PE games for kids

Peabody · checked 2026-10-29

Peabody has 11 free PE games for a whole class and 3 class workouts, all written so every child is moving at once rather than queueing for a turn, and so nobody is ever eliminated. 8 of the games need no equipment at all.

11 PE games for a whole class

- Game: Freeze Dance · Children: 2–40 · Minutes: 6 · You need: nothing · Room: a room · Ages: 4 to 11
- Game: Animal Tag · Children: 3–30 · Minutes: 7 · You need: nothing · Room: a room · Ages: 4 to 11
- Game: Jump the River · Children: 2–30 · Minutes: 7 · You need: chalk · Room: a room · Ages: 5 to 12
- Game: Simon Says Moves · Children: 2–40 · Minutes: 6 · You need: nothing · Room: a room · Ages: 4 to 12
- Game: Traffic Lights · Children: 3–40 · Minutes: 7 · You need: nothing · Room: a room · Ages: 4 to 11
- Game: Hold It Till It Comes Back · Children: 3–12 · Minutes: 6 · You need: a soft ball · Room: a room · Ages: 7 to 14
- Game: Roll an Animal · Children: 2–30 · Minutes: 6 · You need: nothing · Room: a room · Ages: 4 to 11
- Game: Everybody's It · Children: 4–30 · Minutes: 6 · You need: nothing · Room: a park or a hall · Ages: 6 to 12
- Game: The Relay With No Queue · Children: 6–40 · Minutes: 8 · You need: a shoe · Room: a park or a hall · Ages: 6 to 14
- Game: Captain's Coming · Children: 3–40 · Minutes: 7 · You need: nothing · Room: a room · Ages: 5 to 12
- Game: Pass the Pose · Children: 3–30 · Minutes: 5 · You need: nothing · Room: a room · Ages: 5 to 14

The two rules that make them work

Everybody moves at once. A relay where twenty-eight children queue so four can run gives most of the class about ninety seconds of activity in a half-hour lesson. Every game here has the whole room moving in its own space.

Nobody is eliminated. Knockout games sit down the children who most need the movement, in front of everyone, first. A team here can race a clock or a task, but a child is never ranked against another child — the wording that would do it is refused by our own tests.

Class workouts

- Workout: Everybody Moves · Ages: 6 to 9 · Minutes: 12 · Children: 6–40 · What it is: A good class has everybody moving at once, not queuing for a turn.
- Workout: The Whole Hall · Ages: 9 to 12 · Minutes: 15 · Children: 6–40 · What it is: A class of thirty should be thirty children moving, not four moving and twenty-six waiting.
- Workout: Corners · Ages: 6 to 9 · Minutes: 12 · Children: 6–40 · What it is: There are more ways of getting across a room than running, and children should own all of them.

What the guidelines ask for

SHAPE America recommends 150 minutes a week of instructional physical education for elementary children and 225 for middle and high school, plus 20 minutes of daily recess — and says plainly that recess is not PE and must not be used to meet a PE requirement. One study of US elementary schools found PE actually offered about twice a week, averaging 78 minutes; recess fared better at about 137 minutes a week.

Running it with thirty children

- Mark out an arm's length per child before you start, and keep anything that jumps away from the walls.
- Read the five stop signals to the class once: dizzy, chest hurts, can't catch your breath, a sharp pain in one spot, feeling sick.
- Every move has an easier and a harder version and a no-jump swap, so one activity fits a mixed class.
- No equipment a school would have to buy. Chalk, a soft ball, a few cushions and some shoes for markers covers all of it.

Is this safe for a school?

There is no barbell, dumbbell, kettlebell, bench or bar anywhere in the Gym — the words are not even in its data, so a future workout cannot reach for one. The heaviest thing a child ever picks up is a ball, a towel, or a backpack with a book or two in it, and only from 3rd grade; nothing goes overhead with anything in the hands below 4th grade, and nothing anywhere puts weight on a head or a neck. The two youngest levels have no clock to race. Every workout that leaves the ground teaches landing first, in its own warm-up, and every workout page carries the same five stop signals — dizzy, chest hurts, can't catch your breath, a sharp pain in one spot, feeling sick — read aloud before any clock starts.

Why nothing here mentions weight

The Gym never mentions weight, shape, size or calories, and never suggests eating less. About sixty of those words are refused in the code itself, in every line a child reads, including the spoken ones. What it says instead is strong, fast, springy, steady and bendy — and that

food is fuel.

Questions

What makes a good PE game?

Everybody moving at the same time, no elimination, a rule you can say in one sentence, and something to change when it gets easy. Every game here lists three ways to change it.

Do these need equipment?

8 of the 11 group games need nothing at all. The rest want chalk or tape, a soft ball, some cushions, or shoes as markers.

Where do these come from?

The way this section thinks about fitness — ten general physical skills, three ways to move, "do it right, do it right every time, then do it fast", and ending a session with a game — comes from CrossFit's published training model and its CrossFit Kids program. Peabody is not affiliated with them. The safety rules here are our own, and in several places stricter.

Nothing is sent anywhere

The Gym is free, with no ads and no sign-up. There is no camera, no pose detection and no leaderboard. What your child has done and their own best times stay on their own device and are never sent anywhere, so there is nothing to lose and no account to make.

Free at peabody.kids/pe-games-for-kids