

Down Time Fun

Sometimes just walking from one area to another can be a task. Try some of these fun activities to make getting around more interesting. These games can keep your campers active while on the move, and if a camper is busy focusing on a task, they'll have less time to focus on being disruptive.

1. Mission Impossible – Try to get somewhere (the next activity, the cabin, the cafeteria) without anyone else seeing your group.
2. Funny Walks – Walk somewhere in a funny way. Switch it up. One day everyone has to walk like their favorite bug, the next day their favorite super hero, an airplane, etc...
3. Blind Trust Walk – Campers have to get somewhere (the next activity, etc...) with their eyes closed. Counselors can lead the way with their voices and watch for potential hazards. Campers can hold onto the shoulder of the camper in front of them. Not only is this a time filler, it's also an excellent way to build trust within the group.
4. Scavenger Hunt – Spend a bit of time creating a list of items that campers have to find on their way somewhere. You can fill it with items from nature, landmarks, or anything that you know you'll see on your way to where you're going.

Hip pocket games are fun games that you can play anywhere with little to no props. Did your group arrive too early to their next activity? Are your campers looking for something interesting to do? Might that something be troublesome? Have some games ready in your hip pocket to keep them engaged.

1. Elbow Tag – Campers to stand in a circle, in pairs, elbows linked (an odd number of players may result in one trio). Choose a chaser and a runner. The chaser tries to tag the runner. The chaser and the runner may not leave the immediate vicinity of the circle and may not cross through the circle. The runner becomes safe when s/he links elbows with another player. When a pair is joined by the runner, the player opposite the former runner becomes the new runner. If the chaser tags the runner, the roles are reversed (the former chaser must find an elbow to latch onto).
2. Gotcha – Make a tight circle. Each person places their left hand in front of them, palm up and flat. Then each person points their right index finger into the left flat-palmed hand of the person to their right. Everyone should have someone's right finger in the palm of their left hand. On "Go" everyone tries to grab the finger in their left hand without letting their right finger get grabbed. Whoever grabs a finger wins. After a few tries, switch hands.
3. Chicken – People – Make a tight circle, shoulder to shoulder. Throw an object on the ground (usually a rubber chicken, but any object will do – even your keys). Say "chicken," and everyone in the circle has to look down at the chicken. Say "people," and everyone in the circle has to look up and directly into the eyes of someone else in the circle. If the person you're looking directly in the eyes is looking directly in your eyes, you both scream, then back out of the circle. You're both out. The circle tightens again (shoulder to shoulder), and you start with "chicken." Continue until one person, or no one, is left. This game should be fast paced, going quickly from chicken to people to screaming to exiting to tightening to chicken to people, etc...

Getting to Know You

These games are great Ice Breakers. Not only do they give your campers a chance to get to know each other, they give you a chance to get to know your campers (and learn their names).

The Name Game:

You'll need a pillow for this (or a rubber chicken, or even your sweatshirt tied into a knot). Have the campers stand in a circle. They can not move out of this circle unless they become "it." Tell the group to super glue their feet to their spot in the circle. Have each camper say their name. Make sure everyone in the circle hears each camper's name. Repeat if necessary. Choose one person to start in the middle. Pick another person to say the name of someone else in the circle. The object is for "It" to tag the person whose name was said before s/he says the name of another camper in the circle. "It" should tag players by **gently** touching the person with the pillow (or rubber chicken). They can not throw the object at the person they are attempting to tag. They can not swing it hard at the person they tag. They must **gently** tag the person in the chest / stomach area. No head shots. No groin shots. A player becomes "It" if they are tagged, if they say the name of a person not in the circle, if they say their own name, if they say the name of the person that just said their name, if they move out of their spot in the circle or they say the name of the person in the middle. The game starts over with the new "it."

Variations: Instead of names, you can change what they have to yell out to different categories (fruits, pizza toppings, movies, etc...). If you want to play this game as a time filler you can use a rolled up sweatshirt as the tagging object.

Nice To Meet You Tag:

Similar to Freeze Tag. This is a great game for kids in a group to get to know each other. First choose one or two (depending on the size of the group) campers to be "It." Set boundaries. "It" tries to tag the other campers. Once tagged, a camper has to remain frozen until another camper approaches her/him and introduces themselves:

Unfrozen Camper: "Hi, I'm Billy."

Frozen Camper: "Hi, I'm Julie."

Both Campers: "Nice to meet you."

The frozen camper becomes unfrozen and can continue running away from "It." The boundaries should be large enough to allow enough time for the formalities to occur between frozen and unfrozen campers. The game is over when / if every camper is frozen or the allotted time runs out.