



# Nutrition and Movement Activity Book:

Taking Steps to Healthy Success

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Nemours®



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## Nutrition and Movement Activity Book

# Welcome

Welcome to the National Early Care and Education Learning Collaboratives (ECELC) Project *Nutrition and Movement Activity Book*. This is a collection of physical activities and nutrition education ideas from Linda Carson’s *I am Moving; I am Learning* Project, *H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies*, and Elizabeth Walker’s *Boston ABCD Head Start Lesson Plans* that can be incorporated throughout each of the Learning Sessions.

The Implementation Guide for the National ECELC Project suggests when each activity can take place throughout the day of a Learning Session. Prior to the day of the Learning Session Trainers should choose an activity from this book and gather the necessary materials. Additionally, a physical activity slide in each Learning Session PowerPoint prompts trainers to conduct an activity.

The Nutrition and Movement Activity Book contains the following activities:

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Each activity card contains information on the appropriate age level, equipment needed, skills emphasized, description of the activity, teaching suggestions/variations, adaptations for implementation with younger children (if applicable), and safety considerations.

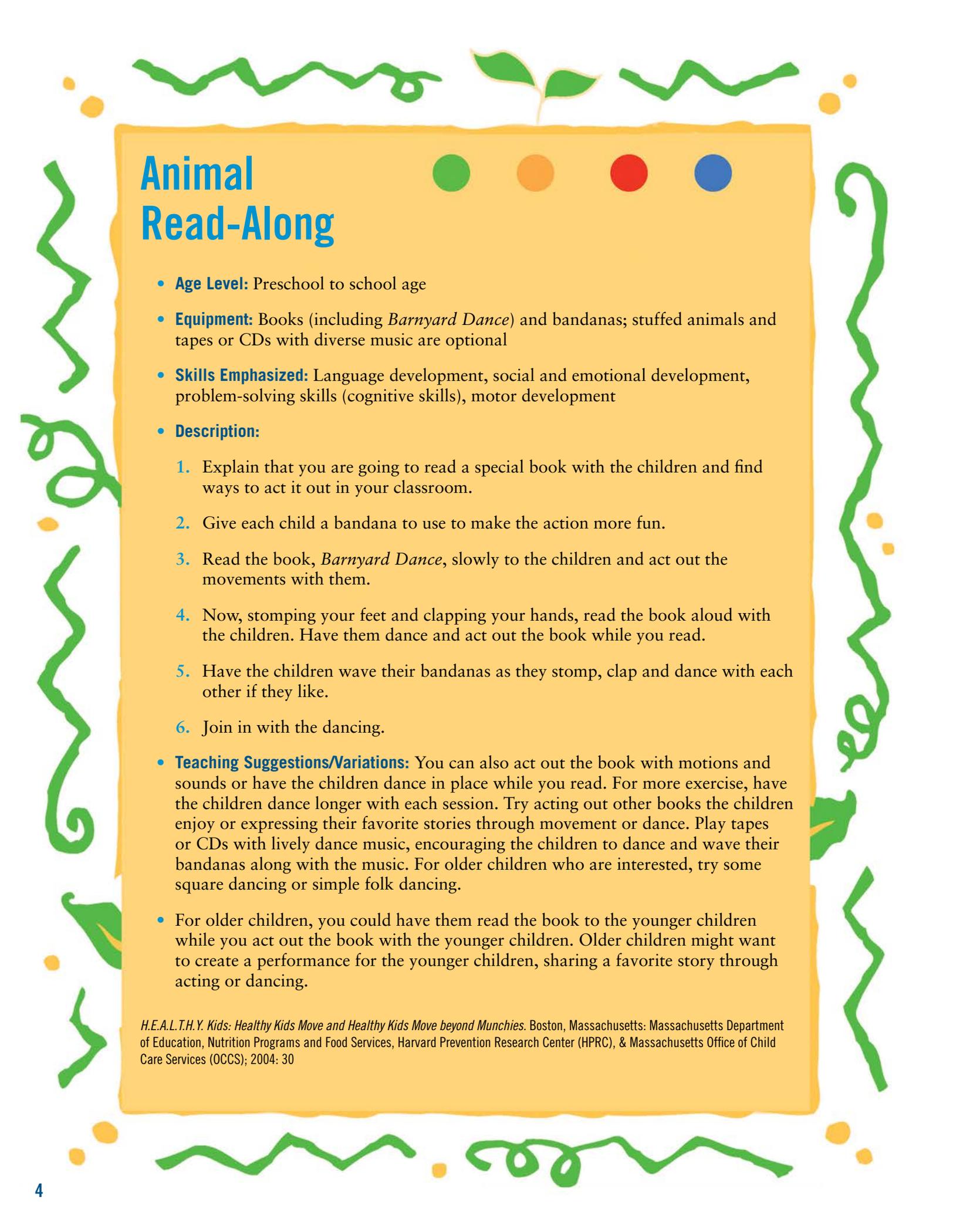
Pick your favorite activities and incorporate them in to the National ECELC Project Learning Sessions and encourage your ECE providers to use them in their classrooms!



# Across The River

- **Age Level:** Preschool to school age
- **Equipment:** Three jump ropes for every four to five players
- **Skills Emphasized:** Teamwork, cooperation, balance, coordination, speed, agility, group awareness
- **Description:** Divide the children into groups of four. Have the groups stand in line next to each other. Three jump ropes are placed in straight parallel lines in front of each group, creating a “bridge” to get across a stream. The children must work as a team to cross the floor or playground by moving the last jump rope to the front after each person has stepped over it, and to the other two jump ropes lying on the floor in front of it.
- **Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Ask the children to help create a story of how you will cross the river: you may make it through the jungle or meet other challenges by working together and using your rope bridge. Increase or decrease the number of jump ropes or players in a group. As children become more skilled, they may want to time themselves making it from one end of the classroom or playground to another. Instead of being a bridge, pretend the ropes are a stream and challenge the children to jump over the stream. Ask the children to join you in creating other active scenarios with the three ropes. This is a great activity for indoors or outdoors.
- **For Younger Children:** Lay the jump ropes in a circle on the ground for the children and let them jump, hop or walk from one jump rope to the next. They can walk to music or you can lay the jump ropes in an interesting pattern (i.e. circle, square, snake, etc.) for the children to follow. Ask the children to help pretend that you are crossing a river or lake and use rowing arm motions.
- **Safety Considerations:** Teams may only move a jump rope off of the ground when all group members have stepped over it. They may not run with the jump rope around their bodies. Teachers must supervise any activity with ropes carefully and coach or direct children as appropriate.

*H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies.* Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, Harvard Prevention Research Center (HPRC), & Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS); 2004: 53.



# Animal Read-Along

- **Age Level:** Preschool to school age
- **Equipment:** Books (including *Barnyard Dance*) and bandanas; stuffed animals and tapes or CDs with diverse music are optional
- **Skills Emphasized:** Language development, social and emotional development, problem-solving skills (cognitive skills), motor development
- **Description:**
  1. Explain that you are going to read a special book with the children and find ways to act it out in your classroom.
  2. Give each child a bandana to use to make the action more fun.
  3. Read the book, *Barnyard Dance*, slowly to the children and act out the movements with them.
  4. Now, stomping your feet and clapping your hands, read the book aloud with the children. Have them dance and act out the book while you read.
  5. Have the children wave their bandanas as they stomp, clap and dance with each other if they like.
  6. Join in with the dancing.
- **Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** You can also act out the book with motions and sounds or have the children dance in place while you read. For more exercise, have the children dance longer with each session. Try acting out other books the children enjoy or expressing their favorite stories through movement or dance. Play tapes or CDs with lively dance music, encouraging the children to dance and wave their bandanas along with the music. For older children who are interested, try some square dancing or simple folk dancing.
- For older children, you could have them read the book to the younger children while you act out the book with the younger children. Older children might want to create a performance for the younger children, sharing a favorite story through acting or dancing.

*H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies.* Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, Harvard Prevention Research Center (HPRC), & Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS); 2004: 30

# Beach Ball High



**Age Level:** Toddlers to school-age (adapt to fit age of your children)

**Type of Activity:** Gross motor activity, indoors or outdoors

## Materials Needed:

One beach ball for every three to 10 players

## What To Do:

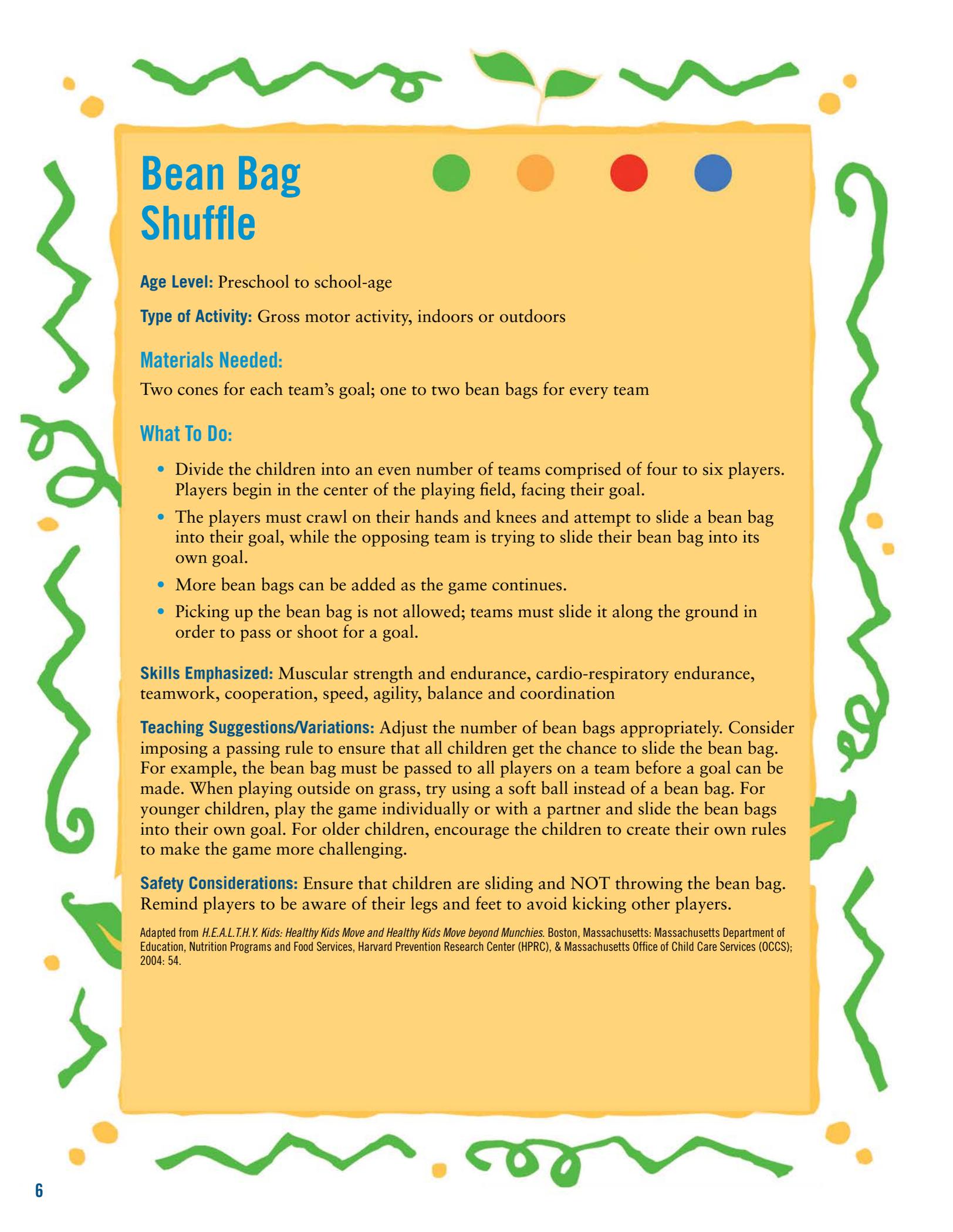
- Have children form a circle and instruct players to see how many times they can work together to hit the ball and keep it in the air without letting it touch the ground.
- The teacher and the children can count the number of hits together.
- If the ball touches the ground, the game starts over.
- During the next game, the children try to increase the number of times they hit the ball.

**Skills Emphasized:** Balance, coordination, agility, teamwork, cooperation, and some muscular/cardio-respiratory endurance

**Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Form smaller groups or add more balls of different sizes or colors. Also, this is an excellent game to include during a break from water play. For younger children, play this game by sitting on the floor and rolling the ball between them. Try to keep the ball moving. For older children, increase the size of the circle or playing field to make it more challenging.

**Safety Considerations:** Remind the children to be careful not to run into the other players, and encourage them to keep their balance when going for the ball.

Adapted from *H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies*. Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, Harvard Prevention Research Center (HPRC), & Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS); 2004: 41.



# Bean Bag Shuffle

**Age Level:** Preschool to school-age

**Type of Activity:** Gross motor activity, indoors or outdoors

## Materials Needed:

Two cones for each team's goal; one to two bean bags for every team

## What To Do:

- Divide the children into an even number of teams comprised of four to six players. Players begin in the center of the playing field, facing their goal.
- The players must crawl on their hands and knees and attempt to slide a bean bag into their goal, while the opposing team is trying to slide their bean bag into its own goal.
- More bean bags can be added as the game continues.
- Picking up the bean bag is not allowed; teams must slide it along the ground in order to pass or shoot for a goal.

**Skills Emphasized:** Muscular strength and endurance, cardio-respiratory endurance, teamwork, cooperation, speed, agility, balance and coordination

**Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Adjust the number of bean bags appropriately. Consider imposing a passing rule to ensure that all children get the chance to slide the bean bag. For example, the bean bag must be passed to all players on a team before a goal can be made. When playing outside on grass, try using a soft ball instead of a bean bag. For younger children, play the game individually or with a partner and slide the bean bags into their own goal. For older children, encourage the children to create their own rules to make the game more challenging.

**Safety Considerations:** Ensure that children are sliding and NOT throwing the bean bag. Remind players to be aware of their legs and feet to avoid kicking other players.

Adapted from *H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies*. Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, Harvard Prevention Research Center (HPRC), & Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS); 2004: 54.

# Bean Bag Toss

**Age Level:** Toddlers to school-age

**Type of activity:** Gross motor activity, indoors or outdoors

## Materials Needed:

One bean bag for every two players

## What To Do:

- Children form two lines facing one another so that everyone has a partner.
- Each two-person group tosses a bean bag back and forth to one another.
- Each time that a two-person group is successful in catching the bean bag, they take one step backward.
- If the bean bag is dropped during the pass, each of the children in the two-person group should decide if he/she is thirsty. If so, they may get a drink of water and then start over from the original start position.

**Skills Emphasized:** Eye/hand coordination, throwing, catching, agility, cooperation, body awareness, and attention to thirst

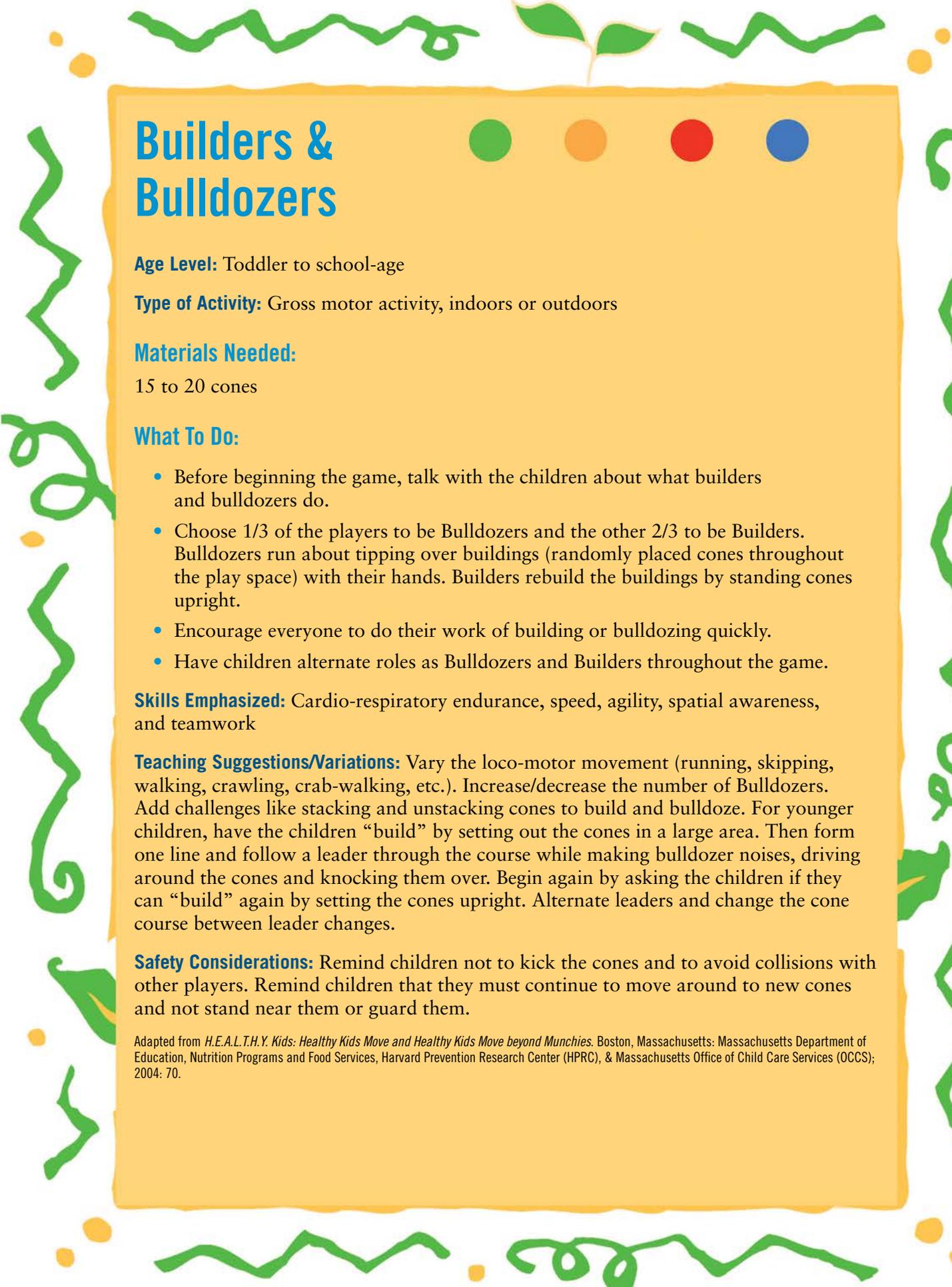
**Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Players can switch partners after each pass. Foam balls or Frisbees may also be used. This is a great physical activity for indoors or outdoors. For younger children, have them toss a bean bag into a laundry basket or large bucket or box. Toddlers will also enjoy putting the bean bags into a container and dumping them out or loading them into a cart or wagon and pushing them around the play area.

**Safety Considerations:** Remind children to throw the bean bag only when their partner is looking. Ask children to use an underhand throw.

Adapted from *H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies*. Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, Harvard Prevention Research Center (HPRC), & Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS); 2004: 42.

# Beanie Baby™ Tag

- **Age Level:** Preschool (3-5 years)
- **Equipment:** Depending of the size of the group, three pool noodles to use as “taggers,” and four Beanie Babies™ or other small soft objects to use for “untaggers.”
- **Skills Emphasized:** Following directions, spatial awareness, running and dodging, and movement vocabulary.
- **Description:** Have children stand spaced apart in an area either indoors or outdoors. Make sure the group understands the boundaries of the game. Here is how to play:
  - Three children will have pool noodles to use as “taggers.” Four children will have “Beanie Babies™” that protect them from being tagged, and may be used to “untag” a friend who has been tagged.
  - When tagged, the child sits down until a friend drops a “Beanie Baby™” into their lap. Then they are “safe” until they use the “Beanie Baby™” to “untag” another friend.
  - Use a clear signal to indicate when the game begins and ends, either a whistle or music that starts and stops. Play rounds until everyone has had a chance to be a “Tagger.”
- **Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** You can vary the length of the activity and one other variation would require the holders of the Beanie Babies™ to pass the Beanie Baby off to someone else after 5 seconds. This activity is appropriate for both indoors and outdoors.
- **For Younger Children:** Keep it short and use fewer “taggers” than “untaggers.”
- **Safety Considerations:** Discuss this activity with the group before beginning. Each child should be clear about the game’s boundaries and how to gently tag. One of the reasons for using the pool noodles is that they make it clear who is a “Tagger,” and they are soft and don’t hurt. Ask for the children’s ideas on how to keep everyone safe during such an exciting movement activity.



# Builders & Bulldozers

**Age Level:** Toddler to school-age

**Type of Activity:** Gross motor activity, indoors or outdoors

## Materials Needed:

15 to 20 cones

## What To Do:

- Before beginning the game, talk with the children about what builders and bulldozers do.
- Choose 1/3 of the players to be Bulldozers and the other 2/3 to be Builders. Bulldozers run about tipping over buildings (randomly placed cones throughout the play space) with their hands. Builders rebuild the buildings by standing cones upright.
- Encourage everyone to do their work of building or bulldozing quickly.
- Have children alternate roles as Bulldozers and Builders throughout the game.

**Skills Emphasized:** Cardio-respiratory endurance, speed, agility, spatial awareness, and teamwork

**Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Vary the loco-motor movement (running, skipping, walking, crawling, crab-walking, etc.). Increase/decrease the number of Bulldozers. Add challenges like stacking and unstacking cones to build and bulldoze. For younger children, have the children “build” by setting out the cones in a large area. Then form one line and follow a leader through the course while making bulldozer noises, driving around the cones and knocking them over. Begin again by asking the children if they can “build” again by setting the cones upright. Alternate leaders and change the cone course between leader changes.

**Safety Considerations:** Remind children not to kick the cones and to avoid collisions with other players. Remind children that they must continue to move around to new cones and not stand near them or guard them.

Adapted from *H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies*. Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, Harvard Prevention Research Center (HPRC), & Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS); 2004: 70.

# Chickadees

- **Age Level:** Preschool
- **Equipment:** Bandanas
- **Skills Emphasized:** Endurance, speed, agility, coordination, teamwork, social emotional development, phonemic awareness, cooperation
- **Description:** Try this movement activity, a variation on Five Little Monkeys.
  - The children all stand in a large circle, and the teacher selects five children to stand in the center of the circle.
  - The whole group sings or chants the rhyme, naming each child in turn. While singing, the children wave their bandanas and walk in place. The named child “flies away” from the center and returns to the circle.
  - If there is time and interest, the activity can be repeated until all of the children have had a chance to be chickadees.

## Chickadees

Five little chickadees walking on the floor,  
*[Name]* flew away and then there were four.

**Chorus:**

Chickadee chickadee happy and gay,  
Chickadee chickadee fly away.

Four little chickadees sitting in a tree,  
*[Name]* flew away and then there were three.

**Repeat Chorus**

Three little chickadees looking at you,  
*[Name]* flew away and then there were two.

**Repeat Chorus**

Two little chickadees walking in the sun,  
*[Name]* flew away and then there was one.

**Repeat Chorus**

One little chickadee waiting all alone,  
*[Name]* flew away and then there were none.

**Repeat Chorus**

- **Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Have the children pretend to fly like birds while flapping their bandanas fast or slow. They can also walk or hop like birds.

Adapted from *Boston ABCD Head Start Lesson Plans* by Elizabeth Walker.

# Dog Tag

- **Age Level:** Preschool to school age
- **Equipment:** Bandanas
- **Skills Emphasized:** Cardio-respiratory endurance, loco-motor skills, spatial awareness, speed, agility, muscular strength and endurance, teamwork, cooperation
- **Description:** Two to four players are chosen to be “Bulldogs,” who wear bandanas to mark them as Bulldogs. The other players are designated as regular “Dogs.” All players move around the floor on “all fours” (hands and feet-not knees). Bulldogs chase the Dogs, as the Dogs attempt to keep away from the Bulldogs. When tagged, Dogs are **frozen** and must maintain a bridge position until another Dog digs under the bridge (crawls under) to free them. Regularly choose new Bulldogs, so that everyone has a chance to be a Bulldog, as well as a Dog.
- **Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Increase/decrease the number of Bulldogs. Encourage the children to be creative and to bark and howl like dogs. You can have the “Dogs” choose what breed of dog they want to pretend to be. You can also change the freeze position to be a statue, rock, dancing statue, etc.
- **For Younger Children:** Have the children pretend to be dogs or cats without tagging them. Teachers can pretend to be the bridge or bridges can be created from inanimate objects like desks or tables. Children will love going through tunnels and bridges while barking or meowing and pretending to be dogs or cats.
- **Safety Considerations:** Discuss this activity with the group before beginning. Ask for the children’s ideas on how to keep everyone safe during such an exciting movement activity. Remind children not to step on fingers of other players and to help each other get free.

*H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies.* Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, Harvard Prevention Research Center (HPRC), & Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS); 2004: 73.

# Fitness Tag

- **Age Level:** Preschool to school age
- **Equipment:** Cones, jump ropes
- **Skills Emphasized:** Cardio-respiratory endurance, speed, agility, muscular strength and endurance
- **Description:** Set up a large play area with clearly marked boundaries. Choose two to four children to be “taggers.” The rest of the children are “runners.” When the other players are tagged they must go to a special “Fitness Area” designated by cones, and perform the specified activities before returning to the game. For example, 10 jumps, 10 hops, eight jumping jacks, four karate kicks, jump rope, five sit-ups, or four modified push-ups.
- **Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Alternate taggers and runners. Change the tasks to be completed in the Fitness Area when tagged. Make cards with photographs of children doing specific fitness activities for the Fitness Area; when tagged, children draw a card to see what activity to do and how many times. Vary loco-motor movements during the tag game (running, jumping, walking, hopping, skipping, etc.). Decrease the size of the playing area to increase the intensity of the game.
- **For Younger Children:** Teachers may have the children march in line, stop and call out a fitness activity. Or teachers could have children stand in a circle (arms width apart) and then randomly call out a fitness exercise. The children love to learn how to do jumping jacks, sit ups, karate kicks or push ups at even the younger ages.
- **Safety Considerations:** Ensure that all players are able to perform the activities in the Fitness Area correctly. Remind children to **walk** into the Fitness Area to perform their fitness activities. Direct the taggers to tag gently. Coach the children to avoid collisions.

*H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies.* Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, Harvard Prevention Research Center (HPRC), & Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS); 2004: 75.

# Frogs & Ants

- **Age Level:** Preschool to school age
- **Equipment:** Bandanas
- **Skills Emphasized:** Cardio-respiratory endurance, spatial awareness loco-motor skills (walking, jumping, hopping, skipping, etc.), speed, agility, cooperation
- **Description:** Set clear boundaries for this game of tag. Choose two to four players to be Frogs, and have them wear bandanas so that everyone knows they are Frogs. The rest of the children will be Ants and spread out across the play area to try to avoid being tagged. The Frogs must jump or hop around trying to tag the Ants, while the Ants walk or skip around the room. When tagged, an Ant must lie on his/her back with legs and arms extended in the air. The other Ants may save their fellow Ants by gently helping them onto their feet. New Frogs should be chosen throughout the game.
- **Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Increase/decrease the number of frogs and the size of the play space. Depending on the abilities and needs of your children, vary the loco-motor movements used (skipping, hopping, crawling, walking, marching, running, galloping, etc.). Engage the children in helping to create variations to try.
- **For Younger Children:** Teachers may be the Frogs and tag the children who are ants. When tagged, have the children become Frogs and try to tag the other children, rather than lie on the floor. A simpler variation is just to have the children act out the movements of an animal until the teacher gives a signal (rings a bell or claps hands) and announces a new animal for the children to imitate. Children might enjoy imitating not only ants and frogs, but also dogs, cats, fish, rabbits, birds and more.
- **Safety Considerations:** Discuss this activity with the group before beginning. Ask for the children's ideas on how to keep everyone safe during such an exciting movement activity. If necessary, remind players to be careful when helping an ant to his/her feet (not to yank) and to tag gently.

*H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies.* Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, Harvard Prevention Research Center (HPRC), & Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS); 2004: 76.

# Fruit & Vegetable Olympics

**Age Level:** Preschool to school-age

**Type of Activity:** Outdoor nutrition/gross motor activity

## Materials Needed:

Plastic fruits and vegetables and finish line (tape or cones)

## What to do:

Try these events to host a Fruit & Vegetable Olympics:

- **Carrot Hop:** Make a starting line. Place one carrot for each child in a parallel line about 20 feet from the starting line. Ask the children to line up at the starting line. Explain that when you give the “go” signal, the children should hop like rabbits to the second line, pick up the carrot and hop back to the start line. Repeat until all the children have had a turn hopping to the finish line. Remind the children to hop or jump with both feet like rabbits instead of running. Encourage the children who have finished the Carrot Hop to keep hopping behind the finish line while other children finish the activity.
- **Fruit & Vegetable Shot Put:** Draw a starting line. Ask the children to line up on the starting line for the “Shot Put.” Using round fruits or vegetables (grapefruit, oranges, apples, peppers, lemons, eggplants, etc), demonstrate how to throw. Each child should choose the three fruits or vegetables they want to “shot put” as far as they can from the starting line. Once they have thrown, tell the children to run out to where the fruits and vegetables landed and return them to the starting line for the next group of children to use.

**Skills Emphasized:** Awareness of fruits and vegetables; increased breathing and heart rate during moderate to vigorous physical activity; play and positive interaction with other children; understanding and following spoken directions; and basic loco-motor skills: jumping, throwing, running

**Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Create a large, safe, open space with clear boundaries to do these activities indoors or outdoors. Depending on the interests and developmental levels of your children, suggest different ways of moving: walking, jumping, running, crawling, etc. Do the carrot hop with real carrots. Involve the children in washing them and helping to prepare them for a healthy snack with water to drink after the Olympic Events. In cold weather, make a simple carrot soup together. Ask the children to share their ideas for other Fruit & Vegetable Olympic events. Create some new games together.

Adapted from Session 3: Maniacs Go Wild: Experiential Learning Activities: Physical Activity: Fruit and Vegetable Olympics. *Munchin' Maniacs: University of Illinois Extension, Food Stamp Nutrition Education*, 2005; <http://www.wellnessproposals.com/nutrition/feeding-your-children/go-wild-teachers-guide.pdf> Accessed March 23, 2010.

# Hot Potato

**Age Level:** Preschool to school-age

**Type of Activity:** Gross motor activity, indoors or outdoors; nutrition

## Materials Needed:

Several bean bags or foam balls

## What To Do:

- Children sit in circles of five to 10 persons each, passing a “hot potato” (the bean bag or foam ball) between them.
- When the whistle blows (or music stops), the player with the ball decides if he/she is thirsty. If so, he/she may go to get a drink of water.
- At the end of the game (or every 15 minutes if the children want to keep playing), ask **all** the children to determine if they are thirsty. Encourage those who are thirsty to go get a drink of water.

**Skills Emphasized:** Eye/hand coordination, cooperation, speed, agility, group and bodily awareness, and proper hydration

**Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Increase the number of balls or bean bags in play, make groups smaller, or create a time limit between passes. Encourage the children to pretend the bean bag is actually a “hot potato” and toss it to the person next to them as quickly as possible. Consider using fun age-appropriate music to determine when time is up. For older children (ages eight to 12) increase the distance between players, use different kinds of balls at the same time or bounce reaction balls which move in erratic patterns, making this game more challenging. Younger children learning this game may enjoy passing the “hot potato” in smaller groups of two or three.

Adapted from *H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies*. Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, Harvard Prevention Research Center (HPRC), & Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS); 2004: 45.

# I Can Fly

- **Age Level:** Preschool (3-5 years)
- **Equipment:** Instrumental music to support flying movement activity. We like to use the CD from Choosy Kids: *I'm Moving, I'm Learning*, which has prompts for the activities embedded in the song, *I Can Fly*.
- **Skills Emphasized:** body awareness, moderate-to-vigorous physical activity, gross motor skills, balance, flexibility, rhythm, perceptual-sensory functioning, spatial awareness, movement vocabulary
- **Description:** Introduce the activity by talking with the children about flying. Ask them about the kinds of machines that fly: airplanes, rocket ships and hot-air balloons. Tell them that this activity will give them an opportunity to pretend to fly like these flying machines! Please see two options for this activity below:
  1. If you have access to the CD, *I'm Moving, I'm Learning*, play song 8, *I Can Fly*, and follow the prompts on the CD, being sure to model the activity.
  2. If you do not have the CD, select some flowing, fast-paced instrumental music (soft rock works well) and be sure to model all the activities. Follow these steps:
    - Speak as the flight captain and let the children know they are going to be airplanes and they can extend their arms out wide for wings. They are ready for take off! Remind them to fly only into open space, being careful not to bump into other planes. As the music progresses, give directions for flying movements: forward...backward...in a big circle...forward...land...FREEZE!
    - Now let's be rockets and fly into space. Ask the children to put their arms over their heads in a point like the top of a rocket. Remind them to fly into open space only. Count down 4-3-2-1 LAUNCH! As the rockets fly in space, give some movement directions: jump forward...jump backward...land.
    - Now children will fly in hot air balloons. Give children time to explore the size and shape of their imaginary balloons. Countdown 4-3-2-1 LIFTOFF! Ask children to fly around like they are in hot air balloons. Encourage circular movements. Slow down and land down back on earth!
- **Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Vary the activities to fit the needs of your children. Encourage more complicated or vigorous movement if children are ready.
- **Safety Considerations:** Before the activity, talk with the children about their own "personal space bubbles" when flying. Ask for the children's ideas on how to keep everyone safe during such a fun movement activity.

*I'm Moving, I'm Learning. Choosy Kids CD, USA: Prizm Media Group; 2008. Available from [www.choosykids.com](http://www.choosykids.com)*

# King & Queen

**Age Level:** Infants to school-age (adapt as appropriate)

**Type of Activity:** Gross motor activity, indoors or outdoors

## Materials Needed:

Foam ball or bean bag

## What To Do:

- Select one child to be the king or queen.
- He/she stands with his/her back toward the other players and throws the ball backwards over his/her shoulder for one of the players to catch.
- The king or queen waits a moment while the player hides the ball behind his/her back. The king/queen has three guesses to decide who has the ball.
- The player with the ball becomes the new king/queen, either when they are correctly guessed or after three incorrect guesses.
- The game starts over with a new king/queen.

**Skills Emphasized:** Eye/hand coordination, throwing, catching, muscular strength, and critical thinking

**Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** In order to make it more difficult to guess, encourage the children to pass the ball around the group before the king/queen turns around. Try having the children sing while they are passing the ball around, so that the king/queen cannot hear where the children are passing the ball. If there are not very many children, decrease the number of guesses. Encourage the children cooperate to keep the secret of who has the ball. For younger children, hide the ball under an object or behind your back for the infant or toddler to find. For preschoolers, the teacher should model how the game is played. The teacher could turn around, throw the ball to the children over his/her shoulder and have the child who catches it hide the ball behind his/her back for the teacher to guess.

**Safety Considerations:** Ensure that an appropriate playing object (preferably a soft ball or beanbag) is being used and remind children to be ready to catch it when the king/queen is about to throw.

Adapted from *H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies*. Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, Harvard Prevention Research Center (HPRC), & Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS); 2004: 46.

# Let's Go Picking

**Age Level:** Preschool

**Type of Activity:** Science/nutrition, gross motor activity

## Materials Needed:

Real and plastic fruits and vegetables; photographs

## What To Do:

- Talk with the children during group time about how and where different fruits and vegetables grow: some grow high in trees, bushes and vines; some are low plants; and some grow deep in the ground. Share colorful pictures of fruits and vegetables growing in their natural habitats.
- Show two or three real fruits or vegetables. Ask the children to share what they know about them, recording their ideas on chart paper.
- Suggest that the whole preschool group go outside and pretend to gather some of their favorite fruits and vegetables. An adult may start, singing possibly, “Apples—high in a tree.”
- The group then sings about apples using the tune to “The Bear Went Over the Mountain.” All make high reaching motions with their arms as they sing:  
Let's go pick some apples  
Apples! Apples!  
Let's go pick some apples  
And have a tasty snack.
- Let the children take turns calling out other fruits and vegetables, indicating whether the picking motions should be high, at mid-body, or low and close to the ground, (for example: “Potatoes—down in the ground.”). Modify the song for each new fruit or vegetable. Encourage children to really stretch and bend as they sing.

**Skills Emphasized:** Learning about where/how different fruits and vegetables grow; following procedures; cooperative play; self-expression using words and expanded sentences; listening to others' ideas; basic loco-motor skills: walking, reaching, bending; awareness of position in space; classifying objects and engaging in moderate physical activity

**Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Encourage the children to do some fruit and vegetable “homework.” They can bring in pictures or examples of fruits and vegetables to share. Add these to the song the next time you play this game. Children may want to chart/classify these foods according to their growing patterns (e.g., grows on trees, grows underground, grows on a bush, etc.).

Adapted from Boston ABCD Head Start Lesson Plans by Elizabeth Walker.

# MESSY Fruits – MESSY Vegetables

**Age Level:** Toddlers to school-age

**Type of Activity:** Science/nutrition; gross motor activity, indoors or outdoors

## **Materials Needed:**

Plastic fruits and vegetables; container big enough to hold all the tossed objects (large box, empty plastic swimming pool, etc); timer (optional)

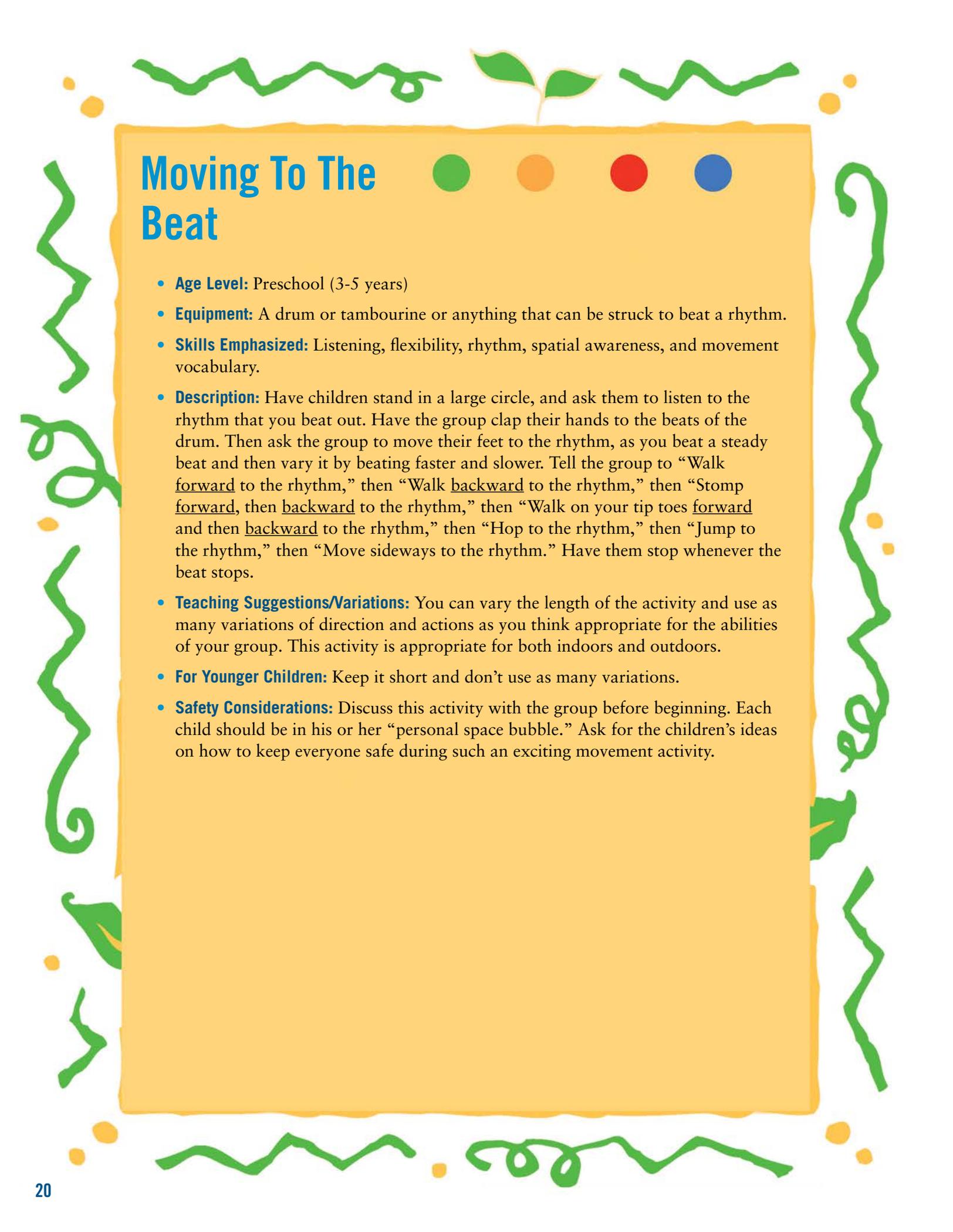
## **What to do:**

- Divide the children into two groups of four to six players. Scatter the fruits and vegetables on the floor between the two groups, which should be positioned at opposite ends of the play space. Place the large container behind Group Two.
- Group One moves toward the fruits and vegetables and begins to throw these toward the area set aside for Group Two. Group Two players catch or gather the thrown objects and toss them into the container.
- If the children seem skilled and comfortable, you can use a timer to encourage speed and precision. The space should be cleared and all the fruits and vegetables should be in the container before the person with the timer calls “Stop!” Encourage the children to try to complete the task even faster the next time.
- If there is no timer, ask any children who are waiting to play in the next round to march around just outside the play space, counting out loud together to a pre-determined number to let Group One and Group Two know how much time they have left. Encourage the counters to shout out the numbers slowly, loudly and clearly. If your children are interested in counting backwards, this is a good time to practice.

**Skills Emphasized:** Using coordinated, purposeful body movements to accomplish a group goal; following procedures; cooperative play; sharing and respecting the rights of others; basic loco-motor skills: running, throwing, catching; numbers and counting

**Teaching suggestions/variations:** For young children, use just one group and ask them to pick up the fruit and vegetables from all over the room as fast as they can. Try suggesting that the children crawl, jump, hop or do some other motion to get to the fruit and vegetables. If your children need help to stay focused on their tasks, divide them by using a strip of tape or a net as a visible divider between Group One and Group Two. Some of the larger, speedier children may quickly scoop up and throw all the fruits and vegetables. To insure that all children have an opportunity to gather and toss, provide additional challenges for those children who seem ready.

Adapted from H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: *Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies*. Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, Harvard Prevention Research Center (HPRC), & Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS); 2004: 59.



## Moving To The Beat

- **Age Level:** Preschool (3-5 years)
- **Equipment:** A drum or tambourine or anything that can be struck to beat a rhythm.
- **Skills Emphasized:** Listening, flexibility, rhythm, spatial awareness, and movement vocabulary.
- **Description:** Have children stand in a large circle, and ask them to listen to the rhythm that you beat out. Have the group clap their hands to the beats of the drum. Then ask the group to move their feet to the rhythm, as you beat a steady beat and then vary it by beating faster and slower. Tell the group to “Walk forward to the rhythm,” then “Walk backward to the rhythm,” then “Stomp forward, then backward to the rhythm,” then “Walk on your tip toes forward and then backward to the rhythm,” then “Hop to the rhythm,” then “Jump to the rhythm,” then “Move sideways to the rhythm.” Have them stop whenever the beat stops.
- **Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** You can vary the length of the activity and use as many variations of direction and actions as you think appropriate for the abilities of your group. This activity is appropriate for both indoors and outdoors.
- **For Younger Children:** Keep it short and don't use as many variations.
- **Safety Considerations:** Discuss this activity with the group before beginning. Each child should be in his or her “personal space bubble.” Ask for the children's ideas on how to keep everyone safe during such an exciting movement activity.

# Musical Stop and Go

- **Age Level:** Toddler to school age.
- **Equipment:** CDs or tapes with diverse music; rhythm instruments and/or bandanas are optional
- **Skills Emphasized:** Cardio-respiratory endurance, speed, agility, coordination, teamwork, cooperation
- **Description:** Gather interested children together in one area for a stop and go dance game. Put on a lively CD and encourage the children to dance as long as they hear the music playing. From time to time, stop the music and wait for the children to stop. When everyone has stopped, start the music again and encourage the children to resume their movements. You all will have the most fun if you join in the dancing along with the children.
- **Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Play different kinds of music and ask the children to listen for tempo and rhythm and to change their movement patterns to match the music. Children will respond to lots of different kinds of music: classical, rock and roll, folk, jazz, bluegrass, even show tunes! Try music from different cultures. Depending on the needs of your children, help them work on motor skill development by calling out different ways to move to the music: jump, hop, march, dance, skip, gallop, crawl, twirl, etc.

Instead of using a tape or CD, let the children take turns making music with rhythm instruments. One child at a time can shake, drum or ring out a rhythm for the group to move to. When the child stops, the group stops. If the children enjoy this activity, experiment with having a small group of musicians shake, drum or ring out the rhythm for the group to dance to.

Use a piece of red and a piece of green construction paper as a visual cue. You or one of the children can hold up the green paper as a signal for the children to move. Hold up the red paper when they are to stop. See how long it takes for everyone in the group to notice the stop and go signs.

- **Safety Considerations:** Discuss this activity with the group before beginning. Ask for the children's ideas on how to keep everyone safe during such an exciting movement activity.

Adapted from *Boston ABCD Head Start Lesson Plans* by Elizabeth Walker.

# Runaway Train

- **Age Level:** Preschool to school age
- **Equipment:** None needed. Bandanas are optional
- **Skills Emphasized:** Cardio-respiratory endurance, speed, agility, coordination, teamwork, and cooperation
- **Description:** Players begin in teams of three to four children, lined up as “trains” by wrapping their arms around the waist or putting them on the shoulders of the person immediately in front of them. The front of each train attempts to link with the caboose (last person) of the other trains. The game continues until one giant train has been formed. The teacher can encourage the children to work together as a team to keep the train going along smoothly. If the children are still engaged, start the game again with new teams of three to four children lined up as “trains.” For fun, you can have the children wear bandanas like a train conductor.
- **Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Teams could be set up according to shirt colors or other visuals, rather than taking time to choose teams. Increase/decrease the size of the playing area to appropriately challenge the children. To make this more challenging, once the train is running, you can set obstacles for it to move around, over, or under.
- **For Younger Children:** The teacher may lead the train around the room or playground varying the speed. The children will love to make train sounds and go varying speeds (slow, medium, fast).
- **Safety Considerations:** Discuss boundaries with the children before beginning the game. Ask for the children’s ideas on how to keep everyone safe when moving together as a train. Remind children to stay focused on the person ahead of them, and to be careful to keep their train from hurting anyone.

*H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies.* Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, Harvard Prevention Research Center (HPRC), & Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS); 2004: 77.

# Salad Toss Hop

**Age Level:** Toddlers to school-age

**Type of Activity:** Science/nutrition; gross motor activity

## Materials needed:

Plastic fruits and vegetables: lettuce, broccoli, tomatoes, carrots, peppers, onions, avocados, apples, bananas, oranges, plums, etc. Create a very large masking tape circle on the floor to represent a salad bowl.

## What to do:

- Have all the children gather around the “salad bowl.”
- Pass out different fruits and vegetables to the children for the salad.
- When you say to the children, “Let’s toss the salad!” they all begin to jump around the **outside** of the salad bowl waving their fruit or vegetable. Or you can have the children do other movements in place.
- When you say, “I see tomatoes!” (or carrots, avocados, bananas or any other particular fruit or vegetable you have passed out to the children), the children stop jumping. Those holding the tomatoes (or the other fruit or vegetable you called out) put or throw their item into the “salad bowl.”
- You say, “This looks delicious!” and start a discussion about the food value of the item just named. Encourage the children to add any information they may have about the item or to share their experience with the food.
- When you say, “Let’s toss the salad!” the children again jump around the bowl until a new food item is named. The game continues until all the items have been named and placed in the “salad bowl.”

**Skills Emphasized:** Identifying fruits and vegetables; following procedures; cooperative play; loco-motor skills (throwing, jumping, etc); self-expression using words and expanded sentences; listening to others’ ideas; sharing and respecting the rights of others; applying knowledge or experience to a new context and engaging in moderate physical activity

**Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** As the fruits and vegetables are called, have the children dance into the salad bowl with their fruit or vegetable. The last child called has the choice to become the new caller for the next game. Gather some actual ingredients for a salad and have the children cut and peel and chop different fruits and vegetables and have a healthful snack. Ask children to bring in fruits or vegetables from home to talk about and to share for a “taste test” during group time.

Adapted from Boston ABCD Head Start Lesson Plans by Elizabeth Walker

# Swing and Sway

- **Age Level:** Preschool (3-5 years)
- **Equipment:** Instrumental music to support marching, swinging and swaying. We like to use the CD from Choosy Kids: *I'm Moving, I'm Learning*, which has prompts for the activities embedded in the song, *Swing and Sway*.
- **Skills Emphasized:** body awareness, gross motor skills, balance, flexibility, rhythm, using movement to cross the midline, vestibular development, perceptual-sensory functioning
- **Description:** Introduce the activity by talking with the children about trees. Tell them that they will be pretending to march to the park where they will see some very tall trees and observe their movements. Then they will have some time to act out the movements themselves. Please see 2 options for this activity below:
  1. If you have access to the CD, *I'm Moving, I'm Learning*, play song 7, *Swing and Sway*, and follow the prompts on the CD, being sure to model the activity.
  2. If you do not have the CD, select some flowing, moderately paced instrumental music (jazz works well) and be sure to model all the activities. Follow these steps:
    - Tell the children to pretend to march to the park to find some tall, strong trees to observe. Then “march to the park” together. Freeze!
    - At the park, point out the tall trees, swaying in the breeze. Guide the children through the activity. Ask them to put their branches (arms) high up in the air and sway like the tree, first side to side, then back and forth in the wind. Encourage more intense movement by saying that it is REALLY WINDY! From time to time, tell the children the wind has stopped and they must FREEZE.
    - Notice a swing in the tree and encourage the children to move their arms back and forth like the swing. Try it with legs and other body parts. FREEZE!
    - When it is time to leave the park march back to your classroom.
- **Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Vary the activities to fit the needs of your children. Encourage movement across midlines and more complicated movements for children who are ready.
- **Safety Considerations:** Discuss this activity with the group before beginning. Each child should be in his or her “personal space bubble” even when swaying or swinging. Ask for the children’s ideas on how to keep everyone safe during such a fun movement activity.

*I'm Moving, I'm Learning. Choosy Kids CD, USA: Prizm Media Group; 2008. Available from [www.choosykids.com](http://www.choosykids.com)*

## Tossing For Fun



- **Age Level:** Older preschool (4 years and older) to school-age children and adults.
- **Equipment:** Mechanic's rags, yarn balls, bean bags and other soft objects that are easy to catch and throw.
- **Skills Emphasized:** catching, tossing, hand-eye coordination, speed, teamwork, cooperation.
- **Description:** Have participants stand in a circle, and start tossing one of the throwable objects around the circle randomly. After about 30 seconds, have participants add another object and continue tossing randomly. After another 30 seconds, add a third throwable object and continue tossing randomly. Keep adding objects until everyone is laughing and confused. End the activity at the height of enjoyment!
- **Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** You can vary the number of children in the circle and vary the number and types of objects being thrown.
- **For Younger Children:** Use easy to catch items such as Beanie Babies and mechanic's rags, and limit the number of objects being tossed and caught.
- **Safety Considerations:** Discuss this activity with the group before beginning. Each child should be in his or her "personal space bubble." Ask for the children's ideas on how to keep everyone safe during such an exciting movement activity. Remind participants that this game emphasizes cooperation and helping each other to catch the object being tossed.

*Adapted from [I Am Moving, I Am Learning](#) with permission from Linda Carson, Ed. D.*

# What Could It Be?

**Age Level:** Toddlers to school-age

**Type of Activity:** Science/nutrition

## Materials Needed:

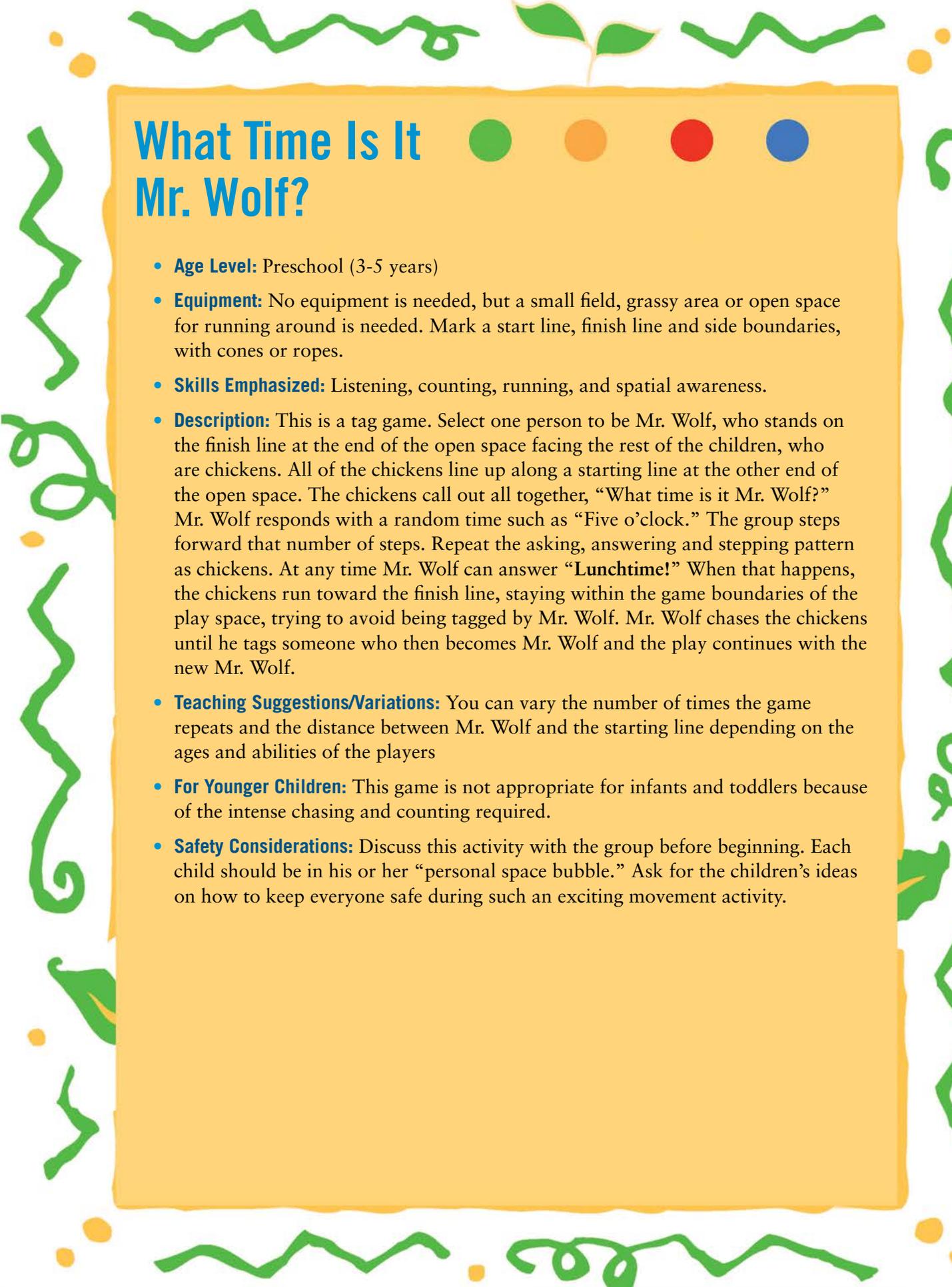
A selection of real or plastic foods that are familiar and easy to identify by touch e.g., banana, apple, lemon, broccoli, potato, onion, carrot, dried beans, etc; a “feely” box or bag to conceal the food items one at a time. The box or bag should have a small opening to allow a child to investigate an object with hand/fingers, using only the sense of touch without seeing the object.

## What to do:

- Talk with the children at meal times and during large group times about different healthy foods and why we eat them—especially fruits and vegetables. Encourage the children to share how foods look, feel and smell, as well as how they taste. Encourage the children to talk about their favorite foods that they eat at home with their families.
- Gather the children in a circle with all of the real or plastic fruits and vegetables that you will use in this game. Show each of the foods to the children. Name each food and pass it around so the children can feel it. Encourage the children to talk about each fruit or vegetable.
- After the children have named and touched all of the food items, secretly place one of the items in the “feely” box or bag. Do not let the children see what was placed in the bag or box. Explain that you will try to explore with your sense of touch to discover what fruit or vegetable is inside.
- Ask if anyone would like to give it a try. Give the box/bag to a child who explores with hand and fingers only and tries to name the hidden item. After three guesses, reveal the item and see what is inside.
- Repeat with another item and another child. Continue until all of the children have had a turn. You can use the same food item more than once. If this seems difficult for your children, use questions to guide them.

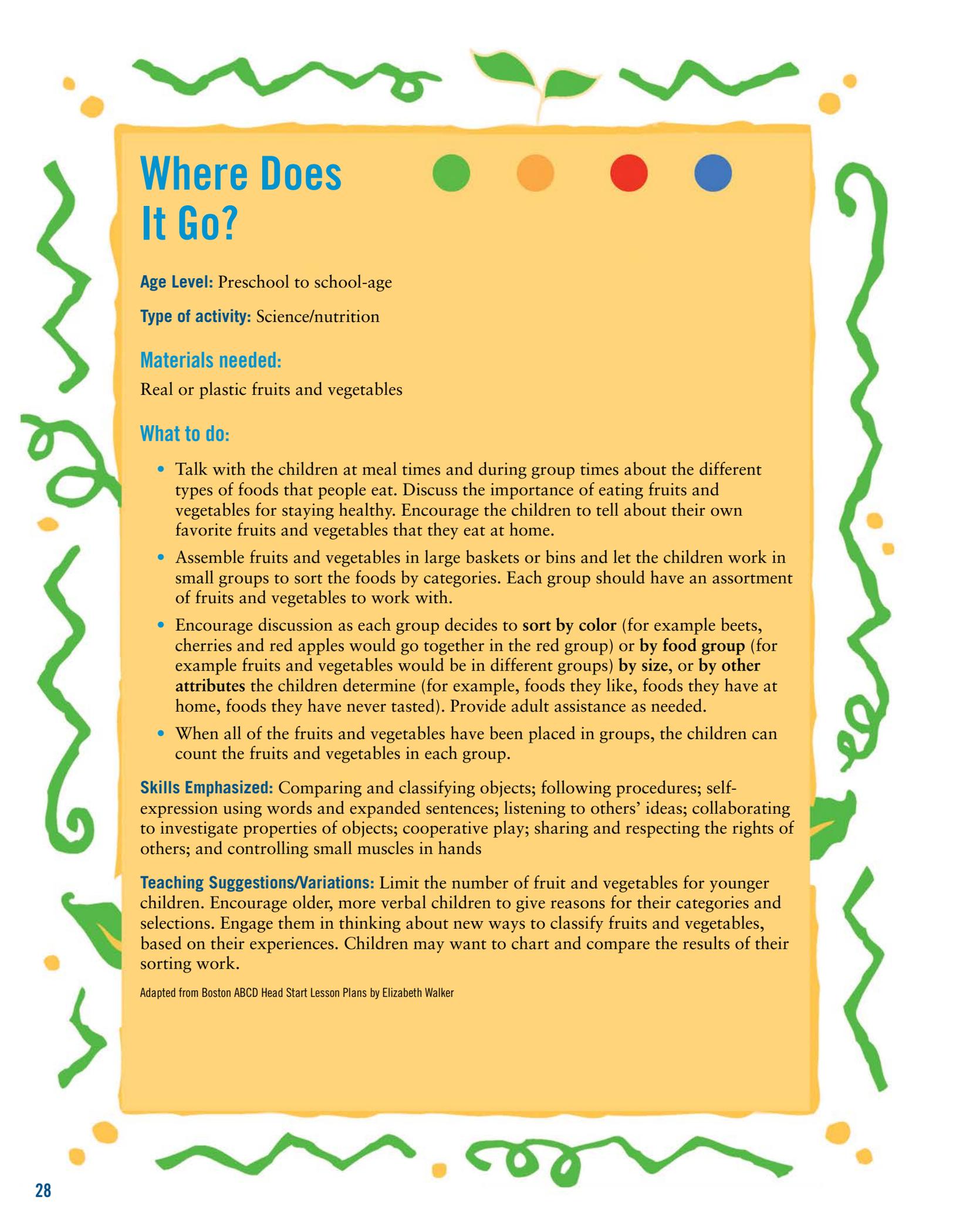
**Skills Emphasized:** Recognizing and naming through tactile exploration; following procedures; self-expression using words and expanded sentences; listening to others’ ideas; investigating properties of objects; cooperative play; sharing and respecting the rights of others and controlling small muscles in hands

Adapted from *H.E.A.L.T.H.Y. Kids: Healthy Kids Move and Healthy Kids Move beyond Munchies*. Boston, Massachusetts: Massachusetts Department of Education, Nutrition Programs and Food Services, Harvard Prevention Research Center (HPRC), & Massachusetts Office of Child Care Services (OCCS); 2004: 90.



## What Time Is It Mr. Wolf?

- **Age Level:** Preschool (3-5 years)
- **Equipment:** No equipment is needed, but a small field, grassy area or open space for running around is needed. Mark a start line, finish line and side boundaries, with cones or ropes.
- **Skills Emphasized:** Listening, counting, running, and spatial awareness.
- **Description:** This is a tag game. Select one person to be Mr. Wolf, who stands on the finish line at the end of the open space facing the rest of the children, who are chickens. All of the chickens line up along a starting line at the other end of the open space. The chickens call out all together, “What time is it Mr. Wolf?” Mr. Wolf responds with a random time such as “Five o’clock.” The group steps forward that number of steps. Repeat the asking, answering and stepping pattern as chickens. At any time Mr. Wolf can answer “**Lunchtime!**” When that happens, the chickens run toward the finish line, staying within the game boundaries of the play space, trying to avoid being tagged by Mr. Wolf. Mr. Wolf chases the chickens until he tags someone who then becomes Mr. Wolf and the play continues with the new Mr. Wolf.
- **Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** You can vary the number of times the game repeats and the distance between Mr. Wolf and the starting line depending on the ages and abilities of the players
- **For Younger Children:** This game is not appropriate for infants and toddlers because of the intense chasing and counting required.
- **Safety Considerations:** Discuss this activity with the group before beginning. Each child should be in his or her “personal space bubble.” Ask for the children’s ideas on how to keep everyone safe during such an exciting movement activity.



# Where Does It Go?

**Age Level:** Preschool to school-age

**Type of activity:** Science/nutrition

## **Materials needed:**

Real or plastic fruits and vegetables

## **What to do:**

- Talk with the children at meal times and during group times about the different types of foods that people eat. Discuss the importance of eating fruits and vegetables for staying healthy. Encourage the children to tell about their own favorite fruits and vegetables that they eat at home.
- Assemble fruits and vegetables in large baskets or bins and let the children work in small groups to sort the foods by categories. Each group should have an assortment of fruits and vegetables to work with.
- Encourage discussion as each group decides to **sort by color** (for example beets, cherries and red apples would go together in the red group) or **by food group** (for example fruits and vegetables would be in different groups) **by size**, or **by other attributes** the children determine (for example, foods they like, foods they have at home, foods they have never tasted). Provide adult assistance as needed.
- When all of the fruits and vegetables have been placed in groups, the children can count the fruits and vegetables in each group.

**Skills Emphasized:** Comparing and classifying objects; following procedures; self-expression using words and expanded sentences; listening to others' ideas; collaborating to investigate properties of objects; cooperative play; sharing and respecting the rights of others; and controlling small muscles in hands

**Teaching Suggestions/Variations:** Limit the number of fruit and vegetables for younger children. Encourage older, more verbal children to give reasons for their categories and selections. Engage them in thinking about new ways to classify fruits and vegetables, based on their experiences. Children may want to chart and compare the results of their sorting work.

Adapted from Boston ABCD Head Start Lesson Plans by Elizabeth Walker





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