



# Chapter 1: Tag, You're It!

Tag games have been around for years, and children continue to enjoy them tremendously. Improved fundamental gross motor movements, increased fitness and other health-related benefits, and the strengthening of spatial-body perceptual skills are just some of the positive effects of playing tag. This chapter contains a wide variety of tag games that contribute to the development of gross motor skills while enhancing the learning process.

## Early Learning and Movement Tag Games

### Animal Walk Tag

**Equipment:** none

**Task Analysis:** arm strength, abdominal strength, muscular strength and endurance, cardiorespiratory endurance, lateralization, crossing the midline, visual memory, figure-ground discrimination, hypotonic

**Description:** This tag game requires students to perform different animal walks after they have been tagged. First, select an animal (e.g., a bear) and choose a student to be the tagger. Children begin to walk through the play space as the tagger performs the selected animal walk (e.g., bear walk) and attempts to tag the other children. When a child is tagged, that child must also perform the animal walk as she moves through the play space assisting the original tagger. The game continues until all children are performing the animal walk.

Have students try to move like these animals: crab, kangaroo, bunny, seal, inchworm, bear, frog, duck, elephant, horse, and caterpillar. You may also use movements of the types of animals you are currently studying in the classroom.

**Variations:** When the tagger tags a student, the tagged student calls out a new animal. All other players then begin to move like the new animal. A student can be safe from being tagged if that student makes the continuous sound of the selected animal (e.g., growls like a bear).



### Animal Walk Tag—Form Discrimination

**Equipment:** stuffed animals and/or pictures of animals (animal action cards can be found on pages 142–145)

**Task Analysis:** arm strength, abdominal strength, muscular strength and endurance, cardiorespiratory endurance, form discrimination, picture identification, visual memory, figure-ground discrimination, form constancy, spatial relationships, position in space, attention and concentration, hypotonic

**Description:** Begin by placing the stuffed animals or displaying the animal pictures throughout the play space. Then, hold up a selected animal (e.g., an elephant) and choose a student to be the tagger. Children begin to walk through the play space as the tagger performs the selected animal walk (e.g., elephant walk). Students may walk to and touch the stuffed selected animal or picture of the animal to avoid being tagged. When a child is tagged, that child must also perform the animal walk as he moves through the play space assisting the original tagger. The game continues until all children are performing the animal walk. Have students try to move like these animals: crab, kangaroo, bunny, seal, inchworm, bear, frog, duck, elephant, horse, and caterpillar. You may also use movements of the types of animals you are currently studying in the classroom.



# Language Arts Tag Games

## Letter Tag

**Equipment:** letter cards (found on pages 33–41)

**Task Analysis:** muscular strength and endurance, cardiorespiratory endurance, language arts, letter recognition, visual memory, locomotor skills, figure-ground discrimination, form constancy, spatial relationships, position in space, attention and concentration, hypotonic

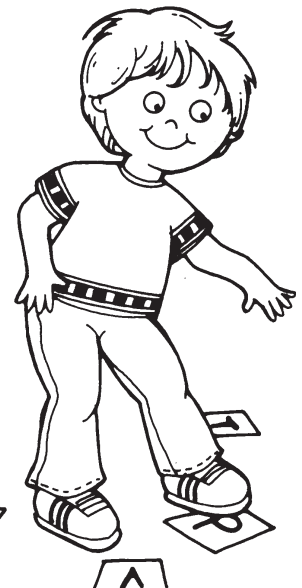
**Description:** This tag game allows students to recognize and identify selected letters of the alphabet. Begin by scattering the letter cards throughout the play space. Designate the locomotor skill to be performed (e.g., skipping) as well as the number of times to circle the play area. Choose a student to be the tagger. Then, hold up a selected letter or letters. The tagger begins to try to tag other students. To avoid being tagged, students may find and touch with their toes a card with the selected letter(s). When a child is tagged, that child must circle the play area, performing the designated locomotor skill the specified number of times. After completing the movement, the child reenters the game. Remember to choose a new tagger often.

## Letter Sound Tag

**Equipment:** letter cards (found on pages 33–41)

**Task Analysis:** muscular strength and endurance, cardiorespiratory endurance, language arts, letter sound recognition, visual memory, locomotor skills, figure-ground discrimination, form constancy, spatial relationships, position in space, attention and concentration, hypotonic

**Description:** This tag game allows students to recognize and identify the alphabet letters that make the selected sounds. Begin by scattering the letter cards throughout the play space. Designate the locomotor skill to be performed (e.g., galloping) as well as the number of times to circle the play area. Choose a student to be the tagger. Then, hold up a selected letter and review the sound of the letter. The tagger begins to try to tag other students. To avoid being tagged, students may find and touch with their toes a card with the letter that makes the selected sound. When a child is tagged, that child must circle the play area, performing the designated locomotor skill the specified number of times. After completing the movement, the child reenters the game. Remember to choose a new tagger often.



## Upper- and Lowercase Letter Tag

**Equipment:** upper- and lowercase letter cards (found on pages 33–41)

**Task Analysis:** muscular strength and endurance, cardiorespiratory endurance, language arts, upper- and lowercase letter identification, form discrimination, visual memory, locomotor skills, figure-ground discrimination, form constancy, spatial relationships, position in space, attention and concentration, hypotonic

**Description:** This tag game allows students to recognize, identify, and match the uppercase and the lowercase forms of selected letters of the alphabet. Begin by scattering the letter cards throughout the play space. Designate the locomotor skill to be performed (e.g., tiptoeing) as well as the number of times to circle the play area. Choose a student to be the tagger. Then, hold up a selected letter and review whether it is the upper- or lowercase form of the letter. The tagger begins to try to tag other students. To avoid being tagged, students may find and touch with their toes a card with the selected letter in the form that was not previously shown, either upper- or lowercase. When a child is tagged, that child must circle the play area, performing the designated locomotor skill the specified number of times. After completing the movement, the child reenters the game. Remember to choose a new tagger often.



## Word Tag

**Equipment:** word cards (make word cards from students' current reading program)

**Task Analysis:** muscular strength and endurance, cardiorespiratory endurance, language arts, letter sound recognition, visual memory, locomotor skills, figure-ground discrimination, form constancy, spatial-relationships, position in space, attention and concentration, hypotonic

**Description:** This tag game allows students to recognize and identify selected words. Begin by scattering the word cards throughout the play space. Designate the locomotor skill to be performed (e.g., hopping) as well as the number of times to circle the play area. Choose a student to be the tagger. Then, hold up a selected word card and say the word aloud. The tagger begins to try to tag other students. To avoid being tagged, students may find and touch with their toes a card with the selected word. When a child is tagged, that child must circle the play area, performing the designated locomotor skill the specified number of times. After completing the movement, the child reenters the game. Remember to choose a new tagger often.

**Variation:** A student can be safe from being tagged if that student repeats the selected word aloud.

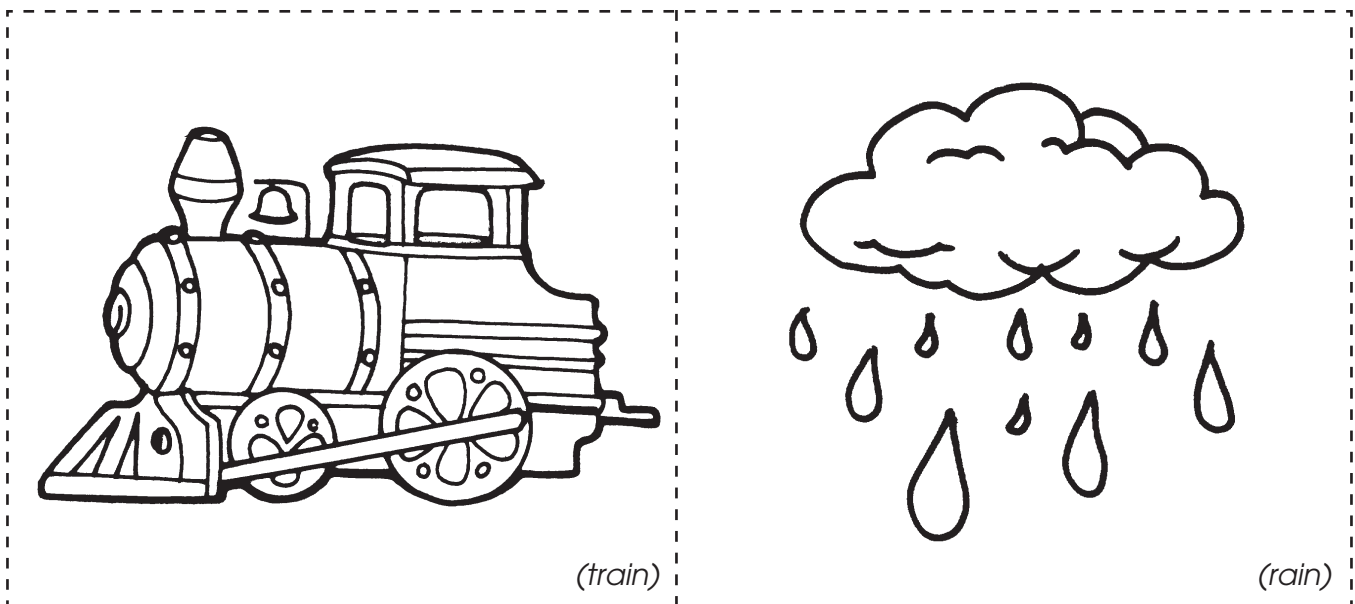
## Rhyming Tag

**Equipment:** selected rhyming word picture cards (found on pages 42–46)

**Task Analysis:** muscular strength and endurance, cardiorespiratory endurance, language arts, sound discrimination, rhyming words, visual memory, locomotor skills, figure-ground discrimination, form constancy, spatial relationships, position in space, attention and concentration, hypotonic

**Description:** This tag game allows students to recognize and identify selected rhyming words. Begin by scattering the rhyming word picture cards throughout the play space. Designate the locomotor skill to be performed (e.g., skating) as well as the number of times to circle the play area. Choose a student to be the tagger. Then, hold up a selected picture card and say the name of the picture aloud. The tagger begins to try to tag other students. To avoid being tagged, students may find and touch with their toes a picture whose name rhymes with the selected picture. When a child is tagged, that child must circle the play area, performing the designated locomotor skill the specified number of times. After completing the movement, the child reenters the game. Remember to choose a new tagger often.

*(rhyming picture cards)*





## Chapter 2: Remember Hopscotch?

Traditionally, hopscotch is a playground game children play at recess. However, hopscotch can be incorporated into your school day to support academic concepts both inside and outside the classroom. When played outside, many different innovative and creative hopscotch patterns can be drawn. Patterns created with sidewalk chalk on playgrounds give flexibility to originate different challenges for children, based on their developmental profiles. When playing inside, masking tape can be used on floors to create similar challenges.

Hopscotch affords each student opportunities to develop gross body coordination, static and dynamic balance, eye-foot coordination, eye-foot accuracy, and eye-hand accuracy. Visual motor coordination, lateralization, crossing the midline, visual motor integration, figure-ground discrimination, spatial relationships, and position in space are also addressed as children engage in hopscotch-based activities. Using a variety of different objects and/or pictures to play allows students to develop form discrimination, visual discrimination, and visual memory skills. The health-related fitness skills of explosive leg power, muscular strength, and muscular endurance build up strong bodies and, as an added benefit, strong minds. With increased strength and endurance, students can sit in their chairs for longer periods and give greater attention to the tasks presented to them without fatiguing.

Use your imagination, as well as the ideas of your students, to create some very interesting and nontraditional hopscotch patterns. The size and length of the hopscotch pattern should match the developmental levels of your students. Then, you can provide academic challenges within the curriculum guidelines that match the cognitive abilities of your students.

Hopping and jumping into spaces enhances a child's understanding of laterality that is used in reading; the ability to perform bilateral tasks, such as stabilizing the paper with the nondominant hand when writing; and to grasp directionality concepts used in spacing words and letters on paper. As children practice using both the right and left sides of their bodies and their laterality develops, the possibility of problems with reversals is reduced. As noted earlier, gross motor development precedes fine motor. As children achieve greater control of their bodies during these hopscotch games, this control will contribute to the development of fine motor control in desktop activities such as writing, coloring, and cutting.

All of the hopscotch games included in this chapter should be played in a noncompetitive manner, with no elimination; all children should have the opportunity to enjoy the game. Allow children to choose what types of objects they want to toss to serve as markers (for example, a small rock for an outside game, or a beanbag for an inside game). Many of the following games can also be played using flash cards, a spinner (pattern found on page 63) or a rolling cube (pattern found on page 62) which can be easily adapted for the particular skill that you wish to teach. Construct the spinner or rolling cube according to the directions on the pattern pages. The spinner and rolling cube can be labeled with the appropriate letters, numbers, words, shapes, or other specific game content. The student gently rolls the cube; when the cube stops, the letter, number, etc., that is facing up is selected. See page 61 for hopscotch examples and directions.





## Language Arts Hopscotch Games

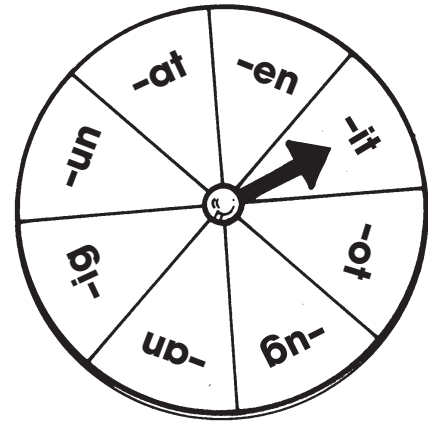
### Rhyming Hopscotch

**Equipment:** word family flash cards, spinner (pattern found on page 63), or rolling cube (pattern found on page 62) labeled with words from several word families; sidewalk chalk or masking tape; marker (e.g., small rock, beanbag) to toss

**Task Analysis:** muscular strength and endurance, cardiorespiratory endurance, bilateral activities, dynamic balance, body part awareness, static balance, visual memory, visual discrimination, locomotor skills, explosive leg power, rhyming words and sounds, eye-foot accuracy, crossing the midline, visual motor coordination, attention and concentration, figure-ground discrimination, form constancy, spatial relationships, position in space

**Description:** Create a hopscotch pattern. In each space, write a rhyming word from the word families featured on the spinner, flash cards, or rolling cube. Include several words from each word family. To select a rhyming word, have the first student use either the spinner, draw a flash card, or gently roll the cube (the word family word on the top face of the cube is the selected rhyme to find). The student should scan the hopscotch pattern for words from the selected word family and then begin to hop on the rhyming words from space to space until returning to the starting space. The next student selects a new rhyming word to find. Specific word family searches can also be repeated for reinforcement.

**Variation:** The student may toss a marker into each space containing a rhyming word before hopping into it.



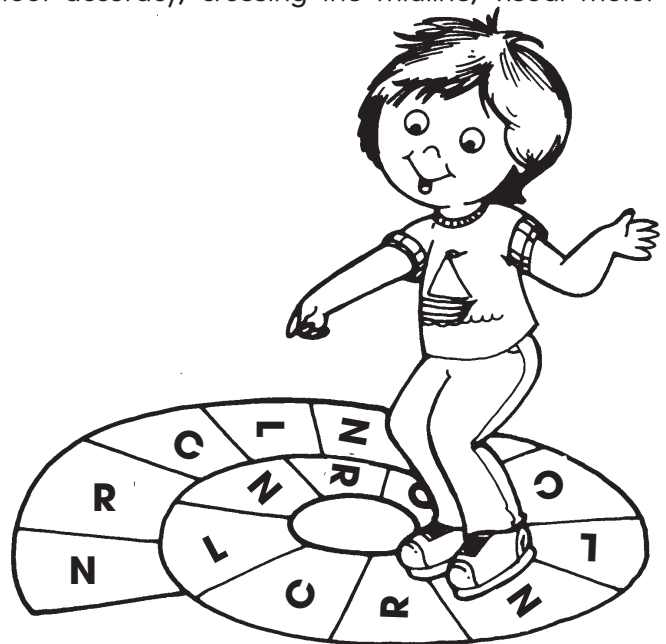
### Letter Hopscotch

**Equipment:** spinner (pattern found on page 63), letter flash cards, or rolling cube (pattern found on page 62) labeled with letters; sidewalk chalk or masking tape; marker (e.g., small rock, beanbag) to toss

**Task Analysis:** muscular strength and endurance, cardiorespiratory endurance, bilateral activities, dynamic balance, body part awareness, static balance, visual memory, visual discrimination, locomotor skills, explosive leg power, letter identification, eye-foot accuracy, crossing the midline, visual motor coordination, attention and concentration

**Description:** Create a hopscotch pattern. In each space, write a letter students are learning to identify; each letter should be written several times. To select a letter, have the first student use either the letter spinner, draw a flash card, or gently roll the letter cube (the letter on the top face of the cube is the selected letter to find). The student should scan the hopscotch pattern for the selected letter and then begin to hop on the letter from space to space until returning to the starting space. The next student selects a new letter to find. Specific letter searches can also be repeated for reinforcement.

**Variation:** The student may toss a marker into each space containing the selected letter before hopping into it.





# Math Hopscotch Games

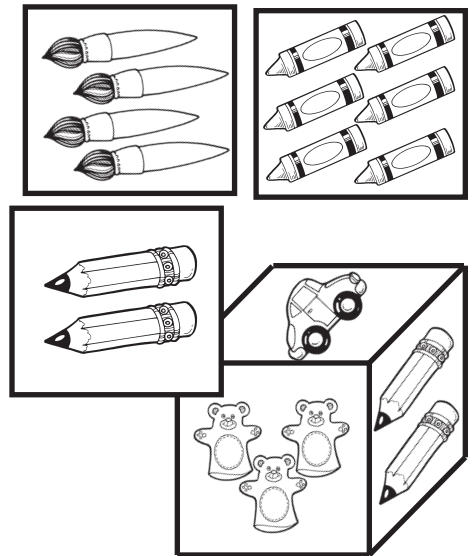
## Counting Hopscotch

**Equipment:** sets of objects cards (found on pages 53–56), spinner (pattern found on page 63), or rolling cube (pattern found on page 62) with pictures of sets of objects (e.g., picture of nine ducks); sidewalk chalk or masking tape; marker (e.g., small rock, beanbag) to toss

**Task Analysis:** muscular strength and endurance, cardiorespiratory endurance, bilateral activities, dynamic balance, body part awareness, static balance, visual memory, visual discrimination, locomotor skills, explosive leg power, mathematics, number recognition, eye-foot accuracy, crossing the midline, visual motor coordination, attention and concentration, figure-ground discrimination, form constancy, spatial relationships, position in space

**Description:** Create a hopscotch pattern. In each space, write a number to which students are learning to count; each number should be written several times. To select a set of objects, have the first student use either the spinner, draw a card with a picture of a set of objects, or gently roll the cube (the set of objects on the top face of the cube is the selected set to count). The student should scan the hopscotch pattern for the number of the objects in the set and then begin to hop on the numbers from space to space until returning to the starting space. The next student selects a new set of objects to count. Specific searches for numbers of objects can also be repeated for reinforcement.

**Variation:** The student may toss a marker into each space containing the number of objects in the set before hopping into it.



## Number Hopscotch

**Equipment:** number cards (found on pages 53–56), spinner (pattern found on page 63) or rolling cube (pattern found on page 62); sidewalk chalk or masking tape; marker (e.g., small rock, beanbag) to toss

**Task Analysis:** muscular strength and endurance, cardiorespiratory endurance, bilateral activities, dynamic balance, body part awareness, static balance, visual memory, visual discrimination, locomotor skills, explosive leg power, number identification, eye-foot accuracy, crossing the midline, visual motor coordination, attention and concentration, figure-ground discrimination, form constancy, spatial relationships, position in space

**Description:** Create a hopscotch pattern. In each space, write a number students are learning to identify; each number should be written several times. To select a number, have the first student use either the number spinner, draw a number card, or gently roll the number cube (the number on the top face of the cube is the selected number to find). The student should scan the hopscotch pattern for the selected number and then begin to hop on the number from space to space until returning to the starting space. The next student selects a new number to find. Specific number searches can also be repeated for reinforcement.

**Variation:** The student may toss a marker into each space containing the selected number before hopping into it.

