





Get the Kids OUTDOORS


Summer and outside should go hand-in-hand for kids, but today's kids spend more and more time inside watching TV, surfing the Internet and playing video games and losing out on the valuable lessons and fun that going outside offers. Many kids just don't know what to do outside, so next time you hear your kids say, "I'm bored," shove them out the door and teach them how to play any one of these "classic" outdoor games.

 **Hide and Seek:** The basic game is simple — A spot is designated as "home" or "base" and one person is chosen to be "It." That person covers their eyes and counts to a predetermined number while everyone else runs and hides. "It" then calls out "Ready or not, here I come!" and then seeks the hiders. The players can look for opportunities to come out of their hiding places and make it to base without being tagged. The first person to be tagged either while trying to make it "home" or by being found and tagged is then "It." A simpler game is played without a home base. The game is won by being the last person found. In Chain Hide-and-Seek, players join hands with "It" when they are found. As the chain grows and becomes unwieldy, much laughter ensues. Sardines is a variation where "It" hides and all the other players look for "It." As each player finds "It," he or she joins the hiding place. As the game goes on, the searchers know that they are looking for a number of kids in a cramped space.

Number of Players: At least three.
Equipment: None. This game can also be played indoors on rainy days.

 **Kick the Can:** One person (or a team of people) is designated as "It" and a can is placed in the middle of the playing area. The other people run off and hide while "It" covers his or her eyes and counts to a certain number. "It" then tries to find everyone. If a person is tagged by "It," they go into a holding pen for captured players. If one of the uncaptured players manages to kick the can, the captured players are released. The game is over once all the non-"It" players are in the holding pen.

Number of Players: At least three.
Equipment: A metal can.

 **Capture the Flag:** This game is most fun with a large group of people. Split the group into two teams, each team having a flag or other marker at the team's base. The object of the game is to run into the other team's territory, capture the flag and make it safely back to your own territory. You can tag "enemy" players in your territory, sending them to your jail. Jailbirds can be sprung from jail by a member of their own team running into your territory, tagging them and running back, with one freed person allowed per jailbreak.


Number of Players: A large group.
Equipment: Two flags or other markers.

 **Four Square:** This ball game is played on a square court

divided into four smaller squares, numbered one through four. One player stands in each of the squares, with the highest ranked player in the number one, lowest in number four. You bounce the ball among the players, bouncing once in the other person's square before that person catches it. Various rules can be added depending on the tastes of those playing. Anyone who violates the rules will have to move down in the ranking, or be eliminated with another player rotating in to square four.


Number of Players: Four, unless you take turns.

Equipment: A four square court, or sidewalk chalk and a playground ball.

 **Hopscotch:** Use some sidewalk chalk and make a hopscotch grid. Number the squares from one to nine. Pick a rock that is good for tossing. Start by tossing the rock onto Square 1. Hop over the rock and hop with a single foot or both feet (to follow the pattern) all the way to the end. Turn around and come back, stopping on Square 2. Balancing on one foot, pick up the rock in Square 1 and hop over Square 1 to the start. Continue this pattern with Square 2 and so on. If you toss your rock and miss the correct square, your turn is over.

Number of Players: As many as you like, one at a time.

Equipment: Hopscotch grid or sidewalk chalk and a medium-sized rock.

 **Red Light, Green Light:** One person is the traffic light at one end and other players are at the other end. When the traffic light faces the group, he or she says, "Red Light!" and everyone

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