

## Access to.....Games (Part Two)

### Introduction

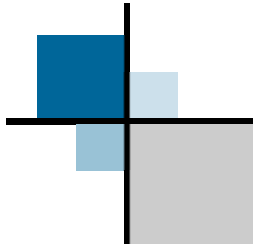
Games are often organised by adults as a substitute for free play because we feel that children and young people need support or control. Both organised games and free play are important, providing different benefits and experiences.

### Benefits of playing games

- ◆ Developing skills (coordination, language, etc).
- ◆ Increase in confidence and self-esteem.
- ◆ Can include players of different ages and abilities.
- ◆ Building friendships and circles of support for disabled players.
- ◆ Provide an initial structure for players who don't know each other.
- ◆ Communication.
- ◆ Social interaction.
- ◆ Learning to follow rules, to win and lose gracefully.
- ◆ Cooperation and trust.
- ◆ Opportunity for people providing services and service users to get to know each other.
- ◆ Stimulation.
- ◆ Provide a safe routine.
- ◆ Using up energy.
- ◆ Fun and enjoyment.
- ◆ Opportunities for players to try out different roles, take the lead.
- ◆ Games can be a useful start and end to a free play session or a period of formal education or work.

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Games chosen and planned carefully can break down barriers, increase understanding of self and others and, most importantly, be FUN!



## Access to .....Games (cont.)

Think about the game before you introduce it to a group of players - better still, play it with your colleagues to identify possible problems and discuss alternatives.

### Avoid

- Games with complicated rules that require lengthy explanation before the game can start - players will get bored and impatient, and may not have the necessary language or memory skills.
- Games where players are 'out' - having to sit and watch an exciting game may lead to boredom, frustration and mischief!
- Compelling players to take part - choosing to be a spectator **is** OK.
- Lots of games that a player cannot take part in - being a spectator due to poor choice of games **is not** OK.
- Competitive games where a player's disability will place them or their team at a disadvantage.
- Environments that are inappropriate for game playing - can the players see and hear the person who is giving instructions, are there distractions, is the space appropriate - are you constantly having to tell players to be careful of light fittings, windows, furniture, etc?

### Adapting games

Adapting the way the game is played, or the equipment used, will often make the game more inclusive.

- ⇒ Pair all the players in twos, so that one player can model what is expected.
  - ⇒ Change the number of teams.
  - ⇒ Keep groups small - more participation, less hanging around.
  - ⇒ Make more players 'It'.
  - ⇒ Create some roles, such as score keeper or ball collector, which allow a player to opt out if concentration, tiredness or noise levels are a problem.
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## Access to .... Games (cont.)

- ⇒ For circle games, ask everyone to sit on chairs (rather than standing or sitting on the ground) so that players in wheelchairs are on the same level.
  - ⇒ Reduce the playing time of the game.
  - ⇒ Change the boundaries - a smaller space will help chase games to flow better or end more quickly.
  - ⇒ Change the method of moving - hopping rather than running, for example.
  - ⇒ Use soft balls, bean bags, Koosh balls that are easier to catch.
  - ⇒ Use balls with bright colours which contrast with the playing surface, or balls with bells.
  - ⇒ Use unusual objects for catching games - a soft toy, hat, stuffed sock, lettuce, bin bag stuffed with newspaper - less emphasis on 'good ball skills'!
  - ⇒ Add more equipment (balls etc) or take some away.
  - ⇒ Reduce or increase the size of the goal or the height of the netball ring.
  - ⇒ Involve players in suggesting modifications to the aim or rules of the game.
  - ⇒ Encourage players to teach the group a new game.
  - ⇒ Work with the group to develop new games or new ways of playing old games.
  - ⇒ Keep explanations of how the game is played simple and clear.
  - ⇒ Use pictures, photographs or symbols to explain the sequence of actions in the game.
  - ⇒ In turn-taking games, give the player whose turn it is a hat to wear (which is passed to the next person when it is their turn) - this will make it easier for some players to understand what is happening.
  - ⇒ Develop a handbook of games the group has played, using photographs to illustrate the game (or a key feature of the game). This will enable a player to indicate which game they want to play.
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## Access to ....Games (cont.)

### Circle games

#### *Pass a squeeze*

Everyone holds hands in a circle. A leader is nominated to pass a squeeze - she can choose which direction. When the group has become used to the game, add another squeeze moving round in the other direction.

#### *Add a movement*

Sit in a circle. The first player makes a movement, e.g. taps her knee. The second player does the same and adds another movement. This continues round the circle with the sequence of movements getting longer and longer.

#### *Passing an object*

This game involves miming. Everyone sits in a circle and an imaginary object is passed round the group. Start with the leader. Pass round something that is familiar to the group, e.g. an imaginary ball. Encourage the players to feel the shape, throw it in the air, bounce it, and so on. Other imaginary objects could include a heavy box, a wriggling puppy, sticky gum.

#### *Throw a face*

One person pulls a face - an exaggerated expression of anger, sadness or happiness. She then 'removes' the face and 'throws' it to someone else. That player pulls the same face, then changes the expression and throws it to someone

#### *Raindrops*

Stand or sit in a circle, turn to the left facing the back of the person next to you. The leader tells a story about walking in the rain. The rain is very gentle at first - each person gently taps their fingers on the shoulders in front of them. Gradually the rain gets heavier (the players tap more strongly with their fingers), then it becomes less heavy and finally the rain stops.

#### *Blossom magic*

Each player scrunches up a square of brightly coloured fabric until it is small enough to fit into the fist. The leader sounds a cymbal (the sun coming out) and players slowly open their fists so their cloth starts to open like a blossom. Clouds cover the sun (scratching on the cymbal) and players close their fists, scrunching up the fabric. Ask the players to suggest magic spells to make the blossoms open.

## Access to ....Games (cont.)

### Active games

#### *Touch blue*

Choose a leader. The leader says "Touch blue" and everyone tries to touch something that colour. Continue with different colours.

#### *Dragon's tail*

Form teams of three. In your teams join together as a chain, one behind the other, holding onto the player in front. The player at the end of the chain tucks a scarf into their waistband/belt - this is the dragon's tail. The leader of each team, without breaking the chain, tries to take other teams' tails whilst defending their own.

#### *Giants, Elves and Wizards*

This is an energetic version of "Scissors, Paper, Stone". Giants chase Wizards, Wizards chase Elves and Elves chase Giants. Giants stand on tiptoes and raise their arms high above their heads. Elves crouch down wiggling their fingers above their heads. Wizards raise their right hand and stretch their left hand out in front, fingers extended. Players divide into two teams, go to opposite ends of the room and decide who they want their team to be. The teams then come back to the centre and shout "Giants, Elves, Wizards" three times, with the appropriate actions. After the third time, each team shouts out what they are and gives chase as appropriate. Anyone who is caught before reaching their den at the end of the room joins the other team. If both teams are the same thing then hugs are exchanged before the game resumes.

#### *Who is the dragon going to eat?*

One player is the dragon and stands on one side of the room. All the other players stand on the opposite side of the room. The dragon calls "The dragon is going to eat Julie!" The other players have to shout "No, you are not going to eat Julie!" and try to protect Julie by making a circle around her, for example. If the dragon catches Julie, she becomes the dragon and chooses who she wants to eat.

#### *Who gets the clothes pegs?*

Each player is given a clothes peg. Players spread out around the room which has obstacles they are not allowed to touch. The leader says "Everybody put their clothes pegs on Eve" and the players have to run up to her without bumping into the obstacles and attach the pegs to her clothes. Eve decides who is next.