

Colonial Games

Written by Administrator
Sunday, 13 September 2009 19:10 -

Sack Race.

Each participant steps into a burlap bag (purchased from a farm store), then hops from the starting line to a line forty feet away, then hops back as fast as possible.

Three-Legged Race.

Ties (used men's neckties, for example) are fastened around the opposite ankles or knees of participants, giving each pair of children three legs to run the race.

Wheelbarrow Race.

One contestant picks up the ankles of another, who walks on her hands to the line. The contestants change places and race back to the starting line.

Hoop Trundling.

The child propels a wooden hoop using a one-foot dowel or stick by stroking it along the top.

Run around the Hoop.

The child sets the hoop spinning, and then tries to see how many times he can run around the hoop before it falls down. Another hoop game is to use the hoop as a hula-hoop, rotating it around the waist.

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Hoop Races.

A chalk trail passes through narrow spaces, such as two stones. Rolling hoops, contestants follow the trail between the gates all around the course back to the starting point.

Potato Race.

Potatoes are placed in buckets at the starting line, and children work in teams of two. Each child grabs a potato from her bucket and runs eight feet to a marked spot, deposits the potato, runs back for another potato, leaves it at a marked spot farther on, and so forth. Her partner runs to the first potato and brings it back to the bucket, then returns for another until all the potatoes are gathered.

Potato Spoon Race.

Each child balances a potato on the bowl of a long iced-tea spoon, and then runs to a line and back without dropping it. Variation: The children place the potatoes at designated spots and then retrieve them, as in a potato race.

Statue.

One child grasps the hands of another and gently swings him around before depositing him gently on the grass. The contestant tries to assume a ridiculous posture as he falls—limbs askew, head cocked, tongue hanging out. After all the players are “statues,” the swinger decides the winner, who then serves as the person who swings the players in the next round.

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Rock Tag.

Players choose a rock or stone to touch or stand on; one child, "It," has no base. At a given signal, all children leave their bases and go to another—one child to a base. If "It" can catch a runner between bases, that child becomes "It."

Shadow Tag.

For small children: On a sunny day children try to step on each other's shadows.

Fox and Geese, single rim.

A wagon wheel design is tramped in the snow or drawn in chalk. The Fox stands at the center and the other children, the Geese, around the edge. At a signal, the Fox tries to catch the Geese, who can run only along the spokes or the rim of the wheel. The one who is caught then becomes the Fox.

Fox and Geese, double rim.

The version of Fox and Geese involves an additional rim halfway up the spokes.

Hunt the Fox.

The wagon wheel is set up as in Fox and Geese, but in this game the roles are reversed: The

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Fox at the center is chased by the others, the Hunters.

Leapfrog.

Children form a line, with each child leaning over on hands and knees. The child at one end leaps over the next child's back, legs spread apart, then over all the others. At the other end she becomes an additional Frog, to be leapt over by the next player.

Leap and Crawl.

The leapfrog line is formed as above. Players leap over one Frog, and then crawl between the legs of the next, leap over the third, etc.

Duck on the Rock.

This game was originally played with rocks in a dirt road. An object several inches high is placed at a distance. On this is balanced one player's beanbag, the Duck. Players stand back of the line and toss their beanbags at the Duck to knock it off. When it falls, all the players who have tossed run to retrieve their beanbags before the Duck's owner can replace her beanbag on the Rock and tag another player.

Beanbag Toss.

Players toss beanbags at a distance through a hole in a wood panel. The game can be played using several holes, each with a numerical value; players compete to reach the score of 21.

Game of Graces.

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Two players with two-foot wands toss a beribboned ten-inch wooden hoop back and forth, trying to catch it in the X of their crossed wands. The wands are drawn rapidly apart to propel the hoop back to the other player.

Jump Rope.

A familiar game even today—for a single child or, with a longer rope, three or more.

Quoits.

Make quoit rings from half-inch manila rope, fastening the ends with masking tape, and construct a box with upright dowels of various lengths, or hammer the dowels into the ground for a quoit field. Players stand at a distance and try to throw the rings over the dowels.

Hopscotch.

The player throws a marker onto a numbered square, hops to retrieve it, and then throws it to the next square in the sequence. Many variations are available on the Internet. A prepared mat can be used, or a hopscotch field can be drawn in chalk.

Spinning Top.

Tops come in many varieties: to be twirled with the fingers, for example, or to be wound with string, the string pulled, and the top thrown on the ground, still spinning. Other tops can be set in motion with the fingers, and then kept going by whipping the sides with a leather thong attached to a short stick.

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Stilts.

This age-old balancing act can be done with stilts to suit the child. Wooden blocks are fastened ten to twenty inches from the ground on long poles. For young children, use pairs of No. 10 cans: Punch holes in the ends of the can and run a length of rope through it for the child to hold on to.

Jacob's Ladder.

Six small blocks are fastened together with sets of ribbon so that the blocks can appear to tumble as a child tilts the top block back and forth. This illusion can be bought ready-made.

Jacks.

A dozen metal jacks are dropped on the floor. A ball is bounced and the child tries to pick up as many jacks as possible before the ball hits the floor again.

Marbles.

Clay or glass marbles are propelled by the thumb toward other marbles in a circle or pit. The player keeps the marbles she can knock out of the ring. There are many variations—ask your grandfather!

Hummers.

Take a four-hole button and run a string or carpet-weight thread through two opposite holes; fasten the ends together. Holding the string so that the button is in the middle, swing the button around and around, and then pull the string loops so that the button revolves first one way, then

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the other. After a rhythm has been established, pulling the string harder each time will make some buttons hum.

Tower Puzzle.

The Tower of Hanoi is a relative newcomer. Six or more graduated disks are placed over one of three spindles fixed to a strip of wood. The object is to move all the disks to another spindle, moving one at a time, without ever placing a larger disk over a smaller one. There is much about the Tower of Hanoi on the Internet.

Ball and Cup.

In this centuries-old game, a small ball is affixed to a string on a short stick, at the top of which is a cup. The player tosses the ball up and attempts catch it in the cup. A variation on this is the Bilbo Stick: The stick is pointed and the ball has a small hole.

Mumblety-Peg.

The point of a penknife is flipped up and into the ground with the front, then the back of the hand. The point is next placed on the wrist, elbow, shoulder, and head, then back down to the hand. If a player can flip the knife successfully each time, so that it always sticks in the ground, he then makes the knife "jump the fence" of the palm and stick in the ground. (We did not play this game.)

Gee-Haw Whimmy-Diddle.

This southern game derives its name from oxen-driving terms: "Gee" is left and "haw" is right. Using a file, cut a series of notches in a short stick, and insert a small propeller in the end of the stick so that it moves freely. Vigorously rubbing a squared stick along the notches makes the propeller spin. Rubbing the thumb along the stick helps make the propeller reverse direction.

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Feather Game.

Sit small children in a circle and release a small chicken feather (check your bedroom pillows). The object is to keep the feather in the air by blowing up on it.

Horseshoes.

Two stakes and rubber or metal horseshoes are needed. Consult rulebooks or the Internet for scoring of leaners and ringers.

Bob for Apples (wet).

Fill a dishpan close to the top with warm water, add a dozen washed, small apples, and place it on a bench. Players try to bite an apple—no hands! Once a player bites an apple, it's his. Have towels handy to dry off the children!

Bob for Apples (dry).

Suspend small apples by string from a branch or pole so that the apples hang at varying heights. Rules are as for wet bobbing: No hands, and the apple a player bites is hers.

Balance Game.

Take a round piece of wood four to six inches in diameter and about twenty-four inches long. Place an eight- or ten-inch board across this pole and try to balance on it, like a lumberjack.

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