**Hug Your Neighbour**

**Year Level**: Pre-primary to Year One

**Equipment**: whistle, cones at ends of two areas to separate the two groups

**Adapted from:** Landy, J. M. & Landy M. J. (1992), p. 7

**Focus:** aerobic warm up

**Organisation:**

Group is divided into two [estimate and split]. Each group starts with one player as IT (as chosen by the teacher). All other players to scatter throughout the designated play area [be specific, no going over the yellow lines]. Emphasis on safety (i.e. tag lightly, no pushing or pulling; gentle hugs). Listen for the whistle which means: Stop and listen.

**Description of Activity:**

When the teacher blows the whistle, IT tries to tag the other players. If another player is tagged, both become IT and work together to try and tag other players. IT and players should listen to teacher who will say: only skip, hop, jump etc. Those they tag become IT as well. This goes on until everyone is tagged or until the teacher blows the whistle.

Players are safe while hugging another player. They can hug their partners for up to three counts only. After the count of three, players must go look for someone else to hug.

Teachers may choose to extend the game so that players are safe only when hugging in threes and hopping or hugging in groups of five and jumping. Other locomotor skills teachers may choose include:

* Skip
* Gallop
* Tip toe
* Giant steps
* Bear crawl
* Crab walk
* Twirl
* Back peddle

(list of locomotor skills from: <http://www.unicommons.com/node/16772>)

**Assessment:**

Call the group together towards the end of the session. Encourage and remark on the things that went well (e.g. gentle hugs, working together, etc). Ask how they felt about the game and solicit ideas on how they would change the game.

**Justification:**

“Hug Your Neighbour” is yet another versatile version of the classic game “tag”. It is fast-moving and no equipment is needed to enjoy the game. It can be played anywhere outside or in the gym and is a great way to warm up or let off steam. The game does not require a large amount of preparation, thus it is fantastic for in-between periods and transition time. Rules take little modification to suit the indoor (as long as it is in a large enough area to allow running) or outdoor environment and only require boundaries set by the teacher.Teachers may choose to adapt the game based on the age and level of children.

Aside from the obvious benefits of the game as a form of exercise (Campell & Musumeci, 2005), “Hug Your Neighbour” encourages:

* Socialisation and friendship (Social and emotional in the KPPP and Interpersonal skills in the Health and Physical Education, Curriculum Framework): This game reinforces aspects of social awareness and the basics of friendship making; no one gets left behind when playing, everyone may get the opportunity to be IT and you have to hug everybody, not just best friends. Young children, particularly girls, are often keen on only “hugging their best friend”, so it strengthens their sense of everyone being part of their class and belonging. Demonstrating and reinforcing the ‘gentle taps and hugs’ rule helps children learn about gentle touches, which is an important social skill.
* Fundamental movement skills (from playing variations) (Physical in the KPPP and Skills for Physical Activity, Knowledge and Understanding, Curriculum Framework): These skills are vital for early childhood. The playing variations (skipping, galloping, etc.) help children engage in complex gross motor skills and allow them to actively demonstrate and exercise control of their movements in a fun and non-threatening manner. Turning these skills into a game is a great way of practising (if they have already been taught) and can be a good method of assessing their skills by observation.
* Maths and counting skills (Numeracy in the KPPP and Understanding Numbers, Curriculum Framework): One of the rules of the game is to find and hug a partner, forming a group of two (which is relatively easy for young children). However, once children are asked to come together in groups of four or five, it requires actively counting how many they have (which some children may find more difficult) or for some children, subitising (i.e. ‘seeing’ without counting). While there is enough evidence that young children are able to subitise up to the number three, they may still have yet to learn the association between the number itself and the pattern (Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, 2007; Bobis, 2008). It helps to put something as abstract as numbers into something more tangible, as children in the pre-primary/year one level are concrete-operational thinkers and require activities that allow for hands-on experiences.
* Cooperation and teamwork: IT players may form a plan to work together and catch other players and the huggers have to work together as well. The early childhood syllabus encourages working together in small groups, forming partnerships and including everyone (Kagan & Kagan, 2009). As such, this is an active way of demonstrating these principles.
* Aerobic warm-up: all sports require a warm-up before the game. Bodies should be loose and limber to prevent injury, warm-ups allow tension to be released before a focused physical activity, and help children concentrate on the next lesson. This sort of game can be used before a sit-down lesson (such as literacy) or before a Physical education lesson.

**Reference list**

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