



Parachute Play: Physical Activity Lesson

Purpose

The purpose of the Parachute Play lesson is for children to demonstrate mastery of fundamental skills for a lifetime of sport and recreational activities. Children will learn cognitive concepts and will enjoy playing the game. Through participating in the lesson, children will increase their physical activity levels. Activities within this lesson allow for a large (or small) group of children to work towards a common goal in a non-threatening, non-competitive environment.

Objectives

By participating in this activity, students will develop and acquire:

- Fine motor and gross motor skills in their hands, forearms, upper arms, and shoulders
- Strength in the muscles that compose the hands, arms, and shoulders
 - Developing these muscles for preparation for writing
- Skills associated with language development, consciousness of self, and social/emotional development
 - Including, but not limited to, imaginative play, cooperative play, self-esteem development, leadership development, relationship building (with peers and teachers), and team building.
- Skills associated with developing sensory input (5 senses) and a sense of rhythm

Materials

- Music and CD player/speakers
- Parachute
- Foam or plastic fruit (variety of 6-8 items)
- Ball (lightweight/medium or large size)

Lesson Steps

- Introduce yourself
- Explain the purpose of the activity





- Open parachute with children and staff
- Practice “Pull Tight” Activity
- Practice “Up & Down” activity
- Perform “Lay Down” Activity
- Perform “Weather” Activity
- Perform “Fruit Salad” Activity
- Perform “Wave” Activity
- Perform “Crazy Ball” Activity

Instruction Tips

- Demonstrate proper holding of the parachute, primarily on the side and handles, before taking it out of its storage bag
- Allow the children to participate in taking the parachute out of the bag. Doing so builds a sense of excitement—like opening a gift!
- Observe the colors of the parachute in the sunlight. Taking the time to look at the parachute in the sun stimulates the children’s sense of sight and prepares them for the activity.
- After practicing the “Pull tight” activity (below), practice moving the parachute up and down slowly as a group. Many children have never seen this done before and want to immediately run under the parachute. Instruct the children that we will have the opportunity to run under the parachute, but not until we explain how to do so properly.
- Use the “Pull tight” activity to differentiate between each parachute activity; use the activity to also keep the attention of the teachers and students.

Game Instructions

- Pull Tight Activity
 - Ask everyone to pull the parachute tight towards their body. Now relax. Then pull again. Watch to see that all children understand how to pull. Have teachers guide any child having trouble.
 - This activity is essential to the remainder of the lesson. This activity will assist you in transitioning from game to game.
- Lay Down (Girls first, then boys)
 - Ask for girls to pay extra attention, as they will participate in the activity first. When the time is right, all the girls will let go of the parachute and will run underneath it. Once there, ask girls to lay down on their backs to look



up at the parachute. Boys hold on and slowly move the parachute up and down together. Do this about 6 times then rotate. Teachers should move with their gender.

- Weather
 - Use imagination to create various forms of weather with the parachute. We'll start calm sitting on the floor; a gentle breeze will come over the parachute with big arm movements and a deep voice slowly saying, "It's windy outside."
 - When ready for rain, make your voice fast and move up to a thunder storm with everyone standing up holding handles shaking as hard as they can to make thunder.
 - When ready for snow, start moving the parachute with tiny movements (wiggles). Teacher will speak in a soft, squeaky voice. Listen to the parachute's soft rippling sound.
- Fruit Salad
 - Parachute is on the ground with children sitting. With foam fruit, ask the children to say the name of each fruit and toss into the center of the parachute. Children should not touch the fruit. Holding the chute, everyone will slowly lift the parachute into a "bowl" where the middle is sagging down to resemble a fruit bowl. Don't let anyone let go!
 - The magic word is "Fruit Salad." When "fruit salad" is said, shake the parachute like the rain in the weather activity above. Instruct the teacher to say any words they think of to trick the children. Model some trick words like bubbles, pickles, and stinky feet.
 - Tell the children to never let go of the parachute. If fruit bounces out of the parachute, only teachers should retrieve the fruit.
 - Remind the children that when the fruit gets bounced around in the parachute it won't hurt them (the fruit is made of foam). Play fruit salad 3-4 times. Have a child lead the group with tricky words and magic words.
- Wave
 - The goal of this game is to keep the ball on the parachute until the count of 10. See how high you can count!
- Crazy Ball
 - Children should never let go of the parachute with this activity.
 - Toss the ball onto the parachute and move the parachute like the rain! Use a loud voice and say it's Crazy Ball! Watch the children move vigorously and teachers only get the ball if it drops off.



Modifications

- Game play
 - If children need extra assistance in learning the games or gripping the parachute, have a teacher stand next to the child to provide extra guidance.