

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Activity: Parachute games

Parachute games are an excellent way to promote teamwork, cooperation and social interaction in a hands-on, fun and memorable way.

Learning aims

- Promotes cooperation and teamwork
- Encourages social interaction and communication
- Develops gross and fine motor skills
- Fosters friendship and a sense of belonging
- Develops understanding of objects, forces and energy.



Resources

- Parachute (or large piece of lightweight material)
- Lightweight ball or balloon.

Activity outline

1. Gather everyone in a large, open space and introduce the parachute as a 'friendship circle' that will bring everyone together
2. Lay the parachute on the ground and ask the children to sit around the edge of the parachute in front of a handle (if there are some). Ensure there's enough space between each child and the adults are at strategic spots to prevent the parachute from collapsing
3. Begin with a simple warm-up activity: Gently shake the parachute up and down to make waves, lift it overhead (make a dome/tent shape) and bring it down slowly (you could count slowly to help children control the speed). Repeat this until the children are able to do it easily
4. Explain that they are going to work together to make the parachute move and do some activities together
5. Ask them to raise it like a tent/dome again and this time explain that one child is going to swap places with another child. Choose two children and when the parachute is in the air, ask them to swap places before the parachute comes down. If necessary, model this with another adult. Continue with the activity but let the children choose and call the name of the child they want to

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swap with

6. Once the children are confident with doing this you can introduce other elements such as moving in different ways as they travel, e.g. hop, skip, walk backwards, crawl etc.
7. Introduce cooperative challenges such as, place a ball or a balloon in the centre, make gentle waves and try to keep it on the parachute for as long as possible. Alternatively, everyone walks round in the same direction (the parachute will resemble a turning wheel) and then, on a command, everyone stops at the same time. As children become more confident you can vary the speed, direction and timing of the stops
8. Incorporate a movement that signals the end of the activity, e.g. after a count of three, lift the parachute high and then gently put the handles on the ground together and give a cheer to celebrate the teamwork.

Extension ideas:

- As the children become confident with controlling the parachute you can introduce more complex games, for example, place some different coloured items under the parachute, assign the same colours to the children. Call out one of the colours, those children with that colour assigned to them run underneath and retrieve something of the same colour.

NDNA products to support you with this activity:

- Development Zone – [Physical activity in the early years](#)