

Play is **healing**. Play is **learning**. Play makes us **happy**.

Let's have a summer of play.



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Play Sparks, Vol. 1

Tag and other games



Tag games are fun for all ages, easy to play, and no equipment is needed. Basically, all you need is a space large enough to run around in. The youngest children might not understand the game, but they will love running around with their friends or family members. As parents and caregivers, we can think back and remember the tag games we played as children. Today's children still play the same sort of tag games, but sometimes with a twist. You might try the suggestions below. Just ask the children in your life to share and teach you their favourites!

- **Simple Tag:** One person is 'it' and chases the others until that person tags (touches) someone else. The person who was tagged is now 'it'. The game goes on until everyone is tired.
- **Hotdog Tag:** If you are tagged, you must stop and stand in that spot until two others come to free you by standing on each side of you - just like a bun holds the hot dog.
- **Shadow Tag:** You can be tagged when the person who is 'it' steps on your shadow. Then you are 'it' until you catch up to someone else and step on their shadow.
- **Frozen Tag:** If you are tagged by the person who is 'it', you stay 'frozen' in that spot and don't move. Usually, you stand with your arms extended until one of your teammates

runs under your arm to free you. The object of the game is for the person who is 'it' to freeze everyone in the group so that no one is left to free anyone else.

- **Grounders:** One person is 'it' and the others must stay on the playground equipment and try not to get tagged (they can't touch the ground). The person who is 'it' runs on the ground, trying to tag the people on the equipment.

These **games** can be played with only two people or with many.

- **Follow the Leader** can be played indoors or outdoors. It encourages imagination, independent thinking, and lots of movement. Everyone follows the leader in a single line wherever the leader goes while doing whatever the leader does! The leader might run with arms spread out like airplane wings and make jet plane sounds. The leader might jog, skip, hop or walk backwards while clapping their hands. There is no limit to the movements; however, it is important to change the leader often.

Check out these picture books about games:

- *Let's Play Tag* by Sarah Hughes
- *Hide and Seek* by Taro Gomi
- *Hiding Heidi* by Fiona Woodcock

- **Simon Says** is a game where one person gives directions to the others and they follow them, but only if the leader says "Simon says" first (or they could use their own name). A play scenario could include: "Simon says, touch your toes." Everyone touches their toes. "Simon says, wiggle your body." Everyone wiggles. "Put your hands on your head." No one should put their hands on their head because Simon didn't say to do it - so keep wiggling!

- **Red Light, Green Light** is a game where one person is the leader and stands a distance away from the other players. The players make a line. The idea is for the players to try and reach the leader. They can move if the leader turns their back and says "green light". If they are still moving when the leader turns towards them and says "red light", they have to go back to the start. The first player to reach the leader is the next leader.

- **Hide and Seek** is a game that can be played indoors or outdoors. One person hides while the other person tries to find them. Little ones love it especially if their parent is 'it' and has to find them. If the parent pretends to be a large snuffly dog or a growling, stomping bear making a lot of noise on the way to finding the child who is hiding, it is even more fun. You can play inside or outside, in the dark, or with your eyes closed!
- **Kick Ball** uses a large ball like a soccer ball. It is played like baseball except that you kick the ball rather than hitting it with a bat.

Parents, grandparents and older children can also teach their friends and family simple games such as Hopscotch, Four Square or other favourites. What are your favourite childhood games?