

Outdoor game ideas for you and your children



Get moving with your kids

There's a tendency in this day and age for children to be quite sedentary, glued to screens interacting with a virtual games world, rather than getting outside and playing games for real.

Parents, it's up to us to rebalance our childrens' lives and introduce them to the joy of games we enjoyed as kids ourselves. If our kids see us slumped on the sofa, switching our attention between different screens, it's little wonder if they do the same.

We have a guide for 9 of the best outdoor games for you and your children. All you need is a bit of outside space - such as a playground or park. Enjoy one of these games this week and you are guaranteed to feel better in both body and spirit.

1. British Bulldog

The larger the number of players, the more fun, so why not suggest a game with your neighbours or other families? One or more kids are selected to be the 'bulldogs' who stand in the middle of the play area. The rest of the players stand at one end (home). The aim of the game is to run from one end of the field of play to the other, without being caught by the bulldogs. When a player is caught, they become a bulldog themselves. The winner is the last one to be caught - the zippiest, quickest dodger and diver.

2. Capture The Flag

This is a great game to play in a large group. Players are divided into two teams and given two zones (one side of the park grass each, one part of the wood each, wherever you are). Each team is given five minutes to hide their flag (or jumper, or scarf or whatever is to hand), then both teams return to a neutral starting point and simply try to get the other team's flag. If a player is caught and tagged by an opponent, she must go to 'jail' and can only be freed by a teammate who rescues her when the opposing team isn't looking. The first team to capture the other team's flag wins.

3. Hide And Seek

Simple but great fun. One person is chosen to be 'it' and closes his eyes (no cheating) and counts to 10 (or whatever number has been decided, depending on the size of the space and age of children) while everyone else hides. When the person who is 'it' finishes counting, they call out 'Coming, Ready or Not' and sets off to find everyone. The rest of the players try to get back to base without getting tagged or else they are 'It'. If 'It' doesn't tag anyone, they stay 'It' for the next round.



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4. Red Rover, Red Rover

This works best playing with at least one other family. Do you remember the excitement of playing this at school when every child in the playground was involved in this game? Just awesome!

You divide into two teams. The teams then line up holding hands parallel to each other. The first team chooses a player from the other team to try and break through their line. After the player is chosen, the team shout 'Red Rover, Red Rover... let (player's name) come over.' The person called runs to the other line and attempts to break the chain (formed by the linking of hands).

5. Sardines

It's like hide-and-seek but only one person hides at first. Everyone else has to try and find the hider, hiding with him or her when they do. The hiding place slowly becomes hugely cramped (like sardines) and the last person to find the group is the loser. An ideal game for indoors.

6. Shipwrecked

One child becomes the catcher – the hungry shark – and everyone else pretends to be shipwrecked, clinging to pieces of shipwrecked boats previously decided on – trees, bushes, garden furniture, walls but, essentially, always one less than the number of players. Everyone runs away from the shark and grabs hold of 'wreckage' to survive. If someone else arrives at your piece of wreckage, you have to move on because only one player is allowed on each piece of wreckage at a time (think Kate and Leo in Titanic). If you are caught 'in the water', you become the shark.

7. Stuck In The Mud

This game can be played with three or more or a large group of parents and children. One person (or two if it's a bigger group) are chosen to be the catchers. When they catch or tag someone, that person is 'stuck in the mud'. The person has to stand still with legs

spread wide apart, not moving. The only way to release him/her is if another person who isn't stuck goes under the child that is stuck to free them. (Cue comic manoeuvres if a large, not very flexible adult is trying to squeeze under a much smaller person.) The game continues until everybody is stuck - or you're all exhausted.



8. Tag/It

Tag couldn't be simpler: one person is chosen to be 'it', then 'it' chases the other players. When 'it' touches another player then the tagged player becomes 'it'. And on you go.

9. What's The Time Mr Wolf?

The point of the game is to avoid being 'eaten' by Mr Wolf. Choose who will be Mr Wolf, then Mr Wolf and the kids line up at different sides of the play area. Mr Wolf then stands with his back towards the other children and the children ask in unison 'What's the time, Mr Wolf?' Mr Wolf answers with a time, such as, 'It's 9 o'clock'. The kids then take nine steps towards Mr Wolf. At any point Mr Wolf can answer: 'Supper time!' and turn round, chasing and howling as he tags (or pretend munches) as many screaming kids as possible before they reach their 'home' (a 'safe' area previously decided on like touching a tree).

For more articles on how to get moving with your kids, visit the [#BackOnTrack](#) hub on the Huffington Post.