



Unplugged: Tech-Free Energizers

PROMOTING:

- **COMMUNITY**
- **MOVEMENT**
- **PLAY**

Digital Wellness
Lethbridge School Division
<https://digitalwellnessteam.schoolsites.ca/>

WHAT THEY LEARN

- **WORKING MEMORY**
- **INHIBITORY CONTROL**
- **COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY**
- **CREATIVE THINKING**
- **MOTOR CONTROL**

BANANA SPLITS

- **POSITIONS:**
 - **WINNER:** PLACES THEIR FRONT FOOT DIRECTLY BEHIND THEIR BACK FOOT (ALTERNATING ORIGINAL POSITION OF FEET.)
 - **LOSER:** SLIDES THEIR FRONT FOOT FORWARD UNTIL IT TOUCHES THEIR OPPONENT'S TOES.
 - **IMPORTANT (LOSER):** KEEP YOUR BACK FOOT IN THE SAME PLACE.
- **KEEPING PLAYING ROUNDS (R,P,S) ADJUSTING POSITIONS AFTER EACH ROUND.**
- **GAME IS OVER WHEN ONE PLAYER LOSES BALANCE OR SPLITS (THEIR FEET TOO FAR APART).**

HOW TO PLAY

- **FIND A PARTNER AND CHALLENGE THEM TO A COUNTING CONTEST TO 21.**
- **TAKING TURNS EACH PLAYER CAN COUNT UP BY ONES OR TWOS.**

WHAT THEY LEARN

- **STRATEGIC DECISION MAKING**
- **LOGICAL THINKING**
- **ACTIVE LISTENING**
- **COOPERATION**
- **WORKING MEMORY**

ONE GROUP, ONE STORY

HOW TO PLAY

- **PREPARATION:** EVERYONE SITS ON THE FLOOR, CLOSES THEIR EYES, AND PUTS THEIR HEADS DOWN. THE FACILITATOR QUIETLY TOUCHES ONE PLAYER ON THE HEAD.
- **ZAPPING:** PARTICIPANTS OPEN THEIR EYES, STAND UP, AND SHAKE HANDS WITH EVERYONE. THE "ZAPPER" SCRATCHES THE PALMS OF OTHERS AS THEY SHAKE HANDS, "ZAPPING" THEM. ZAPPED PLAYERS COUNT TO 15 SILENTLY, THEN DRAMATICALLY FALL TO THE FLOOR.

- **ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY AND UNEXPECTEDNESS TO BE INVITE AND ADDED TO THE STORY.**
- **CONSIDER: ADDING A TALK POINT (BALL, STICK, ETC.) THAT SIGNIFIES WHO IS THE NEXT PARTICIPANT TO ADD TO THE STORY.**
- **EACH TIME THE NEW ADDITION TO THE STORY MUST REPEAT WHAT WAS PREVIOUSLY SHARED.**

In our hyper-connected digital age, youth may face unprecedented challenges to their cognitive development by the constant pull of pings, dings, rings, and notifications.

Increased screen time can limit creativity, stifle imagination, and disrupt the natural flow of play. "Unplugged- Tech Free Energizers" provide a crucial antidote by offering a list of opportunities for educators/families to foster essential executive functioning skills like critical thinking, problem-solving, and flexibility.

By incorporating community, movement, and playful exploration into the learning environment, educators can empower students to thrive in a rapidly changing world and cultivate a lifelong love of learning, community, and play.

TWENTY-ONE

HOW TO PLAY

- **PAIR UP: EVERYONE FINDS A PARTNER AND THE PAIRS SPREAD OUT AROUND THE ROOM.**
- **PARTNERS FACE EACH OTHER, LEFT FOOT BEHIND RIGHT, WITH THEIR FRONT FOOT TOES TOUCHING ONE ANOTHER AND PLAY ROCK-PAPER-SCISSORS, TRY CALLING OUT "BA-NANA- SPLITS VERSUS ROCK, PAPER, SCISSORS.**

- **BEGIN COUNTING TAKING TURNS BETWEEN THE TWO OF YOU.**
- **THE GOAL IS TO AVOID SAYING THE NUMBER 21.**
- **CONSIDER: DEPENDING ON AGE PLAYING TO "11" BEFORE "21"**

WHAT THEY LEARN

- **SPATIAL REASONING**
- **CRITICAL THINKING**
- **MOTOR/BALANCE CONTROL**
- **COOPERATION**
- **TEAMWORK**

ZAPPER

HOW TO PLAY

- **BEGIN WITH A SIMPLE PHRASE OR IMAGE.**
- **EACH PERSON ADDS A WORD, SENTENCE , OR TWO TO THE STORY, BUILDING UPON THE PREVIOUS CONTRIBUTIONS.**

- **ACCUSATION:** ANY UN-ZAPPED PLAYER CAN CALL "ZAP!" AND ACCUSE SOMEONE OF BEING THE ZAPPER. IF CORRECT, THE GAME ENDS. IF WRONG, THE ACCUSER IS "ZAPPED" AND MUST FALL TO THE FLOOR.
- **CONTINUE:** PLAY CONTINUES UNTIL EITHER THE GAME IS STOPPED BY A CORRECT ACCUSATION OR ALL BUT ONE PLAYER IS "ZAPPED."

WHAT THEY LEARN

- **WORKING MEMORY**
- **COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY**
- **MOTOR CONTROL**
- **ACTIVE LISTENING**
- **TEAMWORK**

BUZZ

HOW TO PLAY

- **CIRCLE UP:** ARRANGE THE GROUP IN A CIRCLE.
- **NAME AND ITEM:** EACH PERSON STATES THEIR FIRST NAME AND AN ITEM THEY WOULD ASSOCIATE WITH IT AT A LOCATION (E.G., MALL--> "SHAWN-SHOES").
- **REPEAT AND ADD:** EACH SUBSEQUENT PERSON REPEATS THE PREVIOUS PERSON'S NAME AND ITEM, THEN STATES THEIR OWN.

- **VARIATIONS:**
 - CHANGE THE "BUZZ" NUMBER (E.G., MULTIPLES OF 3, NUMBERS CONTAINING 5).
 - PLAY WITH EYES CLOSED.
- **CHALLENGE:** SEE HOW HIGH THE GROUP CAN COUNT SUCCESSFULLY.

WHAT THEY LEARN

- **WORKING MEMORY**
- **COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY**
- **ACTIVE LISTENING**
- **NAMES OF PARTICIPANTS**
- **TEAMWORK**

WHERE THE WIND BLOWS

HOW TO PLAY

- **PAIR UP:** FIND A PARTNER AND STAND BACK-TO-BACK.
- **CHOOSE ANIMALS:** DECIDE ON THREE ANIMALS (OR SIGNS) YOU WILL USE (E.G., BEAR, ELEPHANT, TIGER) .
- **SHOW YOUR CHOICE:** ON THE COUNT OF THREE, TURN AROUND AND SIMULTANEOUSLY SHOW ONE OF THE CHOSEN ANIMALS/SIGNS.

- THE "WIND BLOWS" COMMAND: THE "WIND BLOWER" SAYS "THE WIND BLOWS ON PEOPLE WHO..." FOLLOWED BY A CHARACTERISTIC (E.G., "WEAR GLASSES," "LIKE PIZZA," "HAVE BROWN HAIR").
- FIND A NEW SEAT: EVERYONE MATCHING THE CHARACTERISTIC MUST QUICKLY FIND A NEW EMPTY CHAIR. ENCOURAGE (2 SEAT MOVEMENT EITHER WAY.)
- REPEAT: THE "WIND BLOWER" CONTINUES TO GIVE COMMANDS, AND PLAYERS SCRAMBLE TO FIND NEW SEATS.

WHAT THEY LEARN

- SPATIAL REASONING
- CRITICAL THINKING
- EMOTIONAL REGULATION
- COOPERATION
- TEAMWORK

THE (NAME) MALL GAME

HOW TO PLAY

- CIRCLE UP: ARRANGE THE GROUP IN A CIRCLE.
- COUNTING RULES: COUNT TO FIFTY (OR HIGHER) MOVING AROUND THE CIRCLE. SAY "BUZZ" INSTEAD OF NUMBERS CONTAINING 7 OR MULTIPLES OF 7. REVERSE DIRECTION WHEN "BUZZ" IS CALLED.

- VARIATIONS:
 - TV SHOWS: (E.G., "JOHN-JEOPARDY")
 - PICNIC ITEMS: (E.G., "SARAH-SANDWICHES")
 - MOVIES: (E.G., "HALLIE- HARRY POTTER")
 - GROCERY STORE ITEMS: (E.G., "DAVID-DORITOS")
- CHALLENGE: SEE HOW HIGH THE GROUP CAN SUCCESSFULLY KEEP THE CHAIN OF NAMES & ITEMS GOING.

WHAT THEY LEARN

- WORKING MEMORY
- COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY
- ACTIVE LISTENING
- TEAMWORK

ANIMAL MATCH

HOW TO PLAY

- THIS GAME IS SIMILAR TO TRADITIONAL MUSICAL CHAIRS.
- FORM A CIRCLE: ARRANGE CHAIRS IN A CIRCLE.
- CHOOSE THE "WIND BLOWER": REMOVE ONE CHAIR AND HAVE THE PERSON WITHOUT A CHAIR STAND IN THE CENTER.

- **CHECK FOR A MATCH:** IF YOUR ANIMAL/SIGN MATCHES YOUR PARTNER'S, YOU WIN! IF NOT, TRY AGAIN.
- **PLAY AGAIN:** FIND A NEW PARTNER AND REPEAT THE GAME.
- **YOU CAN ALSO PLAY IN LARGER GROUPS.**

WHAT THEY LEARN

- **EMOTIONAL CONTROL**
- **INHIBITORY CONTROL**
- **MOTOR CONTROL**
- **COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY**
- **TEAMWORK**

SCREEN-FREE SCRAMBLE

HOW TO PLAY

- **SET UP:** CREATE A GAME BOARD WITH 15 SPACES, DIVIDED EQUALLY BETWEEN TWO TEAMS. TABLE WORKS GREAT.
- **GAME PLAY:** TEAMS TAKE TURNS ROLLING A DIE AND MOVING THEIR MARKER FORWARD THAT MANY SPACES. THE GOAL IS TO REACH THE OPPONENT'S STARTING POINT.

- **COUNT AND COMPARE:** ONCE TIME IS UP, STUDENTS COUNT THEIR LISTS. THE STUDENT WITH THE MOST WORDS WINS THAT ROUND.
- **NEW LETTER, NEW CHALLENGE:** THE TEACHER CALLS OUT A NEW LETTER, AND THE GAME CONTINUES.
- **VARIATIONS:** WRITE ONE AND MOVE TO NEW GROUPS AND ADD ONE.

WHAT THEY LEARN

- **WORKING MEMORY**
- **COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY**
- **ACTIVE LISTENING**
- **EMOTIONAL CONTROL**
- **COOPERATION**

PONG FLIP CHALLENGE

HOW TO PLAY

- **SET UP:** TWO PLAYERS FACE EACH OTHER ACROSS A TABLE WITH A CUP IN THE CENTER.
- **THE CALL-OUT:** A LEADER CALLS OUT "HEAD," "SHOULDERS," "KNEES," OR "CUPS."
 - **HEAD-** PLAYER TOUCHES THEIR HEAD
 - **SHOULDERS-** PLAYER TOUCHES THEIR SHOULDERS
 - **KNEES-** PLAY TOUCHES THEIR KNEES

- **SUCCESS OR FAILURE:** IF THE BALL LANDS IN THE CUP, MOVE TO THE NEXT. IF IT MISSES, START OVER WITH THAT CUP.
- **COMPLETE THE CHALLENGE:** SUCCESSFULLY FLIP ALL TEN BALLS BACK INTO THEIR RESPECTIVE CUPS USING ONLY ONE HAND.

WHAT THEY LEARN

- **WORKING MEMORY**
- **COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY**
- **MOTOR CONTROL**
- **NAMES OF PARTICIPANTS**
- **TEAMWORK**

DICE GAME: TUG-OF-WAR

HOW TO PLAY

- **LETTER CALL-OUT:** THE TEACHER CALLS OUT LETTERS OF THE ALPHABET, ONE AT A TIME.
- **LIST MAKING:** STUDENTS QUICKLY WRITE DOWN AS MANY SCREEN-FREE ACTIVITIES AS THEY CAN THINK OF THAT START WITH THAT LETTER.

- **VICTORY:** THE TEAM THAT COMPLETELY CONQUERS THE OTHER TEAM'S TERRITORY WINS.
- **VARIATIONS:** PLAY AFTER A RELAY RACE, REVIEW GAME, OR CLASS COMPETITION.
- **INTRODUCE SPECIAL DICE ROLLS OR OBSTACLES.**
- **ALLOW TEAMS TO COMBINE DICE ROLLS FOR STRONGER MOVES.**

WHAT THEY LEARN

- **WORKING MEMORY**
- **COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY**
- **ACTIVE LISTENING**
- **OPPORTUNITIES FOR DISCONNECTING**
- **TEAMWORK**

“CUPS”

HOW TO PLAY

- **SET UP:** ARRANGE TEN CUPS IN A LINE OR PYRAMID. PLACE A PING PONG BALL ON TOP OF EACH CUP.
- **THE FLIP:** HOLD THE BASE OF A CUP FIRMLY. LIFT AND QUICKLY FLICK THE CUP UPWARDS, AIMING TO RELEASE THE BALL CLEANLY. CATCH THE CUP AND TRY TO LAND THE BALL BACK INSIDE.

- **REACT AND GRAB:** PLAYERS MUST TOUCH THE CALLED BODY PART OR RACE TO GRAB THE CUP IN THE CENTER.

- **WINNER:** THE PLAYER WHO SUCCESSFULLY GRABS THE CUP WINS THE ROUND.

• **OPTIONAL RULES:**

- **START WITH AN ADVANTAGE:** GIVE ONE PLAYER A SLIGHT HEAD START.
- **BEST-OF-SERIES:** PLAY MULTIPLE ROUNDS TO DETERMINE THE OVERALL WINNER.
- **GROUP PLAY:** ADAPT THE GAME FOR MORE THAN TWO PLAYERS.

WHAT THEY LEARN

- **INHIBITORY CONTROL**
- **ACTIVE LISTENING**
- **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**
- **COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY**
- **COOPERATION**

TIC-TAC-TOE (VARIATIONS)

HOW TO PLAY

- **NOMINATE ONE LEADER TO BEGIN.**
- **PLAYERS STAND UP AND BEGIN BY PUTTING ONE HAND BEHIND THEIR BACK. WAITING FOR THE LEADER/SIGNAL CALLER TO BEGIN THE GAME.**
- **ON YOUR LEADERS SIGNAL OR COUNTDOWN BOTH THE LEADER AND GAME PLAYERS WILL REVEAL USING THEIR HAND A NUMBER RANGING ANYWHERE BETWEEN 2-5.**

- **WINNING:** THE FIRST TEAM TO GET THREE OF THEIR MARKERS IN A ROW (HORIZONTALLY, VERTICALLY, OR DIAGONALLY) WINS.

• **VARIATIONS:**

- **NUMBER ASSIGNMENTS:** PLAYERS RACE TO CLAIM A SQUARE WHEN THEIR NUMBER IS CALLED.
- **RELAY RACE:** INCORPORATE A RELAY RACE ELEMENT INTO THE GAME.
- **ULTIMATE TIC-TAC-TOE:** PLAY ON A LARGER 9X9 GRID WITH MULTIPLE TEAMS.

WHAT THEY LEARN

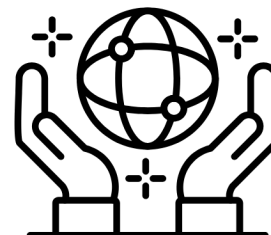
- **EMOTIONAL CONTROL**
- **INHIBITORY CONTROL**
- **MOTOR CONTROL**
- **COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY**
- **COOPERATION**

COMMON TRENDS & UNIQUE THREADS

PRIORITIZE YOUR
DIGITAL WELL-BEING:



Let the Games Begin!



Where play is the objective.

- **GROUP DISCUSSION (OPTIONAL):** THE ENTIRE GROUP COMES TOGETHER TO DISCUSS THE COMMONALITIES AND UNIQUE THREADS DISCOVERED IN EACH SMALL GROUP.
- **RESHUFFLE & REFLECT: (OPTIONAL)** RESHUFFLE THE GROUPS AND REPEAT THE ACTIVITY. REFLECT ON HOW THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF DIFFERENT COMMUNITIES INFLUENCES THE COMMONALITIES AND UNIQUENESS FOUND WITHIN THEM.

WHAT THEY LEARN

- EMOTIONAL CONTROL
- INHIBITORY CONTROL
- MOTOR CONTROL
- COGNITIVE FLEXIBILITY
- COOPERATION

SEVEN

HOW TO PLAY

- **SET UP:** CREATE A LARGE TIC-TAC-TOE GRID ON THE GROUND. DIVIDE PLAYERS INTO TWO TEAMS: X'S AND O'S.
- **GAME PLAY:** TEAMS TAKE TURNS SENDING ONE PLAYER TO STEP INTO AN UNOCCUPIED SQUARE ON THE GRID TO CLAIM IT FOR THEIR TEAM.

- IF THE PLAYERS NUMBER REVEALED **PLUS** THE LEADERS NUMBER EQUALS "7", **STAY STANDING**. OTHERWISE, SIT DOWN AND WAIT FOR THE GAME TO FINISH.

$$\begin{array}{c}
 \text{Player} \\
 \text{Leader}
 \end{array}
 + = 7$$

- THE GAME WILL CONTINUE REPEATING STEPS 2& 3 UNTIL ONE PLAYER HAS BEEN DEEMED THE WINNER.

WHAT THEY LEARN

- EMOTIONAL CONTROL
- INHIBITORY CONTROL
- MOTOR CONTROL
- TEAMWORK
- COOPERATION

Thank you!

WE EXTEND OUR GRATITUDE TO THE CREATIVE MINDS BEHIND THE COUNTLESS GAMES THAT HAVE INSPIRED AND ENTERTAINED US, AS WELL AS THE EDUCATIONAL RESEARCHERS AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT EXPERTS WHOSE INVALUABLE INSIGHTS HAVE HELPED SHAPE THESE ENGAGING ACTIVITIES IN THIS BUNDLE. PLEASE VISIT BELOW TO LEARN MORE.

Sources:

GIBB, R. (2024). BUILDING BRAINS TOGETHER. UNIVERSITY OF LETHBRIDGE.

OLSON, C. (2000). ENERGIZERS: CALISTHENICS FOR THE MIND. EDUCATIONAL MEDIA CORP.

HOW TO PLAY

- **FIND COMMON GROUND:** IN SMALL GROUPS (4-5 PEOPLE), WORK TOGETHER TO DISCOVER ONE THING THAT EVERY MEMBER OF YOUR GROUP HAS IN COMMON.
- **SHARE UNIQUENESS:** EACH PERSON IN THE GROUP SHARES ONE UNIQUE OR INTERESTING FACT ABOUT THEMSELVES THAT NO ONE ELSE IN THE GROUP SHARES.