

6

Challenge Games



Challenge game skills

Challenge games are those in which players solve a particular problem or complete a challenge task. Players can either work individually or as part of a team. Challenge games provide the opportunity to focus on skills, including problem solving, managing risk, and working as a team, that are inherent to active and safe engagement in games as well as enjoying the sense of belonging and being challenged.

Challenge game skills	What this is	What it looks like – Success criteria
Fair and ethical play	It means always playing within the spirit of the game to ensure fairness, inclusion, and enjoyment for everyone involved.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players play within the rules of the game. • They resolve conflicts peacefully within the group and resist defaulting to the teacher to resolve the conflict. • They follow directions and the agreed rules for safety and play. • They show respect for their opponents, fellow players, referees, supporters, and teachers through their gamesmanship, verbal comments, and body language.
Involvement	It means being an active participant, willing to try new activities when opportunities arise and enjoying the sense of challenge they encounter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players participate with positive attitudes. • They show willingness to try new activities and experience new things. • They are able to effectively communicate that they understand the importance of effort. • Players focus on self-improvement and personal needs. • They try to be innovative and creative in the way that they participate. • When they are fully involved, players display enjoyment, laughter, and pleasure.
Problem solving	It means that individuals and groups engage in a process in which they consider, evaluate, and solve the problems that they encounter.	<p>The group demonstrates successful problem solving, which generally involves the following steps:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Defining the problem 2. Generating possible solutions 3. Selecting and trialling solutions 4. Evaluating and identifying effective solutions.
Self-direction	It means that individuals are aware of their own needs and take responsibility to achieve these.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group members are able to set and explain their own goals. • They are motivated to practise with minimal teacher prompting. • Individuals are able to work independently with others. • They use effective strategies to resist peer pressure. • They have developed and are following a plan that will enhance their wellbeing (hauora). • They are able to articulate their plan to enhance their hauora.

Challenge game skills	What this is	What it looks like – Success criteria
Safety	It means that individuals are aware and take action to decrease the possible psychological, emotional, and physical harm to themselves and others involved in an activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The group uses equipment and space appropriately. • They play safely with others. • They are supportive, encouraging, and helpful to others. • They keep themselves physically, socially, and emotionally safe. • They show respect and use the ACC Sportsmart principles towards people, equipment, facilities, and the environment. • They are able to identify the difference between real and perceived risk.
Caring and helping others	It means having the ability to go beyond oneself to provide help, leadership, and encouragement to others also engaged in an activity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Players recognise and are attentive to the needs and participation of others. • They demonstrate compassion and empathy for others. • They contribute as members of a team or group. • They take initiative to lead others to achieve success.

6.1 Bucketball

Bucketball challenges children to imagine that they need to get essential survival equipment back from a deep divide or crevasse. It is a great game for helping children to understand that there may be different solutions to movement problems. It encourages creative thinking, experimentation, and teamwork.



EQUIPMENT

For each group of 3–4:



Distance markers - cones



Bucket (1)



Bean bags (4)



LEARNING FOCUS

This game focuses on the idea that there can be different solutions to a problem. Encourage children to invent and explore as many different solutions as they can devise for solving the problem. To do this, focus on problem solving, brainstorming, testing ideas, and exploring alternatives.

SET UP AND PLAY

Set up:

- Divide the children into groups of two or three.
- Define the playing area by marking two lines 1–2 metres apart. One line will be the near side of the crevasse, the other the far side. (Don't place the lines too far apart because many of the solutions require the children to jump across the crevasse).
- Place a bucket on the far side of the crevasse and the bean bags on the near side.
- Give each group 3–5 bean bags or balls to get into the bucket.

Play:

- Outline the problem that the children need to solve: "Without falling into it the crevasse, get all the bean bags or balls into the bucket on your side of the crevasse." (*Posing the problem like this allows for different solutions that don't always involve throwing.*)
- The game begins from behind the near side.
- Children can jump between the two lines as part of their problem solving.
- The players are only allowed on the sides of the crevasse and can't stand in the middle.
- The idea is to come up with a number of different solutions to this movement problem.
- Once they have solutions, they can pick their best and trial it against the other teams.

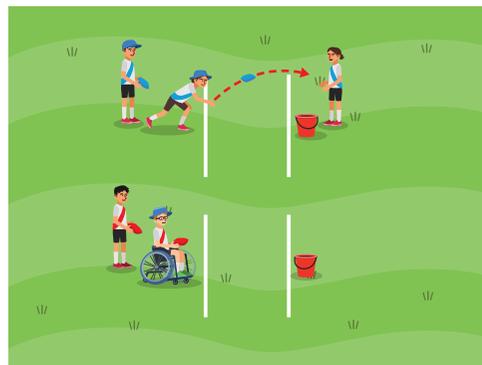
PROGRESSIONS Using the following progressions, think about simplifying, shaping, focusing, and enhancing.



Step One:

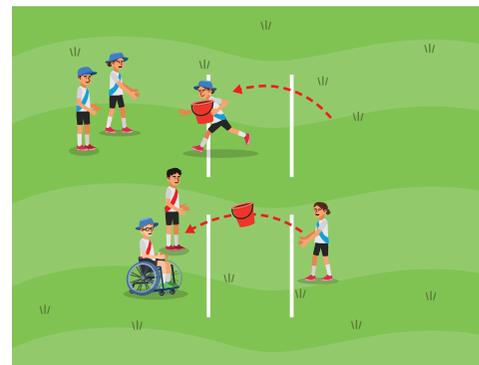
Allow plenty of time for teams to find different solutions to the movement problem.

1. Throw the bean bags into the bucket across the jumping distance to land in the bucket.
2. Send a good jumper to the far side, who throws the bean bags into the bucket. They jump back with the full bucket.



Step Two:

Then get each team to show their solution. There will be a number of solutions. Then ask the debrief questions.



Step Three:

There are more solutions to this game.

3. Send a good jumper to the far side, throw them the bean bags to land in the bucket. They throw the full bucket back and then jump back to the starting area.
4. Send a good jumper to the far side, throw them the bean bags to place in the bucket. They jump back with the full bucket back and then jump back to the starting area.

LEARNING QUESTIONS

- What was your initial strategy to solve this movement problem?
- Did you plan that, or did it just happen that way?
- How many other strategies did you try to solve this movement problem? Overall which was your group's most effective strategy? Why?
- What did you learn about solving movement problems in different ways from watching the other group's strategies?

REFLECTION

After the activity, can the children:

- demonstrate a number of different solutions to this movement problem?
- explain the strategy they used to come up with their first solution?
- decide which solution shared by the groups was the most effective and explain why that was?
- relate this activity to exploring a number of different ways to solve movement problems posed by games?
- explain the value of exploring a number of different ways to solve problems posed in any context?



Guided discovery

Guided discovery is a teaching approach that involves setting a problem and encouraging children to discover solutions using inquiry and experimentation. The emphasis for the teacher or coach is on setting movement problems and guiding children through questions and prompts to solve the problem. Some problems have only one solution, while others can have many effective solutions. Problems that can be solved with different solutions help stimulate creativity and produce carefully considered decision making. Solving movement problems involves exploration using teamwork and the individual strengths of each member of the team.

Some guidelines for using guided discovery include:

1. Set problems that require creativity, inquiry, and experimentation.
2. Resist the urge to provide the answer and instead prompt the children to problem-solve.
3. Encourage children not to accept the first solution but to experiment and find more.
4. Remember that diversity brings intelligence to a group. Have mixed groups that combine their strengths and views.
5. Share and discuss their different solutions and decide on the best ones.

Refer to introduction page 9 for information on guided discovery.

6.2 Push 'n' Pull

This is a fun challenge where children try to push or pull their partner in an enjoyable competition. It can be a good introductory activity as well as an opportunity to teach about working with a partner, responsibility, and mutual respect.



EQUIPMENT



Cones



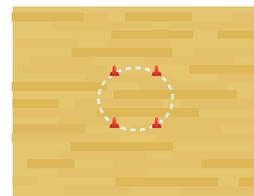
Large balls



Hockey stick



Mats (one each per group)



LEARNING FOCUS

This game focuses on enabling close contact (touching, feeling, sensing) with another person to teach about:

- *care and risk*: trust and responsibility, choice, playing safely
- *movement mechanics*: exploring concepts such as force, stability, balance, and strength
- *body awareness*: feeling, sensing, and moving in relation to someone else.

SET UP AND PLAY

Set up:

- Emphasise that the goals are taking care of each other and doing each other no harm.
- Divide the children into pairs of equal physical size and strength.
- Define the 'dojo' or playing area with cones. It may be a circle or square.
- Have different equipment on hand to change the nature of the challenge when needed.

Play:

- The players stand inside the circle or square (on the dojo). The objective is for each player to force their partner out of the dojo by either pushing or pulling them.
- Emphasise the importance of taking care of your partner.
- Players must stay in contact with each other during the challenge. Do not break the contact.
- Vary the challenge. This can be done by getting each player to push on a ball, pull on a stick, push while back-to-back, or pull while hopping.

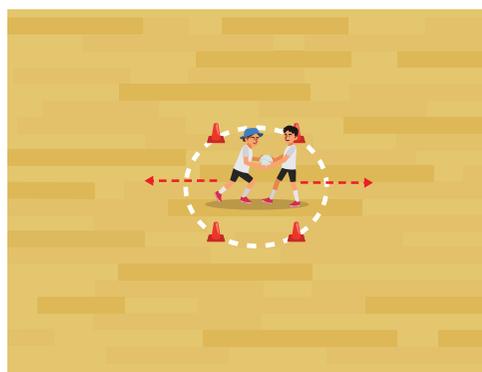
PROGRESSIONS *Using the following progressions, think about simplifying, shaping, focusing, and enhancing.*



Step One:

Start by outlining the need to play safely and responsibly. Emphasise the need to take care of your partner and do no harm.

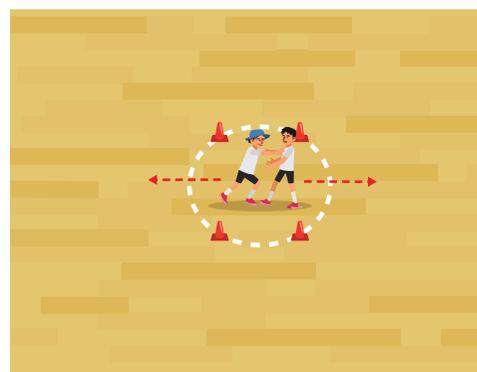
Children begin with some simple pushing activity. They go back to back and try to push the opponent out of the playing area.



Step Two:

An alternative is the challenge of trying to pull the partner over a line. Introduce a ball or bat as the object each is pulling on.

Once again, point out the risks and ask how these should be managed.



Step Three:

Variations can increase the complexity and difficulty of the task. For example, having children hop on one leg, or using different types of equipment to push and pull on.



Twist, toss, and tumble play

Play involving the physical contact of pushing, pulling, and wrestling is a very normal part of childhood. It is important to the emotional, physical, perceptual and ethical development of children. Often there is a fear that it will get out of hand and lead to fighting or someone getting hurt. However, fighting is more a sign of behavioural or relationship issues, whereas twist, toss, and tumble play is a normal aspect of the physical contact of pleasurable play. The objective in twist, toss, and tumble play is to engage in physical contact involving pushing and pulling one another in a safe environment with agreed rules so no one gets hurt. All children can benefit from well-structured twist, toss, and tumble games. Key learning outcomes include the development of:

1. Awareness and embodied understanding of concepts like boundaries, force, stability, pressure, balance, leverage, and weight
2. Movement coordination, agility, strength, and power
3. Confidence, self-esteem, and understanding of individual limitations
4. Cooperation, sensitivity, responsibility, fair play and communication skills
5. Tactical options and exploiting the movements of opponents, sensing opportunity
6. Fun and enjoyment of movement.

LEARNING QUESTIONS

- What rules did you and your partner agree on so that the game was fair, safe, and enjoyable for both of you?
- How did you feel about the nature of the physical contact in this game? Did you enjoy the game? Why or why not?
- Was pushing or pulling a more effective way to get your partner off the dojo?
- What did you learn about leverage and unbalancing your partner?
- What strategies did you use to force your partner off the dojo?
- What do you understand as the difference between strength and power?

REFLECTION

After the activity, can the children:

- negotiate and agree on safe rules and practices to make the activity enjoyable and successful for both partners?
- understand and explain the threshold between enjoyable twist, toss, and tumble wrestling and fighting?
- explain the emotions they experienced playing this game?
- identify the physical and perceptual cues required to be successful at this game?

Did the game reflect any gender differences? Can you see how this game could be used to talk about and break down gender stereotypes rather than reinforce them?