

Abundance Game

Almost any small item that can be easily passed can be used in this game. Coins work especially well because they are uniform in size and have a perceived value.

I prefer quarters or gold dollars. Other items could include, rocks, acorns, crystals, legos, marbles, super balls, a wrapped gumball or piece of candy, or you name it. Maybe try different coin amounts at once, penny, nickel, dime.

How to play - First make small circles with 3-5 people sitting preferably cross legged with knees touching but mainly as close together as possible. If making circles is confusing, stand up and hold hands in circles of 3-5 and then sit down. Making quick circles can be part of the game!

If you need to focus the group's attention to start you can have everyone hold their one quarter in their hand up over their head to signify they are ready.

Keep both hands OPEN to receive

Each person gets one quarter (or item) to start with.

You can put a quarter in any OPEN hand.

Once there is a quarter in your hand it is FULL and cannot receive anymore.

As a fun bonus say *Thank You* every time you receive one. It's surprising that even the older kids usually do this right away.

By continuing to give them away it creates another open hand to receive. The goal is to see how much you can have by how you keep it moving in circulation.

When you have two full hands and someone else has two open hands you can do a DOUBLE SLAM and give two quarters at once. Sometimes kids like to double slam the same person right back which is ok but it is usually more fun to keep it circulating. Also try giving one to yourself in your open hand!

Once it gets going and maybe starts to loose a little momentum you can "double time" and speed up faster.

There are a couple other rules to keep in mind but I would not mention them unless it becomes an issue.

Only passing - no throwing. Basically don't let go of the quarter until it is in the open hand.

You can't tell/demand or move coins for others.

If there are infractions or confusion simply restate the rules of open and full.

Like most games the number one rule is to HAVE FUN!

and the kids will learn what they learn without saying anything about it.

It helps to have a staff/adult in each circle to model courteous behavior. To make sure everyone gets to play, watch for bashful or younger kids that may require gentle instruction to get them going. The game can be fast paced so everyone needs to be sensitive to the individual style of all the players in the circle. Being fair, so everyone gets a chance is naturally built into the game. Surprisingly greed and selfishness seldom come into play. The game is really boring if you don't pass them. Giving away something you like or want can also have a strong lesson in trust and generosity.

I have never reached the threshold where kids want to stop playing the abundance game. Time has been the limiting factor not interest. A variation could be to make it a mini scavenger hunt where each person brings some small object they like to the game. They can be awkward to pass but I highly recommend playing this game with \$100 bills. Ok maybe you don't get to keep them but it is still an exciting experience!

There can be many teachable moments especially with the commemorative state quarters for reading, history and conversation on dates and birthdays. As an example, there was quite a bit of discussion about the harsh slogan kids found on the New Hampshire quarter "Live free or die!"

Watch a video of the Abundance Game at <http://tadpolegames.blogspot.com>

The Abundance Game with large groups.

With larger groups you can try making a CLUMP instead of circles. Just have everyone sit very close together so you can easily reach other people. The same open and full rules apply but quarters can be passed randomly within the clump.

To inspire more interest after playing for a while you can add the opportunity to MAKE A BRIDGE to be able to give a quarter to someone on the other side that you can not reach. This works especially well if you know each others names. "Sara can you please pass this one to Colton?" would be an example to model polite words. If you do not know names it can also work just to say "Can you give this to my friend?" or "bridge please" when you offer a quarter. If they say yes they give the quarter to someone out of your reach.

Another variation is to make the quarters STICKY. You can play regular with open hands but you can also put a quarter in a hand with quarters (being sticky changes the full rule) but now all the quarters stick together so you can only pass the clump of quarters as one. Eventually all the quarters are clumped in one hand then you "turn it around" and the person with all the quarters keeps one for themselves and passes the remaining clump to someone else's open hand which keeps one and then passes on the clump "unsticking" the clump until everyone has one to keep. Regular individual play can continue while unsticking the clump.

Rubber Eggs - Super Bouncy Ball Game

We have been experimenting with many variations of bouncy (super) ball games and our fundamental discovery is that everyone likes bouncy balls! Like bubbles, super bouncy balls inspire delight for all ages. Their unpredictable nature requires coordinated quick reactions.

This game can be played indoors or outdoors. This is a work in progress and there are many variations emerging.

First create a designated space for the "Nest" which can be a hat, cup, egg carton, a soft jacket or anything that will hold bouncy balls safely without rolling away.

Depending on how many kids are playing, you could start with one ball for each kid or 6-8 balls works well. A person is designated as the "thrower" and holds all the balls. Then everyone counts down from twelve (the number of eggs in a carton or any number you like) and on zero all the balls are bounced together at the same time and bounce wildly in every direction.

Sometimes we say "hatch" for the zero to release all the eggs. The kids race off to catch the balls and bring them back to the nest as quickly as they can. Everyone helps until all the balls are back in the nest. The game cannot start again until all the balls are returned to the nest. Everyone helps search if there is a "lost egg" Surprisingly we have always been able to find all of the balls but it could be a rule that if you loose one, the game is over for the day, which may inspire more searching.

A rhyme like *Eggs eggs fly away, will you hatch again today?* can also work well for releasing the balls. So far, deciding who is the thrower has not been an issue. The kids naturally took turns so everyone could have a chance. Making it less competitive by being a group task makes it easier for all ages to play and succeed together.

If there is concern when someone gets a dull color like grey or prefers another color, I sometimes offer the option of trading for one in my handful of extra balls. I make it very clear there is only one trade per kid. Occasionally they will trade with each other.

In a gym for an indoor version after first playing the Abundance Game each kid had a ball that they liked. Then they “memorized” it by studying the color and pattern. After playing for a while they also quickly began to recognize the balls of other kids. Loosing a ball is much less of an issue in a gym and can keep the game moving quicker.

More bouncy ball ideas

Hiding Guessing Games – like the classic shell game, choose which hand it is in. This can also work well for choosing the thrower.

Traditional catch with two or more players.

Bouncing a ball off a wall to yourself or someone else at an angle is also fun.

You could use cups to bounce into for points.

Losing a ball *is a very common thread*. A lost ball can open a door to finding creative ways to handle the complexity of the situation.

Peace Pause

This simple game can quickly refocus a group and create a fertile space to give directions. It will also assist in developing a healthy balance of activity and rest.

Hold a hand up in the air with a Peace sign and loudly declare “PEACE!” the kids need to immediately stop whatever they are doing and shout back “PEACE!” then start counting down from 10-1, start fairly loud on 10-9-8 while fading slower and more quietly until silent at one. Do a silent peace gesture (like ripples in a pond) or silent cheer. Then count silently using your fingers to ten or a random number quietly “called out” by the leader. The randomness can add to the attention getting effect and adapt to the intensity of the energy level. After achieving silence for the full count do a silent cheer.

Watch a Peace Pause video at <http://tadpolegames.blogspot.com>

When teaching the Peace Pause the first time, I find that kids ask to do it again right away. You can repeat the whole process three or more times. This will reinforce and model what the game looks like when we arrive at our goal or do it “right” If there is any talking during the silent counting at the end you can start the whole process again until it works. Treating it as a game like missing in jump rope helps reduce the perception of scolding and a little silent peer pressure can go a long way to reel in a few strays.

Then to be silly and test it out, I like to have the kids “pretend” to be silly and noisy and then I say PEACE! and they followed right along with the echo. You can practice this a couple times. The kids are usually quite amused by this and the randomness keeps their interest and attention. One of the keys to success in using a Peace Pause is to make sure it is strongly anchored by practicing first. This process is easy to reinforce quickly. Kids are speed learners. Also be sure to use this as a surprise game in the middle of normal and quite activities as well as high energy moments to reinforce the unpredictability and to practice in lower stress situations.

Instead of a time out let’s have a peace in! Using quiet time as a reward instead of a punishment will bring much more balance and harmony to the over all energy of the day.

Wacky Penguin – is a fun game to condition the contrast of high energy with regaining high attention.

Visit <http://tadpolegames.blogspot.com> for complete written instructions and video.

Look here for directions to this wacky game with endless variations to keep kids having a ton of fun without them knowing one of the things they are learning is how to quickly shift their energy from fast and wild to quiet and sitting. It can be fun to put amusing new spins on familiar games. It can also transform a game that could be considered for “little kids” into something new and original.

My game song Duck Duck Penguin is an excellent example. This game is an obvious spin off of Duck Duck “Grey Duck” but with many variations to keep it interesting.

The first significant variation is you can play this sitting as a group instead of in a circle. At my concerts I’m always IT but it would also be fun to let kids take turns being IT.

The rules are simple. I say duck and the kids echo duck. They continue to echo whatever I say or do. As an example, duck-duck, duck-duck, happy duck-happy duck, sad duck-sad duck, quack-quack, duck-duck, chicken-chicken, yippee-yippee, oooh-oooh, clap hands-clap hands, purple duck-purple duck, and on and on in endless variations, until I shout PENGUIN!

And everyone stands up and does the wacky penguin dance.

The easiest way to do the Wacky Penguin Dance is to stand up and pretend that your elbows are stuck to your side and your knees are stuck together. Then dance and waddle around like a wacky penguin.

Then when I shout duck! Everyone shouts back duck! And sits down as fast as they can. The duck echoes begin again until the next penguin surprise. Ending with a Peace Pause or a few breaths works well.

I like to repeat the word duck occasionally and sometimes even tap a few kids on the head to remind them that this is a variation on Duck Duck Grey Duck. You can also experiment with variations in volume and tone to keep the kids attention focused.

I have mostly played this game with preschool kids but the concept could easily be adapted for games with older kids. An educational variation that I have tried with toddlers is to start with an extremely simple version of duck echoes and let them jump and dance around on the penguin dance and the variation is that they sit down and listen to penguin trivia like *penguins are black and white* alternated with penguin dancing *penguins are a bird that can’t fly but can swim*.

For the musically inclined here are the lyrics and chords to the wacky penguin song.

Otherwise you could use pre recorded music or just say dance dance dance everybody dance dance dance or maybe just use a percussion instrument like a tambourine. Generating happy enthusiasm is more important than the song.

Wacky Penguin Dance

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<http://www.willhale.com/contact.html>

G

Do the wacky penguin the wacky penguin

C G

Everybody dance

Do the wacky penguin the wacky penguin

A D G

Dance dance dance

Useful Resource Links

Will Hale - Tadpole Parade Game Resources – videos and directions to original Will Hale games.
<http://tadpolegames.blogspot.com/>

Ultimate Camp Resources – a great game list
<http://www.ultimatecampresource.com/site/camp-activities/tag-games.page-1.html>

Many interesting activity ideas including, how to make a paper fortune teller with downloadable templates.
<http://www.momsminivan.com/article-cootie-catcher.html>

Fun-attic Game List
http://www.funattic.com/game_list.htm

A huge list of jumping rhymes
http://www.aacs.wnyric.org/donius/jump_rope/rhymes.html

How to play Cat's Cradle string figures with excellent photos.
http://www.ifyoulovetoread.com/book/chten_cats1105.htm

Have you ever wondered what might happen if you released 300,000 super balls down a hilly street?
Here is a link for a video of someone who tried it.
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NZvfr3HsSto&feature=related>

Bonus Games

Virtual Hide and Seek

Pick a place inside your house to hide, and imagine you are there. You can be any size, so you can hide in the silverware drawer, inside the toilet, in the dryer, wherever you can imagine! The others ask yes/no questions only, ie "are you in the kitchen" until they narrow it down to the room, area and then....find you! Kids love this game because it's so fun to hide in places you'd not really fit into. You may have to clarify no hiding between walls and in plumbing!

Japanese Tag

Similar to the regular game of tag except the one who has been tagged must place his right hand on the spot where he has been touched, whether it is on his arm, his chest, his back, his ankle, etc. Then he must chase the other players in that position until he has tagged a new person to be it.

Captain May I

The captain is the leader in front. The crew lines up across from the captain. The captain takes turns giving each person an order like "Brandon, take three giant steps and a hop" before taking the order the crew member must reply "captain may I?" and the captain replies "Yes you may" If the crew fails to reply before acting on the order they must return to the starting line. The first one to arrive at the captain becomes the next captain. Kids frequently underestimate the power and consideration of the captain to decide the winner. An order of 300 giant steps would make anyone a winner so it is up to the captain to be fair and compassionate so everyone has fun. This game is a stunning example of the strength and effectiveness of polite words.

6 year old revelation by Alex *"When I was three I thought 100 was the highest number but there are a lot more, like thousands and thousands!"*

Please try out these games and send me your feedback with ideas, suggestions or new variations.

Will Hale & Tadpole Parade **Kid Tested, Parent Approved, Teacher Recommended**