

Interactive Games & Activities that Encourage Physical Activity and Literacy in your Child

Game Legend



→ Inside Activity



→ Outside Activity



→ Group/Sibling Activity



→ Single Child Activity

Please refer to the Litera-cise handout for more information on physical literacy and literacy development as well as definitions.

Simon Says



- The leader says: “Simon Says....” Some examples are below:
 - ...say the sound ‘t’ makes (or any other letter)
 - ...tell me what this letter is (hold up a letter)
 - ...clap your hands or hop on one foot to the beats in ‘hot dog’ or ‘macaroni’ (or any word with more than one syllable)

Be creative with your instructions!

- Sometimes the leader does not say “Simon Says...” before the instructions
- If the child completes the action when the leader hasn’t said “Simon Says...” it’s their turn to be the leader

Try it this way!

- Write letters on paper plates and scatter them on the floor
- Have the leader say an action and then a letter, ex. “Simon Says....
- Hop on one foot to the letter K
- Walk like a robot to the letter P
- Walk backwards to the letter S
- Waddle like a duck to the letter F

Early literacy modification

Write simple sight words on the paper plates

Jump Rope Rhymes



- Sing songs as your child or a group of children are jumping to the beat

Freeze Dance



- Write lower case letters of the alphabet on pieces of paper and scatter them face-up on the floor
- Play music for your child to dance to
- Stop the music in the middle of the song and have your child stand on the closest letter
- Talk about the letter they are standing on: its name, what sound it makes, and a word or object that starts with that sound
- Start the music again and repeat

Emergent literacy modification

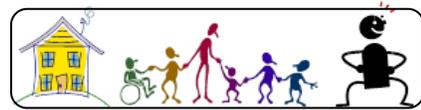
- Instead of letters, cut out different shapes and different colours of paper
- Talk about the shapes and colours they land on when the music stops

Frozen Color Game



- Scatter coloured equipment (ex. toys, clothes, cushions) around the room
- Allow your child to move around in different ways (ex. crawling, walking, running, hopping, backwards, on one leg)
- Call out a colour and have your child touch an object that is that colour
- To make it harder, call out a body part with the colour (ex. “Elbow on blue”)

Parking Lot



- Draw 'parking spaces' on a large piece of paper and write a letter in each space
- Call out a letter or a sound a letter makes and your child has to drive a toy car into the correct parking space
- You can make this more physical by having your child design a car track leading up to the parking lot

Early Literacy Modification

Write simple sight words in each parking space

Obstacle Course



- Write the letters of a word on pieces of paper
- Create an obstacle course using everyday household items (ex. chair, broom, blankets, ladder, baseball bat) that requires different actions (ex. hopping, somersaults, spinning)
- Put different letters at different parts of the obstacle course
- Have your child complete the obstacle course, collect the letters at each part of the course, and then help your child put the letters in order to spell the mystery word

You could also have a picture of what the word is to help your child learn what the word means

Flashlight Game



- Tape words to the wall
- Have the child shine a flashlight on the word as you read it to them
- Clap out the number of beats (syllables) in the word
- Make letter shapes with the light

Tossing Game



- Take a muffin pan and place circles of paper with letters written on them in each of the muffin holes
- Give your child a small craft pom-pom or other object that can be thrown and won't bounce out of the muffin holes, and have them throw it into the correct hole when you say the name or the sound of a letter

Emergent literacy modification

If your child is not at the point where they are recognizing letters, place different colours or shapes on papers in the muffin tin. Even if they don't know the names of the colours or shapes yet, you could show them an image copy of the colour or shape and they have to match it up with the correct match in the muffin tin; this will help develop symbol recognition skills

Early literacy modification

Instead of letters, write short words on the circles of paper

Songs with Action



- Practicing letters:
 - YMCA by The Village People
 - ABC's, try to make the letters using your bodies
- Practicing phonological awareness (songs with rhyming words):
 - Itsy Bitsy Spider
 - Grand Old Duke of York
 - Ring Around the Rosie
 - Barnyard Dance

Bath Time



- Sing “Head and Shoulders” or “If You’re Happy and You Know It” to stretch and identify body parts
 - Instead of saying which body part, say only the first sound and see if your child can guess what body part you’re hinting at
 - Let them take a turn and you guess!
- Play “I Spy” identifying an object that starts with a particular sound
- Use foam floating letters
 - Sing the ABC's and identify the foam letters as you sing

Literacy Walks



- Sign Hunt
 - Point out words and symbols you see on signs
- Alphabet Walk
 - Show your child a letter and have them search for more examples of the same letter
 - Try to find an example of every letter in the alphabet
 - Take turns choosing a sound and finding an object that starts with the same sound (remember the sound is NOT always the same as the letter. For example, fish and phone both start with the /f/ sound)
- Story Retell
 - Take pictures of things that you did and places that you went on your walk
 - Use the pictures to tell/act out to a parent or sibling the story of your walk

Do you see what I See?



- The leader says: “Do you see what I see?”
- Child or children say: “What do you see?”
- The leader says: “I see....”
 - Popcorn popping, Snowmen melting, Monkeys swinging, Seals walking on ice, Horses galloping in the field, Crouching giants, Lions leaping, Butterflies flying, Hippos walking on tightropes, Soldiers marching
- Child or children act out the movements silently by moving their bodies

Sandbox



- Use sticks to trace out letters in the sand
- Make little road signs prior to going out in the sandbox and set them up on the sides of 'roads' in the sandbox for toy cars; talk about what each sign means

Popping Bubbles



- Popping bubbles practices hand-eye coordination
- Try different ways to pop the bubbles such as
 - Stomping, Clapping, Poking, Jumping
- Use different body parts to pop the bubbles such as
 - Elbows, Head, Knees, Feet

Twister

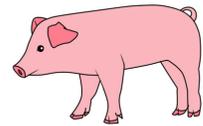


- Write sets of four letters on masking tape and tape to the circles on a twister mat (ex. 4 letter t's on the 4 red circles, 4 letter b's on the 4 blue circles, etc.)
- Play as you normally would, except instead of the colour say the name of the letter or the sound that it makes

Hanging out with the alphabet



- Put up a string like a clothesline; you can hang up multiple strings at different heights so that your child has to stretch and bend and move their body
- Draw or print multiple pictures with the letters of the object written on them using a different piece of paper for each picture (ex. pig)
- Write letters on clothespins that spell the selected words
- Have a container to collect clothespins
- When the game starts, begin with the first picture and have the child run to the clothesline and unclip the clothespins that spell the word and race back to you to put the clothespins in the container
- The goal is to get through all the pictures as fast as possible
- Make sure you have the right amount of letters on clothespins to spell out all the words you've printed



pig

Emergent literacy modification

- To practice more simple symbol recognition, take away the pressure of a race and instead just show pictures of individual letters that the child can match with the letters on clothespins
- When the child returns them to you, practice saying the name of the letter and the sound that it makes

Advanced early literacy modification

- Instead of showing the children all the letters spelling out what the picture of the object is, just show them the picture of the object (ex. ball, cat) and they have to bring back the clothespins that spell the word, or the clothespin that is the first letter of the word

Team Alphabet Olympics



- Break children into small groups (4 children per group works well)
- Have a leader call out a letter, ex. “Make the letter B”
- Lying on the floor/ground each group has to make the letter with their bodies

Early Literacy Modification

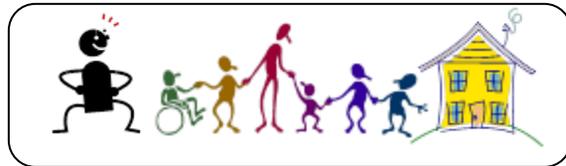
Have the leader call out a word and the groups must make the first letter of the word with their bodies. For example, “Make the letter that is at the beginning of the word ball.”

Chalk Games



- Encourage your child to:
 - Draw a road for their bikes/scooters and label stop signs along the road they draw
 - Practice writing their name at the start or end of the road
- Draw letters with chalk; take turns choosing ways to move around the letters
- Hopscotch
 - Write letters in the squares and talk about them
 - Sing songs and hop one time per word or every time a word rhymes

Fishing for Letters

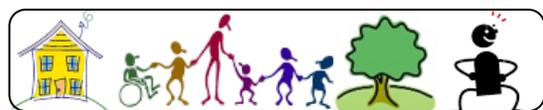


- Cut out fish shapes from colourful paper and attach a paper clip to each fish
- Write a letter on each fish
- To make a 'fishing pole', take a stick and attach a string of yarn one end (don't make it too long or it will be difficult to control)
- Take a small round magnet (you can find these at craft stores and many dollar stores) and attach it to the end of the string
- Let your child fish! Once your child catches a fish, have them say the name of the letter and the sound that it makes
- If they read it correctly, they get to keep the fish; if not, tell them what letter it is and what sound it makes and have them toss it back into the 'lake'
- The goal is to catch all fish

Early Literacy Modification

Write simple sight words on each fish

Treasure Hunt



- Using symbols, make a treasure map that represent different places around the house, or a yard or park
- Have your child identify the symbols and follow the map to find a 'hidden treasure' like a favourite healthy snack or a hidden toy

Creepy Crawley



- Cut out bug shapes from colourful pieces of paper and write a letter on each one
- Scatter the bugs on the floor
- Call out a letter name or sound and have your child swat the bug that has that letter on it

Emergent literacy modification

- Instead of letters written on the bugs, cut out bugs of different shapes (ex. circles, rectangles, triangles) and colours
- Encourage your children to swat bugs of different shapes/colours, ex. “Get all the circle bugs!” or “Get all the purple bugs!”

You can hold up a matching cut-out shape or paper of the same colour to help your child learn the concepts

Early literacy modification

Write simple sight words on each bug

The next activities are copied directly from LEAP (Literacy, Education, Activity Play) BC's Healthy Activities for Preschoolers (HOP) guide. You can find more information about this guide in the resources section at the end of this booklet.

The HOP guide is a great resource in that it clearly outlines the benefits to physical activity and language/literacy links for each activity. It also provides a selection of recommended books that go along with each activity. This is a wonderful resource that we encourage you to look at further.

Creative Balance



- Show your child different ways to balance
- Invite her to copy your actions (ex. stand on one leg, on tiptoes, two knees and one hand, bottom and two hands, cross-legged, squat, etc.)
- Play ‘puzzle balances’: ask your child to show how she can balance on different combinations of body parts (ex. “balance on your bottom and two elbows”, “balance on one foot and one hand”, “balance on apart that has no toes”)
- Call out a number for how many parts can touch the floor
- Join your child in partner balances by leaning on or away from each other, matching hands, knees, bottoms...Stand in a balanced position with your feet apart, hold your child’s hand and have him lean away from you, trying to lift his outside foot off the ground

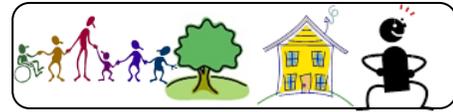
Physical Activity links

- Develops movement skills like body awareness, manipulation, balance

Language/literacy links

- Vocabulary development (ex. sit, squat, cross-legged)
- Number knowledge
- Support activity with talk (interpreting instructions)

Follow the Trail



- Outline a winding trail on the floor, carpet, grassy area, or down the hall using rope, string or yarn
- Have your child follow the trail using crawling and creeping actions
- Suggest, or as you child to suggest, different ways of moving along the trail (ex. scampering like a squirrel, stalking like a cat, creeping backwards).
- With your child, arrange the trail to go over, under, between and around objects in the house. Out loud, describe where the trail goes and invite your child to do the same
- Introduce number sequences: “Creep three paces forward, crawl back four, shake like a wet dog, then crawl forward six more”.

Physical activity links

Develops movement skills like body control and spatial awareness

Literacy/language links

Vocabulary development of position words

Pretend play

HOPS Freeze Dance



- Invite your child to move to the music (ex. walk, skip, roll, twirl, jump, sway)
- Stop the music and call “Freeze”
- The challenge for your child is to stay perfectly still until you start the music again
- Play freeze dance differently by:
 - Calling out different characters or objects and have your child move between “freeze!” commands like:
 - an ice-skater spinning; a puppy with a sore paw; a cat stalking a bird; a racing car; a donkey pulling a very heavy load...
 - Having your child interpret feeling words with movement: happily, sadly, energetically, solemnly, mysteriously, joyfully, etc.

Physical activity links

- Vigorous play
- Creativity and self-expression
- Movement skills like locomotor skills and body control

Vocabulary/literacy links

- Vocabulary development
- Support play with talk (ex. interpreting directions)
- Pretend play

Walk and Talk



- Take a walk to carry out an everyday task and use this time for talking
- Point out to your child what you notice on your walk
- Ex. “Oh, look over there, a cement mixer with the pouring shuts operating...what do you think they’re building?”
- Encourage your child to tell you about what she sees
- Before starting out, and along the way, decide on some of the things that you might see, make a list of them, and make a game out of finding them
- Play “I spy” using colour, shape, letter, or number cues, ex. “I spy with my little eye something that is orange”

Physical activity links

Building physical activity into everyday

Language/literacy links

Supporting activity with talk (ex. observing and discussing, speculating)

Counting

Tread Lightly, Look Closely



- Get ready for a nature walk through a field, park, patch of woods, or backyard
- Explain that on the walk you will stop and look closely at interesting things you notice
- Talk about the saying “Take only memories, leave only footprints” and explain that on the walk we will be looking with our eyes, but leaving everything just as we find it
- On your walk you could:
 - Look closely at plants; insects; different colours; shapes; or textures
 - Listen for sounds made by: birds, animals, machines and people
 - Take turns point out and describing interesting things to each other
 - Make a game of finding patterns that make the shapes of alphabet letters and numbers

Physical activity links

Building physical activity into your day

Playing actively

Language/literacy links

Support activity with talk

Being a role model (tread lightly)

Vocabulary development of plants, colours, textures, berries, numbers, letters, sounds

Helicopter



- Holding a skipping rope at one end, kneel or bend down and slowly move the rope in a circle around your body
- To keep the rope moving without spinning yourself around, you'll need to pass the rope from hand to hand
- Keep the rope low to the ground
- Invite your child to jump over the rope when it reaches him/her
 - If this is too difficult, wiggle the rope like a snake on the ground for your child to jump over
- Each time your child jumps over the rope, call out one letter of his/her name (or the name of animals, friends, etc.) until the word is complete; invite your child to take over the spelling
- Or count each jump backwards to blast-off!
 - Ex. "ten – nine – eight – seven – six – five – four – three – two – one – blast-off!"

Physical activity links

Vigorous play (building strong bones and muscles)
Developing movement skills like jumping and timing

Language/literacy links

Support activity with talk
Playing with the letters and sounds of the language
(chanting, counting rhymes, spelling)

Leap Frog



- Scatter cushions, tea towels or felt squares (lily pads, puddles) around area
- Invite your child to squat like a frog and leap frog over the tea towels, moving around the area
- Have her count how many lily pads she can clear without touching them
- Play “SPLASH!” – your child jumps over the puddles except when you call out “Splash!”...and then she has to land in the nearest puddle
- Challenge older children to call out an alphabet letter for every lily pad they jump over; see how far along the alphabet they can get before getting “puffed out”
- Every time your child jumps over a tea towel, encourage her to call out, in sequence, a letter of her name

Physical activity links

Vigorous play (building strong bones and muscles)

Language/literacy links

Counting

Vocabulary development of alphabet letters and in, on, over words

River Bank Jump



- With chalk or ropes, mark two lines to make a river: wide and one end, narrow at the other
- Encourage your child to choose the width they feel comfortable jumping
- Invite your child to jump in and out and over the river. Call out: “on the bank”; “in the river”; or “across the river”
 - Some children have difficulty imagining a river
 - You can make the river more real by using something different from the floor as the river (ex. a blue towel)
- Introduce an element of suspense and danger by pretending the river has hungry alligators in it

Physical activity links

Vigorous play (building strong bones and muscles)

Developing movement skills like body and spatial awareness, jumping, leaping

Language/literacy links

Pretend play

Playing with the sounds of language

Word concepts like over, in, across

Special Delivery



- Have your child imagine their tricycle or wagon is a delivery truck or their bag is a mail carrier bag
- If possible, have your child design a delivery and pick-up route
- Your child rides or walks around the route, picking up and delivering packages. Invite your child to describe the route to you
- Have your child add a parking spot, so they need to reverse and park; ask them what else they could add to their route (e.g. traffic lights so they need to stop and go)
- Help your child make signs (ex. words or pictures or both) for the stops along the route: perhaps a gas station; library; restaurant; car dealership; hardware, shoe, grocery, pet or toy store; doctor's or dentist's office
- Before setting off, get your child to count the packages to make sure there are enough for each stop on the route
- Have your child draw a picture or a map of the route and their customers

Physical activity links

Vigorous play

Creativity and self-expression

Language/literacy links

Pretend play

Writing

Counting

Mapping

More Resources

- LEAP (Language, Education, Activity, Play), BC's Healthy Activities for Preschoolers (HOP) guide
<http://decoda.ca/children-families/leap-bc/hop/>
- Ideal Curriculum
<https://www.idealacademy.org/ideal-curriculum>
- Early Literacy Alliance of Waterloo Region
<http://www.elawr.org/resources.html>
- International Songs and Rhymes in Different Languages
<http://bpl.bc.ca/kids/embracing-diversity/more-songs-and-rhymes>
- Lettercise Song
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0q7IPo7j1jc>