle course without losing the shell.

### **The Ocean**

We pretend the parachute is the ocean. Children move the parachute in response to the 'weather report' they heard. (Encourages children to be creative). For example, say, "I heard on the weather report this morning that there was a slight breeze over the Pacific. What would that look like?" The children respond by making small waves in the parachute. Other suggestions have been - high winds, snow (we would have to pull it tight to make the ice), twisters, etc. Once they get the hang of it the possibilities are endless.

### **Jaws**

Everyone sits on the floor in a circle holding the parachute stretched out with his or her legs underneath it. The chute is the sea and they are sitting on the beach, happily dipping their toes in the water. By shaking the edge of the chute realistic ripple or wave effects can be generated. Once the waves are going well someone is selected to be a shark and disappears under the chute. They move around underneath and because of the waves it will be difficult to see where they are. The shark chooses a victim and grabs him or her by the feet. The victim can give an appropriate scream before disappearing under the chute. This person now becomes a new shark. To prolong the game you can have the original shark revert to being a bather - or to make it more lively you can have several sharks in there at once. To finish the game you can choose 'once a shark, always a shark' - so everyone eventually becomes a shark. You can introduce freak weather conditions - or even a killer whale!

### **See-Saw**

Pull From a sitting position, have the children pull the chute back and forth in a seesawing motion.

### **Make Waves**

While gripping the parachute, everyone moves their arms up and down to make small and large waves.

### **Chute Lift**

Ask the children to lift the parachute high over their heads and down again. Talk about the soft sounds and breezes that are created. Move the parachute faster and notice the different effects.

### **Mushroom**

From a standing position, lift the parachute from the ground to waist height, counting one (lift) and two (lift). On three (lift), have everyone raise the parachute high over their heads and then crouch down, pulling the parachute tightly behind them. A mushroom effect is created as the parachute settles.

### **Parachute Tag**

Lift the parachute high overhead. Call one child's name and have them run (skip, hop, twirl or crawl) to the other side before the parachute comes down and tags them.

### **One Hand Run**

Have each child hold the parachute with one hand, extending the opposite arm out for balance. Run around in one direction, then change and run around in the other direction. A variation would be to use music as the cue for changing direction (i.e. direction can be changed every time the music stops).

### **Parachute Run**

Have the children take turns running on the parachute as it lies on the ground, while the other children make waves. See how long the children can maneuver on the waves before falling down. The length of turns can be determined by songs that the children choose to sing (i.e. everyone's turn lasts the length of one song).

### **Popcorn**

Place a number of beanbags on the chute. Shake the chute to make them rise like popcorn.

### **Poison Snake**

Place four to six skipping ropes on the chute. By shaking the chute, try to make them hit the players on the other side. Keep track of who gets bitten.

### **Shaking the Rug and Making Waves**

Shaking rug involves rapid movement either light or heavy. Making waves are large movements to send billow of cloth up and down like waves. Waves can be small, medium or large. Kids can alternate turns to see who can make the best waves.

### **Merry go Round**

Turn the body so that the chute is held with only one hand, walk, hop, jump, skip around holding the chute. It looks like a merry-go-round.

### **Merry Go Round Variation**

Let one child lie in the middle and go for a ride - when everyone is holding with one arm and facing the same direction and walking.

### **W A V E**

Where one person puts hands up and person next to her follows action. (like the wave at a football game)

### **Cathedral**

Everyone lowers the chute and then on the count of three raise their arms high once the chute is quite high - everyone takes 3-4 giant steps toward the center and pulls the chute behind them and sit down with their bottoms on the edge of the chute.

### **Cat and mouse**

(although some might find this dangerous - just make sure the cat is crawling on all fours and not running upright) One child - the mouse - is under the chute, everyone is shaking it - quite close to the ground and another child (shoes off) crawls on top and tries to hunt and tag the mouse.

### **Running by Numbers**

The children love to run underneath and switch places with others - could number them 1 through 5 around the circle- and then call out a number. (Lots of screams for this one.)

**SPORTS**  
.com.au