

First Nations Games

Get Outside!
Taking Learning Outdoors

Cross-curricular Connections

The following are traditional First Nations recreational activities. Each requires minimal equipment which can often be found in nature. Students in any grade can actively engage in all of these games.

These activities support the development of many of TDSB's character education traits, particularly: *Responsibility, Fairness, Honesty, Co-operation, Integrity and Perseverance.*

Adapted from activities at Sheldon Centre for Outdoor Education.

Preparation / Resources

Stick Catch

- students need straight sticks about 12 cm long (if they cannot find enough sticks in the schoolyard, have a case of unsharpened pencils available)

Stick Drop

- each partnership needs 1 stick (30 cm long, 2 cm in diameter)

Seal's Nose

- make one by putting a nerf soccer ball into an old winter hat / toque
- tie one end of a 5m rope to the hat / toque

Mush, Mush

- a short stick about 15 cm long and 1-2 cm in diameter

Description of Activity

Time outside: 30 - 40 minutes (5 - 10 minutes for each)

Stick Catch:

- Make sure students have 12 sticks, each about 12 cm long; students should be able to hold all 12 sticks in their hand.
- Have students put one stick on the back of one hand, toss that hand up and try to catch the stick(s) without turning their wrist.
- If successful, add more sticks. *Safety caution:* be aware of others, how high the sticks are thrown and where they land.

Stick Drop:

- Have partners face each other; one person holds a stick between his/her fingers or hand, at the edges.
- The partner should have both hands above the stick, with her/his hands horizontal (not curved over the stick).
- When the stick is dropped, the partner tries to catch it before it hits the ground.

Seal's Nose

- Have the teacher stand in the middle of a circle of students holding the end of the rope; the teacher turns around (i.e. spins) in the middle and students jump over "nose".
- If a student fails to jump over the "nose" or if it hits a student, that student backs away from the circle and does five sit ups/push ups before returning to the game.

Mush, Mush

- Students sit in a tight circle with their knees bent and feet flat on the ground; each student's knees should be touching the knees of the person beside her/him.
- One player stands in the middle of the circle with eyes closed until the group starts passing the stick through the bent knees.
- The middle player gets three guesses to spot the stick being passed underneath the bent knees of those in the circle.
- The goal of the seated group is to get the stick to someone who can 'tap' the person in the middle without being caught. If someone is caught they become the person in the middle.

Follow-up (plus Adaptations and Extensions)

- Seal's Nose** extension: have an elimination round to determine a 'winner'
- Mush, Mush** adaptation: use a smaller object that can be more easily hidden

Other ideas:

- Have students create their own game using objects found in nature and teach their game to a small group
- Have students reflect on why First Nations people might play these types of games (e.g. skill, technique, patience, fun, sharing, community)
- Practice procedural writing by creating a "how to play the game" manual.