

# Tag & Adventure Games

*Play-*

*In the formative years, play is almost synonymous with life.*

*It is second only to being nourished, protected and loved.*

*It is a basic ingredient of physical, intellectual, social and emotional growth.*

*- Ashley Montague*



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## Introduction

Welcome to Tag and Adventure Tag Unit. This section is after my heart and quite possibly one of, if not my favorite units on the website. It could be titled the *Art of Tag*. The first half section, we start with a discussion with critical concepts with **Honesty** and **Character Tag** and the second half section, end with several **adventure tag games**.

Some of these games are unique in physical education experiences. I've tested and refined them over decades and now present them to the PE world. Many of the learning themes are spatial awareness activities, invasion games, or as we progress later on, what I like to classify as **territory games**. Students are moving into other group's spaces or territory.

**Didactic approach.** You will see a positive systematic method of infusing character, and good sporting conduct through the Art of Tag. The bottom line is, I'm confident you and your pupils will fondly think and remember some of these games for years.

### Activities and Games

- Foundation of Tag-Honesty Tag
  - Tagging Drill/Skill
  - Partner Tagging Drill
  - Skill Lines—fleeer and chaser
  - Crash?
  - Individual Play Plan-IPP
  - Honesty Everyday
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  - Erasing the Little Referees
  - Independent Player
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- How do we play Honesty Tag?
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  - Organization
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- Character Tag SOAR Tag
- Adventure Tag Games
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- Bonus games
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  - Sneak-A-Tag

## The Foundation of Tag - Honesty Tag

### Introduction to Honesty Tag (grade 1-5) (Gordan/Sarratt)

Welcome to one of the most amazing units in PE. Tag? Yes, when done well, tag and tagging adventure games create physically, socially and mentally challenging games of our entire programs. The themes and behavior attitudes we teach here blend into every other crevice, unit and programs. Without a doubt, this section is one of the keys of the website, and is devoted to the foundation of sport while simultaneously integrating essential character education concepts. Much of this may never been seen or heard of before in PE. Both this approach and the games.

**No cuties.** For full disclosure, this section is not about the countless cute little tag games. There are hundreds if not thousands and are available to the reader from many other sources. What you will find below is a core system imbedded into tag. Tag is the vehicle used to drive down many concepts. Consequently, it's more than a tag game; it's the foundation of good sporting play in physical education.

#### Concepts

- High time on task ratio to fitness games.
- Excellent safety.
- Developing the offensive / defensive thinking and problem solving.
- Superior honesty while playing competitive games.
- Cooperative learning while in a competitive game.
- The purpose and procedure of temporary learning elimination game, but quickly progressing to inclusive game play.
- Integrating the concept of independent play then progressing to interdependent or cooperative play.
- Integrating other critical character social moral skills, such as caring, empathy and joy as the game progresses into more complexity.

Therefore, you are invited to join me on this journey for the next chapter and hopefully it will be an interesting experience.

### Why are we playing Honesty Tag?

- ✓ to teach students, through game play, how to be the most honest player in the class
- ✓ to teach students the skill of safe gentle tagging
- ✓ to teach student how to prevent and handle accidents
- ✓ to teach students the skill of fleeing
- ✓ to teach students the skill of chasing
- ✓ to teach students the rules of the game and therefore allowing for creative/ problem solving This is called *framing the game*

#### Tag Drill-finger tips: Practice before play!

How can children learn to tag safely without all the pushing and shoving? The proper skill of tagging must be taught and practiced prior to play because many students don't realize that they are actually pushing, shoving and can even be slapping during the excitement of tag. Not anymore.

Begin by asking the kids do they like it when other kids are rough with them? When kids push and shove in tag games? The kids of course respond that they don't like it one bit! Like lawyers, we only ask questions we know the answers to! Show them what soft finger-tip tagging is. It's the four-finger tips tapping and not a hand slap, push or shove. (see below)

**Practice Time:**

- Practice tag on self. Can you feel the tag?
- Practice tag on partner while standing still. Can he/she feel the tag?
- Tags are allowed on upper shoulders and backs.

Tell the children, *"If your tag hurts you, it will hurt your classmates."* Partners give feedback as to the quality of tag. Was it too hard, maybe too soft and no one could feel it? Try left and right hands. Switch partners. And experiment again.

## Tagging Drill



**Tagging practiced prior to play:** gentle soft four fingertip tags

### Partner tagging drills: learning to tag

#### Drill # 1: Walking

This is an ideal formative drill/game that allows the players to concentrate on tagging just one player and fleeing the tag of that player. Partners take turns power *walking* slowly away from partner while the other partner power walks and practice tags them. Are the students pushing while they tag their buddy? Partners are to report the quality of the tag to their buddy. Each partner has a job.



**Feel the tag...**



**Flash your hand - sky high, then freeze!**

## Two main jobs in Honesty Tag

### Fleer: Defense

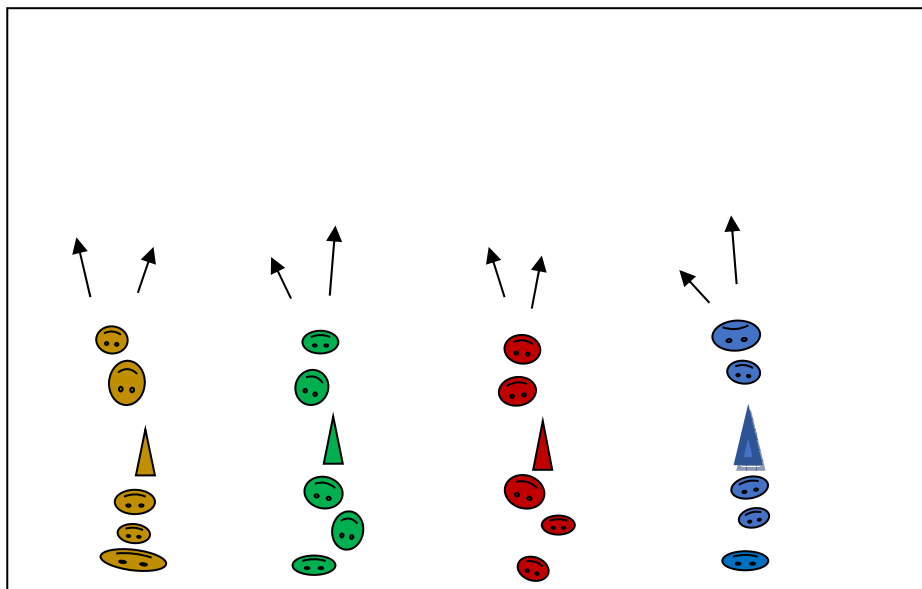
1. Do not look backwards at the player chasing you.
2. Eye scanning: Where should your eyes be? Scanning in front of you as you move and run looking at the open space for safety.
3. Trying to make moves to avoid being tagged, yet, safely moving and turning, staying in bounds and stopping, but not falling down.

### Chaser: Offense

1. Must chase only his/her partner.
2. Look at main core area, trunk and beltline. (Don't get tricked out with head fakes!)
3. Tag safely and effectively. Shoulders and back with fingertips.
4. Must also perform eye scan to watch his fleerer and VERY careful other players: other *Fleerers* and *Chasers*.
5. Be prepared to react to Fleers moves without bumping or crashing into him/her.
6. Stopping: also able to stop, to avoid a crash.
  - Switch rolls.
  - Any group waiting is switched in.
  - Play with jogging, but not fast running.

### Drill # 2: Running

**Skill Lines:** Use 4-6 and send out in small pairs. First person in each line is the ***Fleer*** person behind is the ***Chaser/Tagger***. Rotate so each gets a turn after a few seconds or so. (See below)



Tagging Skill Lines

**Oops, we have a crash, now what?** We don't want an accident turning into anger. PE teachers need an accident plan that fosters positive social skills when a simple accident occurs, and they will. Like always, it's best to have the kids deal with the situation themselves unless there is an injury. The following steps are helpful.

**Safety first:** Early on in my career, I learned from a wise principal, a valuable lesson; always teach safety skills first for all games and activities. Make a habit of this practice and it becomes quite natural, that the first sets of rules of the activity are the safety rules, before you progress to the specific game rules. Most safety rules are similar from game to game, and unit to unit; therefore they often will be reviewed or just a slight adaptation, but certain games and activities have very game specific requirements which will be new to the learner. Cover those safety rules first and consistently as part of the teaching policy, it goes a long way to greatly enhance safety.



Students must know individual safety is the personal responsibility of each child. Make no mistake about it, students are required to be as safe and careful as they can be for their actions in our PE programs. Our job is to teach safety skills before they play in any activity and game. However, the students must know they are accountable for following the directions. Reminders are necessary and don't hesitate to stop a lesson to reteach safety procedures to an individual student or the entire class, if deemed necessary.

When two kids bump, or one kid bumps into them, (or if a player's basketball were to knock into them,) they are required to stop playing and say and do several things. ***"I'm sorry,"*** or ***"I didn't mean that, sorry."*** This may sound weird at first, but it instantly lets the player know it was a mistake resulting in reduced emotional tension, even with our more aggressive kids. Think about it, it's difficult to get angry with someone when they are saying sorry to you and they did it by accident. Also, all players follow up with ***"Are you okay?"*** Most the time, they're just fine and the situation ends by having the kids shaking hands and they continue to play.

### Visual tour-almost a crash...



Yikes, we almost had a crash!

Not happy...

*"I'm sorry, Are you okay? Friends"*

Back in action!

**Empathy in Action-verbal drill plus a handshake.** Have the students pair-up and practice reciting, *"I'm sorry. Are you okay?"* After the, *"I'm sorry. Are you okay?"* verbal drill, they practice shaking hands and say ***"friends."*** It will be necessary to show younger students the proper way to shake hands. Oh, the many jobs of a PE teacher...



***Friends!***

**Tears?** If someone is a little hurt and there are a few tears? This changes everything. Both students report to the teacher. Each student reports his or her version of the accident. If it is a “simple” accident, maybe a tiny bump and no one was reckless, students are to repeat the, *“I’m sorry,”* and shake hands again. A quick review of the basic safety skills with the two students may be necessary. Then they go on their merry way.

**Individual Play Plan (IPP)** may be necessary for a select student when they choose to play reckless, or not following rules. The student should be removed from play due to safety concerns and consequences are enforced.

One simple teaching technique is to have a student stand next to you while all the other kids are playing the next game and explain to the child the exact skill he/she needs to develop. Kind of like a play-by-play announcer. Make sure to have your mini rules poster on your clipboard to show her/him the specific rule. (See below)

### IPP in action



*“See how Lagan is tagging softly and not slapping?  
See how she is running carefully and tagging others softly?  
Remember fingertips!  
Do you think you can try that?”*

Examples of IPP's assigned to individual students are required a specific student to use the **no run rule** if running out of control or if they tag roughly, to use only **tagging wands**. Tagging wands take the “art” out of tag and can make the game actually “wilder” in some cases, but are effective in specific instances like this. Experiment and with fingertip tagging or tagging wands. Once a student learns to exhibit better and safer choices he is permitted to play with regular rules and the IPP is lifted.



**Experiment with tagging wands**

**Honesty everyday:** How can we get the kids to play honestly and respect all the rules while in a competitive game? All PE teachers know it's so easy for kids to "bend" game rules and for some kids to flat out break them. How can we combat this regular occurrence?

Revisit honesty every day, every class. It's not another poster on the wall that's ignored. Some concepts are the core to PE and life. The message of honesty is a character challenge, never perfectly won, but certainly worth the good work. And yes, maybe some deeper philosophical thoughts are best left for the humanities building on university campuses. But for certain we don't have the luxury of a tea and scholarly debate, we must lace up our tennis shoes and trek on through to the fact it's clear that honesty is quite possibly the single most important factor in game play. And our children will become more mature and better players by being honest than any single attribute, even responsibility.

Life is flat out easier this way by honoring truth. And succinctly said by Ralph Waldo Emerson, "*The highest compact we can make with our fellow is: let there be the truth between us two forevermore.*" And another expression, "*lying has a thousand faces, the truth only one.*" Therefore, let's not allow our kids to spend an ounce of so much wasted emotional energy being dishonest.

And just as an example, we need to look no further than the International Olympic Committee (Olympics.org) and Olympism and its strong moral stance on these matters. Every two years I use various Olympic posters and messages, like the Olympic Creed and Olympic Honor Code as a learning tools to reinforce our honesty program. Again it's like an old friend coming back to visit us biannually and we can't wait.

**Honestly Policy and Tag:** And the second way to play honestly and kids from bending and breaking game rules is by starting the process integrating the new **Honesty Policy** through the practice of **Honesty Tag**!

**Honesty Policy:** The moment of truth. Before we play any tag games in PE class for the school year discuss the **Honesty Policy**. The **Honesty Policy** is defined as: *Teachers and students do not call players out in tag games.* This is opposite of other programs where kids and teachers call others kids out when they tag them. We are flipping the individual student's accountability from the teacher and taggers directly onto each player. It is now utterly the students' duty or conscientiousness to demonstrate perfect personal honesty in when tagged.

**Erasing the Little Referee:** We don't mean to complicate matters further, but there is one last method of addressing the Honesty Policy and it's quite adorable; Larry Gordan has been the using phrase "**erasing the little referees**" for decades. Think of it this way, the primary job for the players is to "*erase the student referees,*" which is them! Children often feel they must referee for everyone else as they play games, even though they themselves have yet to develop honesty skills! We are erasing this need for kids to referee for everyone else, one player at time. Hence erasing the little referee, therefore, they cannot be referees, calling each other out and allow everyone to be a **self-honesty** player. Sometimes using creative imaginary language is all it takes for the concept to sink in. Later on, you'll read the second way of erasing a referee which is even more creative.



### Erasing the Little Referee:

**Independent Player:** The above theory is our **Independent Play System**. Once the children learn this, they are now **independent of a referee**. And, the referee in virtually all games in physical education has virtually been the responsibility of Mr./Ms. Gym (or sometimes student referees). Not anymore, they are on their own. What!

Let's see how we use the **Honesty Policy**, **No Little Referees**, and the **Independent Play System**. For example, in our tag games and invasion /territory games when a student gets tagged in a game or breaks a rule, like stepping out of bounds, he/she must first **flash** his hand up high above his head, indicating he/she is out and then stops running. We call this action a **flash** and it's critical to fostering honesty, safety and, as you will read, cooperation. We require a student to flash his/her hand, the instant a student is tagged or breaks a rule so he/she proudly proves his/her **honesty**. Prompt them to do this quickly, to be the **fastest flasher** in the class! Also, it is much safer for a student to flash first, then stop running, second, and when applicable slowly drop and sit. But the flash is always first, indicating he/she knows he/she was tagged, and no one must say anything to him/her. He/she needs no little referee, the other student calling them out. It simply works magnificently.



Feel the tag...



Flash your hand - sky high, then freeze!

**Not fair:** We know the question, so we'll address it now and not let it linger in your mind as your read. What if a student is not playing fairly? What if he does not flash or ignores the tag? First, this should be rare due to our previous instruction, skills, drills, and character education integration and motivation tactics. But it does happen sometimes as students are learning the system and if the teacher clearly sees an infraction and the student is not playing properly; quietly call the student over for a private meeting and rules clarification and/or consequence. Show the student the specific rule on your clipboard. (See rules below)



*"I think Tommy may be going out of bounds and keeps playing.  
That's not fair."  
"Thank you, I'll keep a close eye on him."*

**No hysterics or tattling needed:** If a student clearly sees another student making infractions, she/he may quietly, calmly and privately report this information, but without any emotion in their voice, to the teacher. Thank the player for her/his help, and she/he goes back to play. Mr. / Ms. Gym will need to keep a keen eye on this student and if valid and during an appropriate time, silently wave or quietly call the student over.

And the definition of tattling we use for our boys and girls? *"Tattling is trying to get another student in trouble, but reporting something you see that may help another child especially something **unsafe** is not."* (This stops most tattling) Again, a quite private meeting and an IPP may be needed for this student. But the teacher and student never calls out to a player who broke a rule or was dishonest. In this game, it simply robs the child the opportunity to demonstrate honesty.

**Pro Tip:** "fastest flasher" (see diagram below)

Practice the "**fastest flasher**" drum drills. Students scatter jog to the drum beat, on two hard quick beats, players instantly flash their hand high and as fast as they can, then put on the brakes and stop. Encourage the students to be the fastest!



**Boom!**

**Fastest Flasher!**

### **How do we play Honesty Tag?**

Putting the *Honesty Policy* and *Independent Play* to the test.

Grades 1-5

- Start with power walking
- Progress to jogging
- Running once student exhibit good physical skills

### **Honesty Tag Rules**

*...the tag test game...*

1. **Everyone is “it!”** Everyone gets everyone out!
2. **Flashlights on!** Eyes forward, look where you going.
3. **Travel safely!** Just fast enough to stop quickly.
4. **Fall down = Out!**
5. **No, No-No Land!** If you go into No-No Land=Out like a tag. (Sit in Yes-Yes Land)
6. **Tag Softly:** Finger tips/tagging wans.
7. **Tagged = Out! 10 F’s:** “*Feel, friends, fingers, fairness, flash, freeze, five, flop (down) fold & focus*”
8. **No “tag backs.”**
9. **Double Tag:** both players are out.
10. **Honesty Policy:** We always play honestly, and there is no need to call others’ out as we play. We don’t need to rob players the opportunity to show us their best honesty.

Before we describe Honesty Tag and for definition purposes, we should clarify the differences between **elimination** and a **pause** or temporary **out**.

- **Elimination** is when a player is tagged or removed from a game for the remainder of the game, until the game ends resulting with a single or a few winners. The player has been eliminated until the next game restarts. It is kept brief and as an integral teaching tool part of learning system.
- **Out or pause** is temporary, and the player will return through a teacher planned and creative **reentry methods** like **saving** or **rescuing** and other innovative ways you will see in this website. The **out** should be brief and just considered a fun and enticing **pause** in the action, but the player is still mentally, emotionally and often physically involved in the overall game experience.

Back to our Honest Tag game, and with those important terms and methods clarified, Honesty Tag that uses single elimination is our formative tag and the **learning game** that leads into the next slightly more complex Tag game that adds **reentries**. Honesty Tag ups the honesty ante due to the competitive nature of the game. In the previous activities honesty was rather undemanding compared to what is about to happen. Just what we want - a real honesty test!

**Who is the most honest?** Prompt the competitors by saying methodically, *“In this game I am really going to test your personal honesty like never before and I will be looking for the most honest player in this class. When you get tagged, can you instantly flash your hand, and show me, and everyone else, you are the most honest player? I will be so proud of you and so will everyone else. But boys and girls, most importantly, you will be so proud of yourself.”* You can hear a pin drop when it’s said like this. It’s powerful due the fact the challenge is laid upon them internally.

**Why do we play games?** Before starting play, ask the students this final closer and concept reinforcer. In fact, this is an excellent tip involving game play. *“Girls and Boys, why do we play games?”* All students repeat back in choral format, *“To practice being honest!”* This technique is a great little cognitive checker.

The great aspect to Honesty Tag (and the following game) is that everyone is **“it”** and may get anyone and everyone out and the teacher is not responsible for selecting the **“its”**. This is due to the fact that everyone is **“it”** and if we only play a couple mini-games and for only a few minutes in the beginning of a class, there is not going to be any disappointed students who did not get to be **“it.”** Everyone is it! (All It Tag) A single **mini-game** only lasts 45 seconds or so, until there are only about 25% of the students remaining in the game.

**Goal Structure-Honesty Game:** And yes, this is a single elimination game, and it must be. Remember, this goal structure is to solely test their honesty, it’s not for a high time on task ratio or fitness, or even cooperation at this time. And what better way is there than requiring each player to **eliminate themselves** from a competitive little game truly proving absolute honesty? And just think, if they pass this test, what kind of competitors they will be for the next game, and like we said before in more demanding, more complex games. However, one critical stipulation, all the learners must proudly prove honesty before progressing to the next tag game that has the desired higher time on task ratio. It’s progressive.



**Legitimate elimination?** A quick but important thought that is not acknowledged commonly about elimination: As we know, most PE authorities state that elimination is a poor prehistoric practice from the PE past. That the child who needs the most practice, the least talented learner, is going to get out and be eliminated first.

We read hear and read this all the time don't we? Is this really the case? If we truly study games, we find it's not often the case for specific reasons. In games like Honesty Tag there is "game specific build in differentiation" and most athletically talented kids go after the other faster kids almost subconsciously. We proactively teach that; if you are not as quick and fast as others, play a more defensive role; it's your best play. Those quick and darting players are more adventurous and naturally risky, but they get tagged out more too! And there are other factors at work here too, like teaching the players to find an excellent starting position around the perimeter, and not get out in the first five seconds. That is the magical time in tag: make it through that threshold, and you will have a good game regardless of talent. But you have to work hard and be a little witty, and that's good thing.

Consequently, with lots practice and discovery all kids will learn a balance of offense and defense over time that suits them; they will all get in plenty of action and not immediate elimination. Therefore, it's not elimination that is the problem if it's handled in our system, it's the lack of deep understanding about tag games and how to graciously teach them, the central purpose that's been eliminated from the discussion until now.

### **Equipment and Facilities**

- Typical size gym, field space or blacktop
- Cones to highlight lines
- Wall posters, charts, large diagrams
- Mini posters
- Rules and diagrams for each mini game on clipboard

**Organization** (see diagrams below)

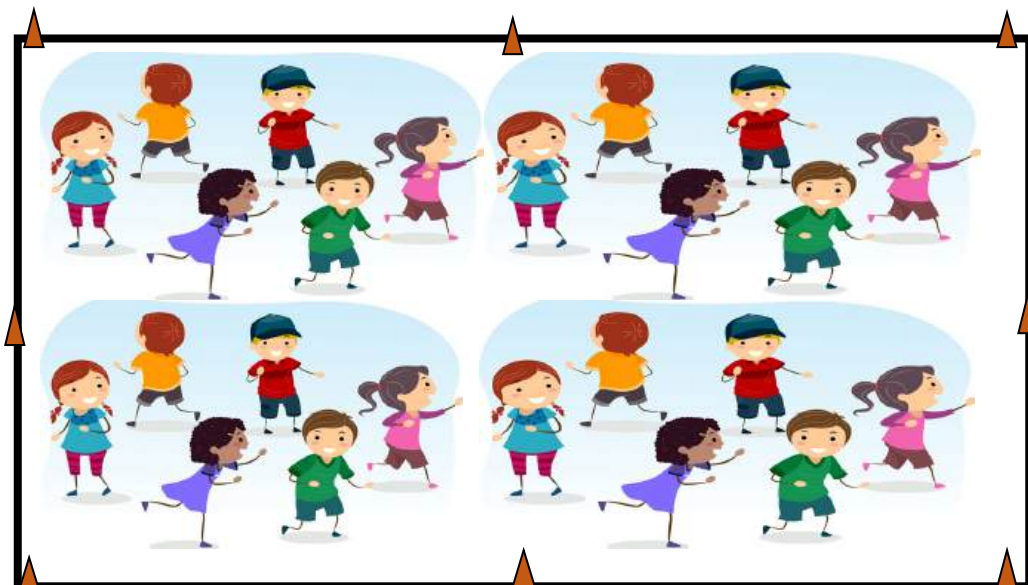
Set up activities in typical setting of gym, field or blacktop. Use lots of safety cones to highlight the boundary lines. For many games they are class games, several are small sided games. If needed, review in **Spatial Awareness section Stopping Game** and **Big Space Game** prior to play. All the following activities have high time on task except **Honest Tag** which has a different learning **goal structure**, and yet still these games can be played fairly quickly in back to back fashion. (Please note, it is a learning/test game; students move on very quickly).



**Scatter starting position.** Students start in the scatter position and their primary goal is to tag as many players out, while not getting tagged out. The play paradox. Once a student is tagged, steps out of bounds or falls, he/she flashes his/her hand and stops running where tagged. The old referee, us, is no longer going to call the student out. As mentioned, that job is now extricated from our responsibilities; we concentrate on more important aspects of the teaching-learning process.

**Please note:** I only have a couple elimination games in my entire program: **Honesty Tag** being one of them.

Student's scatter position-playing **Honesty Tag**



Play lots of Honesty Tag games until your class owns it, and ready to progress to Character Tag.

**10 F's.** Have all students learn the complete “**flash, freeze and flop**” process. A cute tip for the players is the gnomonic **10 “F”s**. Feels, friend's fingers (tag) fairness (good choice on honesty) flash, freeze, (counts to) five, flop (down and sit) fold (legs in) and focus attention (on the game).



If a student **feels** a tag from a **friend's fingers** she/he is out, showing **fairness**, then **flashes** her/his hand high, indicating the out and about to stop running (on balance) and **freezes**, counts to **five** (using fingers for the young kids) then slowly **flops** down and sits, **folds** her/his legs crossed and **focuses** her/his attention on the remaining game for a few seconds. It's very cute and easy to teach, and for the kids to remember.



**Feel the tag, flash & freeze** (note: counting to five)

**... and flop, sit tall and focus on game, you'll be back-in, in a few seconds...**

**Flash and freeze.** After the older students, grades 4-5, learn the flash and sit, they quickly progress to the “**Flash and Freeze**,” technique. They do not sit, but remain standing upright in excellent balance upon a tag. (See photo below) However, they need to know and perform the previous skill for future games that require dropping down safely. And make a note here: they may need to practice the **flash, freeze and flop** again, before playing some of the complex future adventure games in the next sections.



### Flash and Freeze

**The art of repeatability.** *“What time is it? Practice Time!”* As you know, we get good at things, by actually thinking, reflecting, feeling, and doing things over and over. So, we need to play lots of quick mini games up to 45 seconds or so or until about 25% of the class is remaining. After each mini-game thank the honesty players, and ask all the students to quickly find their next **starting position** and get ready to begin again. They will be ready in an instant because they mastered the **Personal Space Games** previously. *“Next game, spread out, ready... go!”* That’s all it takes, they are ready that fast!

Resetting each game is not an issue. And you can give a one sentence “coaching” style direction just prior to saying “go” as well. *“Back up towards the out of bounds lines and play some good defense. Ready, Go!”* Also, by focusing the attention on the honesty players and the kids who followed the rules, the students work diligently on the honesty policy and fair play. Winning is minimized and honesty proudly emphasized. But not completely, it’s okay to acknowledge the kids who won the game, who are, of course, the kids still in the game at the end.

When first playing and learning this new **independent play system**, some students will accidentally call others out when tagging them. With practice, the kids will become experts at honesty and the Honesty Policy. As mentioned, smart and crafty kids do well in this game, not just the little speedsters. One caution when first teaching it, the teacher will impulsively want to call pupils out, but a bit of patients is needed on our parts, as well. Let the **Honesty Policy** work its magic. If you see a tagged out player keep playing, let it go and then quietly call him over for a private meeting after the game has ended as we discussed. Most the time just quick and friendly reminder and showing the specific rule on the mini poster or wall poster is all that is needed and fixes it. This has worked wonders over the years.



*“Sorry, young lady, you may not run into No Man’s Land! It’s not safe.”*

*“But, I’m a girl. I thought I was allowed...”*

*Mr. Sarratt, maybe it should be gender neutral, and call it No One’s Land...*

**Problem? No problem:** Oh no, we have a tad little problem, the entire class seems out of sorts. No worries, no panic, no anger, and most importantly no problem - just part of the program. They need a positive rules refresher. By all means, call a quick class huddle, discussion and encouragingly revisit the specific rule(s), quick demo if needed, then zap, back to starting positions for another series of games.

**P’s of Play:** Upon first attempt, it’s not uncommon to take multiple classes to work this process: play – little problem, polish, play – problem, polish, play, etc. Honesty - following basic rules, honesty - following basic rules, etc. It is always a constant patient, persistent and praising cycle / system. Around and around it goes. Especially for the younger learners like 1<sup>st</sup> graders, the process and system simply cannot be rushed. Once the kids have honesty, you will know it, which will without exaggeration radically transform your PE program. They have exact skills and excellent honesty and are accepting being tagging out bravely.

**Magical Moment:** sharing time

Call on students and ask them to share what they did, or what it took for them “in their mind” to be an **honesty player**. For example, if you saw a student accidentally step out bounds and he flashed his hand and then stopped playing. This is his time to share and show his honesty experience. They may share about their internal fortitude that is growing exponentially in front of your eyes. Ask the kids how it feels to play and know everyone is also playing honestly and within the rules.

To them, this is very special and power feeling;  
playing games with complete and utter honesty.

With practice, all students will become so honest, it will astonish you...

## Variation and progression

### Eyes tell the complete story...

Before we move on to the Character Tag, there is one critical concept that we must share and cannot be ignored – it's a player's eyes upon a tag. They tell the whole truth for full honest disclosure. What we mean is, the instant a player gets tagged, and if he/she glances at Mrs. / Mr. Gym, the player is lacking complete ownership of independent play. He/she is still looking to the teacher for guidance and even for external control. You know the teacher glance, that tells him/her to play honestly. Or as Piero Ferrucci states in his beautiful book, **The Power of Kindness**, (2006) *"Honesty allows us to look into someone's eyes and through them into the heart, because there is no veil, no fiction. It allows us to let ourselves be seen-and and look back without averting our eyes."*

Therefore, when a child gets tagged or steps out of bounds and her/his eyes are averted, she/he performs the flash-hand held super high. You know she/he made it, has matured to the concept of internal **independent play** and absolute honesty. This little darling can be even as young as a 1<sup>st</sup> grader. She/he suddenly doesn't need us anymore. She/he is now doing the right thing on automatic pilot. Furthermore, upon implementing this system, don't be shocked to see your youngest players own it first and your older pupils take longer to develop these newly learned skills. Old habits are hard to break and new longer to be to be mastered. But everyone in your school will own it eventually.

### Eyes into action

So what does all this eye theory mean and how do you implement it? Call a class meeting after most of the learners have the Honesty Tag down cold. This is final processing and clear coat polishing phase stuff. We are bringing out the duel action high speed buffer. Explain to your class, *"I have noticed 'looks' I've been getting from a few... players... and I am now searching for **everyone...** to be the most honest player in this class."* Really lay it on them heavy, hold them to complete and utter honesty.

Give it another go and you should now see all students are playing Honesty Tag with, well, complete and utter Honesty. They are averting their eyes upon a tag not breaking a rule and flashing proudly and promptly. They are flashing sky high and counting to five, freezing, sitting and waiting patiently for the next super quick game. There is patience to the play and no panic. Give a subtle compliment to those few last learners-they want it and need it. This class is almost there and you must be so filled with pride. However there is just one tiny weird test...

**Teaching Tips in Action:** Erasing the *Big Referee* challenge.

**Bye bye teacher:** Since everyone is playing Honesty Tag so well, maybe they don't need a teacher in the room. As mentioned earlier, this is **part two**, it's called **erasing the big referee**, and the final piece to the play puzzle. The PE teacher, (Larry G.) uses the pretend concept of the kids erasing him with an eraser.



***Invisible Teacher-Becoming an Independent Player***

Dale tells his students to imagine he is vanishing into thin air becoming invisible; kind of like in *Star Trek* being “beamed” to another planet. You see, the kids have done such a remarkable job of **erasing** the **little referees**, themselves, they now are at work and challenged to erase the big referrer, **Mr. or Mrs. Gym-us**. Can they play so well that the teacher, (the big referrer), is not even needed in the room? What a challenge!

So the “imaginary” theory, now, is the class is alone in the gym during each mini game. When introducing this dramatic independent play system Dale only reappears to start a new game for the class and then, poof, he “beamed,” dissolves into thin air and become invisible again. Yes, it is a little dramatic but the kids buy into it as part of the game. We are sure you can come up with your own notion for this final concept.

**Good humor:** Ask your class how the games are going since you are not there to witness the honesty first hand. “*How did the game go? Did you call each other out? Were you able flash and freeze?*” Allow them to tell you about the wonder of the honesty policy. Congratulate all your students upon their excellent honesty and safety performances. “*They wish you were there to see it!*” Most importantly with additional practice, your students will have independent play mastered as well. Keep an eye on their eyes and ears to their hearts; you’ll have them playing with complete independence.

It’s now time for the next journey and challenge. It’s not to be missed, for this is how we live tag. **Character Tag.**



### Closure to Honesty Tag

- How did your students handle learning this new system of play?
- What grade and level did the best, what level had the most challenge?

## Character Tag

(Grades 1-5 - Sarratt)



### **Introduction**

Once the students have mastered Honesty Tag they have accomplished something quite remarkable in world of sports. And fortunately, the process does not take as long as one might imagine. The students remarkably themselves, **eliminated, elimination!** Therefore they progressed directly into the glorious game of **Character Tag**. We have discovered once we leave Honesty Tag, Character Tag evolves into our primary tag game for the remainder of the school year, which helps the students to keep honesty and independent skills finely tuned like an instrument. You'll only need to revisit single elimination Honesty Tag if it deems necessary, solely to practice your basic honesty skills.

### **Why are playing this game**

- ✓ to practice being honest
- ✓ to practice future practice fleeing and chasing in game
- ✓ to practice and show caring, empathy and joy for others-by saving/helping others
- ✓ to practice speaking and listening skills in a game
- ✓ to show the level of independence-maturity

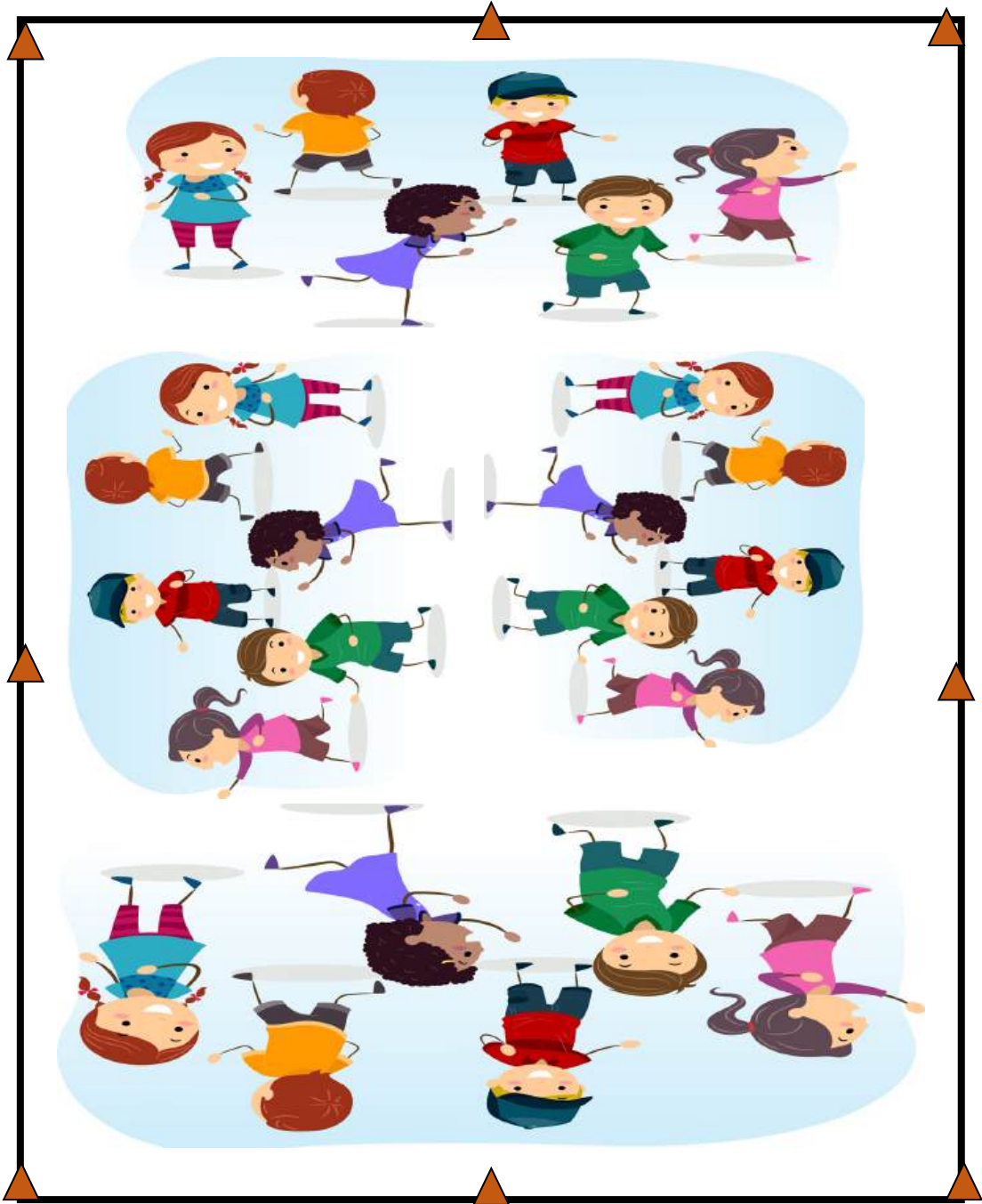
### **Equipment and Facilities**

- Typical size gym, field space or blacktop
- Cones to highlight lines
- Wall posters, charts, large diagrams
- Mini posters
- Rules and diagrams for each mini game on clipboard

### **Organization** (see diagram below)

Same scatter starting position as Honesty Tag. In fact both games often are played and developed in the same class.

Character Tag



Character Tag

### How do we play Character Tag?

Character Tag is the identical game as Honesty Tag, except for the new rule allowing for the art of **saving** the tagged out players. This simple saving rule dramatically amends the personality of the game by adding the powerful human character traits of **empathy** and **caring** and giving **joy** while **helping others** also bolstering a higher active learning time (ALT). So now in Character Tag, all students are it, getting each other out, chasing/offense, trying not to get tagged, flee/defense while all students are saving everyone, being a hero. A tad more complex, more action and fun.

If you notice a lot of tagged-out players, shout, “*Where are my hero’s?*” Or start a new game.

All players have, four simultaneous jobs.

1. **Offense:** *Chasers* all it, attempt to tag as many players as possible.
2. **Defense:** *Fleers* trying not to get tagged out.
3. **Hero:** *Saves* the tagged-out players, allowing them to reenter the game. Must be still in the game and not out themselves.
4. **Out-player:** *Allowing* a player to save you and thanking him/her.

**Note:** There’s no PE perfect term for a tagged-out player other than, stranded-player, eliminated, etc. So the use of “tagged-out player” “out player” “out friend” “out buddy” and “out teammate” is used in our lessons and this web-site.

### Only two ways out in tag games

- **Self-out:** By breaking a rule such as stepping out of bounds or falling down, etc.
- **Tagged-out:** Being tagged out/pause in the action.



# Character Tag

## Rules and Procedure

*...the caring game...*

*Sarratt/Gordan*

***Why are we playing this game: To practice being honest and caring!***

- 1. Everyone is “it!”*** Everyone tags everyone!
- 2. Flashlights on!*** Eyes forward, look where you are going.
- 3. Travel safely!*** Just fast enough to stop quickly.
- 4. Fall down = out!***
- 5. Tag softly!*** Use only fingertips.
- 6. Tagged = Out*** Feel the tag, flash your hand, count five, and flop down.
- 7. No, No-No Land!*** If you’re in there, drop and sit in Yes-Yes Land.
- 8. Double Tag!*** Both players are out.
- 9. Hero saves by leap frog!*** Hands on shoulders, jump and on feet.
- 10. Safe while being saved!***
- 11. Hero is safe while saving others!***
- 12. Thank your Hero!*** Shake hands and say, “Thank you.” Hero, “You’re welcome!”
- 13. Four jobs in Character Tag!***
  - a. Offense:*** everyone is “it” and chases everyone
  - b. Defense:*** everyone is a fleerer; tries not to get tagged by everyone
  - c. Hero:*** everyone is saving and helping other players get back into the game
  - d. Being saved:*** allowing other players to help you, and thanking them

As you can see from the rules, the selfless hero is what creates such a charming game and truly ties in many of the core values we previously discussed; especially the character trait of caring. For many children saving a tagged out buddy is just as rewarding as getting other players out. For some children this allows them joy and to act on warm hearts they may never been able to do or even vocalize during the school day.

Take a stroll around the modern school. Stay in your seat and do your work, take a test, now take another test or two is the motto of the modern education world. Focus is often solely raising core test scores, at the sacrifice of social skills and time. And it’s not surprising but children often just don’t get the proper opportunity to show real caring during the school day. So being rescued is a fantastic feeling. When a Hero shows up to save you, wow, you feel special for that moment: You think, “*Someone cares to save me! Awesome.*”

Over the years many teacher assistants and I have analyzed the children while they play; you could almost call this game “*compassionate*” tag. And, yes, this is probably over the top, but has been interesting to note how children blend together in the game. Various students saves each other and then a moment later, the favor gets graciously returned. We have hopefully created a sense of warmth, community, and less individualism.

Consequently, it's a game with all the players getting out and saved with harmonious fluidity. Now we can think of Character Tag and the later adventure tag games and teambuilding challenges they progress to as our **Interdependent Play System** using social skills like communication, cooperation, teamwork and saving built in among the players. Steven Covey illustrates it like this, *"Interdependence is a far more mature, more advanced concept. If I am physically interdependent, I am self-reliant and capable, but I also realize that you and I working together can accomplish far more than, even at my best, I could accomplish alone. If I am emotionally interdependent, I derive a great sense of worth within myself, but I also recognize the need for love, for giving, and for receiving the need for love, of giving, and for receiving love from others. If I am intellectually interdependent, I realize that I need the best thinking of other people to join with my own."* (S. R. Covey, 1989). As you can clearly see, this is giant step up the maturity ladder, and most definitely a skill set implored more deeply during teambuilding challenges. But certainly interdependence play enters the realm here and is needed.

Back to the game, each child still shows honesty, but the additional cooperative elements too. Character Tag can last up to several minutes without needing to halt the game for needed time on task purposes, like in Honesty Tag. In most cases, it should be stopped to give the kids a much needed break from all the action. Another neat feature of Character Tag is getting tagged out is, of course, not an issue to kids as in single elimination tag games. Everyone gets out, like we said, even the class super zoomers, and everyone will be saved and get the chance to rejoin the game within a few seconds due to all the saving.

### **Saving is the act of a hero: the Saving Routine**

In a classic tag game a lot of players get tagged out, therefore, a **rescue** or **save** now allows that player to **reenter** the game without a teacher restart or **fitness reentry**. We use a few terms like **saver**, **lifeguard**, **rescuers**, and even **heroes** because the kids need to risk themselves to get their buddy back in the game, and it's applicable to their lives on their level - they really are caring and rescuing.

Savers can save rather quickly and it shouldn't be too difficult; conversely, we don't want it to be too easy either, like a quick high five, or kids don't mind getting out and have a tendency to play less controlled. Just the right amount of time and effort on the saver's part is desirable. In other games, later on, saving can be a bit more taxing.

### **Save two ways**

- First, use the **leap-frog** method that is ideal for the little kids, grades 1 & 2 because it's fun and creative and a little safer. It's recommended these maneuvers should be taught and practiced before played.

### Visual tour of the leap save system



Can I be saved by my buddy?    Hands on shoulders.    Spread legs & leap frog.    “Thank you, you’re, welcome!”

- Secondly, for the older students, in grades 3-5, we like the tagged-out player to stand with his/her legs shoulder width apart and the rescuer will **tunnel** under the legs method (tunnel tag). They go only through the **front door**. It’s much safer than crawling through from the backside.



**Flash and freeze,  
feet shoulder width apart,  
and wait to be saved by a buddy...**

### Visual tour of tunnel save system



Feel the tag...

Flash, freeze & five

Tunnel - front door!

Thanks. You're welcome!"

As you see, both techniques require an additional two elements that beautifully unites this game together, with character and social skills and non-negotiable: the children must use the proper etiquette-adult style handshake. We are promoting charming social skills.

- First, after the hero has saved her tagged-out buddy, the buddy must thank him/her rescuer for taking the time, energy and caring enough to save him/her. She/he will reach out and shake hands with her/him and say loudly, *"Thank you!"*
- The hero graciously accepts the handshake and says, *"You're welcome!"* It creates a delightful cooperative experience. This prosocial system recurs in future games.
- And of course, both players are safe while saving and being saved.



**Hero accepts the "Thank You" and replies with, "You're Welcome."**

Also note the eye contact: looking at each other eyes when they speak.

This is very respectful: *listening is an act of caring...*

*An art-form in today's busy school day...*

### Practice before play

For the youngest players or the first time teaching the game, have the partners pair up and practice the **saving routine**, either the **leap frog** or **crawl** through the front door techniques, shaking hands, “*Thank you,*” and “*You’re welcome,*” with several partners before playing the game. Switch partner and practice again. Require the children to speak-up when saying, “*Thank you*” and “*You’re welcome.*” Eye contact. Don’t be surprised if the younger kids don’t know how to shake hands properly. Also, with the youngsters, you’ll need to break it down part by part. Oh, the little things we PE teachers have to do...

### Game time

**Teaching styles:** Use incidental teaching, proactive teaching, or teaching by challenge.

**Review:** Character Tag is started and played virtually identically to **Honesty Tag** with the addition to saving. With a little experience the students will discover that rescuing a buddy has one other benefit. It offers the saver a quick little break from all the running, chasing and dodging. If you notice that the kids are not saving their buddies as much as you would like, simply call out, “*Do we have any Heroes in this game?*” That should fix it.

**Oops:** One particular note with this game is that when students are first learning it and involved with the saving and shaking hands ritual, other players will accidentally tag them. They are to ignore the mistaken tag, and remember they are safe during this maneuver; and they are to remember the saying, “*You are safe while saving and being saved.*”

### Variations-PE puzzle

Okay, we have purposely deleted the discussion of game theory and tactics until now. By all means Honesty/Character Tag is a truly foundational thinking and physical experience for students to discover the offensive and defensive conundrum before progressing to more complex games. Our theory is that we do not want to rob the students the opportunity of **discovery learning**-the beautiful light bulb clicking on feeling we all have had. That special emotion we leave for the children to personally discover. By all means we may prompt our learners with leading questions, and even skills and drills, but we are fully aware of the need and willing to give the students extra time and patience to solve the puzzles of games and learning. It’s their job to know when to be more assertive and attempt a tag, or when to back up and play defensive and even when to save a buddy or take a chance. All children are built differently and it shows in games.

Skills to teach and ***teach by challenge***:

- Fleeing
- Defensive
- Eye contact on torso not head
- Balance-knee stabilization

### Teaching Tips and Programming

From a programming planning thought, it's recommended playing and performing these activities repeatedly throughout the school year, although for shorter duration has proven admirable results. A quick game or two as an introductory activity works wonders especially as foundational primers for more complex games. However, taking more time and refocusing on Honesty is needed after long breaks or whenever you feel is needed. Once you have your students playing the new way, you won't want to let them revert back to the old ways. You'll sense when they need more Character Tag and tailor to your program needs. This is only something you can sense, not pull out of a pacing guide/curriculum guide.

**Note:** At the end of this section see [Sneak-A-Tag](#) for my 14 additional mini tagging challenges that blend nicely with Character Tag, and also see the [Snatch It](#) section for additional guidance.

### Final thoughts

In closing out the Foundation of Tag section and specially Character Tag, it's important to note that by combining honesty, independent play, caring and now integrating empathy into a truly fun and exciting game, we are transforming a PE program. We have gone a long way to achieving something splendid, a more civil play place.

We turn our attention to one final unique Tag Game before we head into adventure running and chasing tag game, **SOAR Tag** which hopefully can be modified to most schools.

## SOAR Tag (grades 3-5) (Sarratt)

### Introduction

Welcome to SOAR Tag! Are you ready to SOAR? This is a cross-curriculum activity. The message gets a bit convoluted but it's worth it. Most schools have some type of a behavior acronym system. My main school, we are the **Manor View Eagles** and they **SOARed**. Safe, Organized, Accountable and Respectful. I've worked at 10 or more schools and they all had some other acronym, mascot, behavior system, behavior code and/or pledge and counseling program. A few schools, with higher budgets and wealthy districts may go one step further like mine did and added other programs; for example **Positive Behavior Intervention Program**, PBIS (PBIS.org), **International Baccalaureate Primary Years Program**, IB-PYP (IBO.org) or **Covey 7 Habits Schools** (leaderinme.org). These and many more programs all set behavior language, behavior goals, behavior modification with specific guidance learning goals.

This is where SOAR Tag originates. With SOAR Tag we are integrating the school motto/acronym and school based learning system into a Tag game. That's what I did with SOAR Tag with our IB-PYP & PBIS terms and learning program.

**Modify it:** I will use SOAR Tag and my school as an example and of course each teacher can easily and creatively adapt to their setting. It's a blast!

### Why are we playing this game?

- ✓ to further integrate our school behavior or character code into the PE program
- ✓ to enhance social, emotional skills of the student through challenging play
- ✓ to improve speaking and reading skills

### Equipment

- Wall charts and mini posters with diagrams
- Word of the Week-mini posters
- Cones for the lines
- Tongue depressors (TD) with terms written on them (health room)



### Tongue Depressors: character/positive motivation & fitness terms

- Mini Flash Cards: 2 X 8 inch, word cards laminated (if possible)



### Mini Flash Cards: character/positive motivation

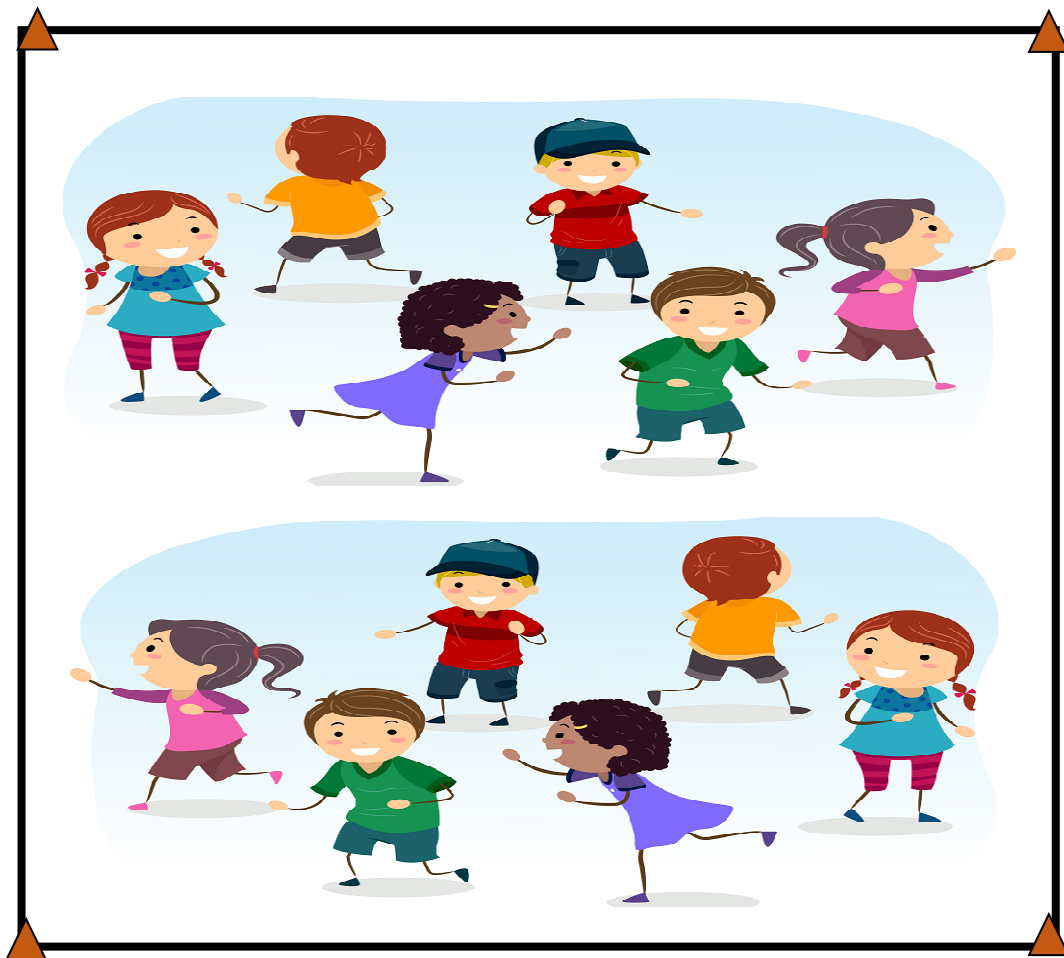
### Organization

**Choose your system:** Each student will be given a TD or mini word card to start the game. Which is better for you? I've used both systems; and each have advantages.

Game starts in scatter position like the previous tag games.

From a programming stand point, I teach this **SOAR Tag** game later in the year. The reason is clear, I do a **PE Word of the Week** (W of the W) and make a pretty big deal out of it. I use the term as part of my **outcome** and **closing/assessment** each day. Most importantly I try to match the W of the W to what I'm teaching that week, the best I can. The concept or skill is integrated into my lesson. For example with IB-PYP, there are 22 ***Learner Profiles and Attitudes*** traits that can be introduced each week (IBO.org). By the time I get near the end of the year, my W of the W, I've hit all of them, some even twice. The kids already know some of these traits, from other teachers and our IB coordinator.

### SOAR Tag



### SOAR Tag

Manor View Elementary School  
Sample Word Bank/Terms

## SOAR Tag

| SOAR & Positive<br>PE Sports Words | IB Attitudes* | IB Learner Profile* |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------|
| Safe                               | Appreciation  | Inquirers           |
| Organized                          | Commitment    | Knowledgeable       |
| Accountable                        | Confidence    | Thinkers            |
| Respectful                         | Cooperation   | Communicators       |
|                                    | Creativity    | Principled          |
| Good Sport                         | Curiosity     | Open-minded         |
| Honesty Player                     | Empathy       | Caring              |
| Fair Player                        | Enthusiasm    | Reflective          |
| Hero/Helper                        | Independence  | Balanced            |
| Encouraging                        | Integrity     | Courageous          |
| Kindness                           | Respect       |                     |
|                                    | Tolerance     | **IBO.org           |

### How do we play SOAR tag?

Create your list of words you'd like to use from your school.

Check with your guidance counselor and teachers for ideas.

### Two way to create your terms:

- **TD:** check with your health room, they will have thousands of them!  
(That's how I got the idea for this game! And they were more than willing to give me a hundred or so)
- **Mini Flash Cards:** type and printed out on your computer. Or hand make them smaller, only 3 X 5 inches or so- laminate so they last more than one game...

### Procedure

- Each student is issued either a TD or mini flash card. They should quickly read what it says. They don't show to others.
- Do they know what it is? Hopefully...
- They spread out / scatter starting position in the play area.
- Tag game begins like **Character Tag** above.
- Except when tagged out, the player stands very still with card/stick up in the air. This indicates they are out and need to be saved.
- The player saves them by coming over and facing the tagged out player, and reading/telling what is on his/her card/TD, making a sentence out of the term, "You have good caring!"
- And the players quickly switch the cards/TD, shake hands "Thank you/you're welcome," and both are quickly back into the game.
- Again, hero tries to use the term in a mini sentence as best as possible as the example showed above.

### Variation/progressions

- **Add:** The *tagged out* player also shares his/her character trait to the Hero, “Thank you! You are so, “**Respectful!**” As she shakes hands. Now both are sharing their traits as they shake hands!
- **Create another set: Exercises** On the back of either the TD or your mini flash cards write some simple exercises! Like jumping jack, snow skier, push-up, curl-up, knee-ups, etc. (see sample above)
- When the Hero saves the player, she hands over the TD/Mini flash card, reads the trait and the exercise on the back, “You’re so **courageous**, good thing, you have to do **push-ups**! They again, switch cards, handshakes and thanks/you’re welcome and off the Hero goes.
- Now the rescued player will do a few fun fitness exercises demonstrating his **courageousness**. Teacher sets a number for all the exercises before the game, 5-10 or so.

### Teaching tips

- Start out very simple - with just a few core terms. There is no federal law that states we have to make this so complicated.
- If you started out this with 5-10 simple school words/terms/traits then you got something. It’s going to be great!
- The key is in the sharing and communication, the switching, what message they are sharing. The classic-sharing is caring!
- What if they don’t know all the words? That’s okay, first, like mentioned above, try to use the words/terms you think most kids will know. Second, we are planting **word seeds** and having them grow as they practice and play with them. It’s mental memory training. Kids will help each other with the words.

### Closure Reflection

- As the games progressed, the kids get tagged out by many players, saved by many players, and get the opportunity to practice using positive character and good sporting language.
- **Community Development:** I no of any other program, I’ve seen in my travels uses my **handshake**, **thank you**, and **you’re welcome** system. I’ve done this for decades; it works wonders, has proven to promote good communication, communities and a positive civil play place. Yes, even with difficult kids and classes. You can see and hear it. Clearly, it’s not needed in every tag game as you are about to see. (can be overdone.)
- With the acquired new skills and concepts, it’s time to for the next level by adding some adventure. We got this!

# Tagging, Capturing, Territory & Adventure Games

*Adding a little adventure to the games...*

The late Dr. P. M Forni, from our home town Baltimore, Maryland and the Johns Hopkins Civility Project elegantly sums up our thoughts from his book **Choosing Civility** (2002), *“In order to be healthy, we need to live among others. Since social integration is healthful, social skills-the skills that make social integration possible-are utterly relevant to our health. When we are skilled in managing our relationships, we are more likely to build and maintain a network of support. Far from being just a matter of good form, civility is also a matter of good health. Quite simply: being good is good for you. To stay healthy we need to perceive our lives as having purpose and meaning. We usually find purpose and meaning linked to the presence of others in our lives. All the more important, then, that we learn how to treat them fairly, respectfully, and considerately. As we do, it becomes clearer and clearer that civility, is the place of encounter between Self and Other where altruism and self-interest find a harmonious way to coexist.”*

The following games, continue to build upon this message. First, let’s see what adventurous tagging offers.



## Introduction to Tag Adventure Games

We now take our students on a more challenging creative journey to tagging and **collecting** games where they will be **invading** the **territory** of others, and in some games, **capturing** items. In the following games we add stories, drama and humor and, most importantly, adventure to games. As you will read, the stories not only add drama, but are inextricably linked to the rules, giving them meaning and purpose. For the

children, they delve into imagination and fantasy as much as they do their physicality. Therefore, the better the story, the better the kids play.

Unfortunately, drama is not something that we can translate well through the typed page, and we wish you well if this is a new aspect to your teaching. We are aware of some teachers' timidity and apprehension after giving in-service sessions of these games. Yes, it takes you temporarily out of your comfort zone. Even we, from time to time, after all these years, trudge ahead confidently knowing your learners are with you, and even there to assist you.

The following class games also continue to fulfill the critical high time-on-task ratio, active learning time/ALT, as each child is involved, often part of a small team or group, yet still experiencing oneness and being engaged with all classmates, not just a few. If taught properly in each game every child will get to play every position at least once in a class. In fact, these games, as mentioned, can be classified as **fitness games** due to the enormous amount of intense running. Depending on your schedule, you may be able to play more than just one of the following full games.

### **Shark Attack** (Sarratt) (grades 1-3)



#### **Introduction**

Shark Attack is without doubt, one of the favorite tag games for our younger students in grades 1-3 and enjoyed occasionally played by fun loving older students too. I believe the reason is the adventurousness and simple sheer fun of the freedom to make **risky choices**.

Each mini game is only a couple minutes where the players are risking and avoiding the sharks. However, each child rotates and plays the Shark position at least once per game/class experience which lasts up to a full 20 - 30 minutes.

This game and the following three games, I present with the same or similar story/paradox/theme. *“Boys and girls, we decided to take a school field trip to the tropical island, to study how children play sports and games. However, the plane in which we were flying ran out of gas and was forced to land on a deserted island. While walking around the island we came upon a beautiful warm tropical pond, and we decided to enjoy the beautiful warm water. We quickly discovered the pond has sharks in it and they look hungry! Do we dare take a chance to go swimming with sharks in the water?”*



**Why are we playing this game?**

- ✓ to practice being honest
- ✓ to play games with adventure
- ✓ to practice both skills of offense and defense, chasing and fleeing
- ✓ to help / rescue our classmate when in need

**Equipment**

- **Cones** to mark boundary
- **Pinnies**
- **Taggers**
- **Sharks** Poly Spots Sportime.com Set of 6 # 9-022959-545
- **Coop bands/straps** (nylon straps at Home Depot/cut to size)
- **Rules Poster/Diagrams**

**Organization**

**Two jobs**

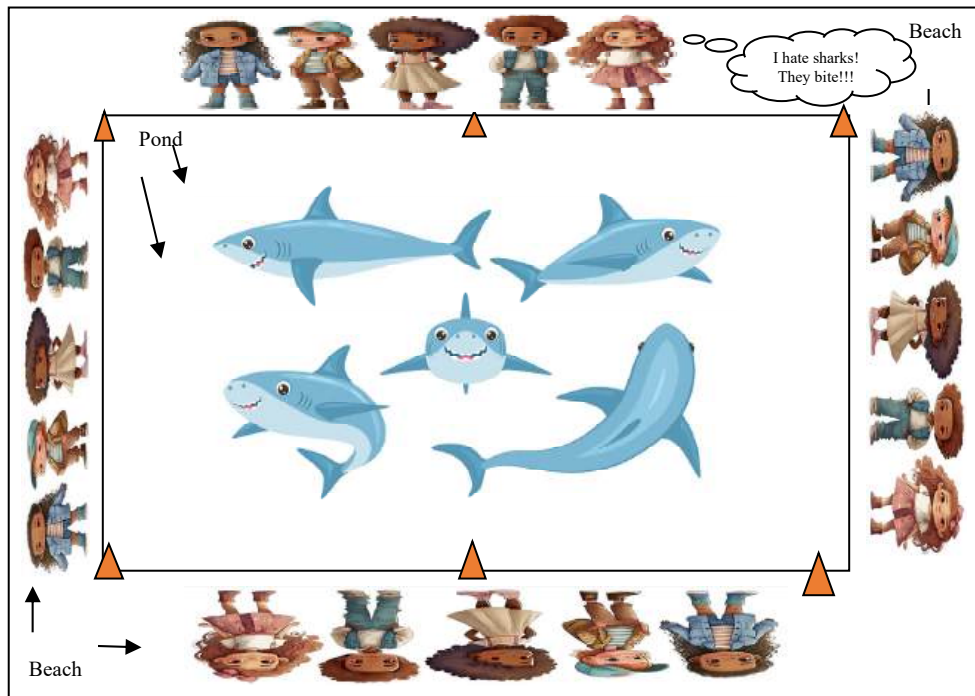
**Swimmers**-starting on the beach

**Sharks**-in the water

Swimmers on the beach. Looking to go for a swim? Swimmers are safe on the beach; in fact they never need to leave the beach. They can hang out there all day. Once they leave, can run at any angle, small or large and take a chance to run all the way across!

Sharks (blue) in water, are waiting for the swimmers. The sharks work as a group to defend their lovely pond from all those swimmers who pollute it!

## Shark Attack Diagram



### How do we play Shark Attack?

Do the kids want to go for a swim? Well of course the kids take a chance to (swim) and run through our make-believe pond, and test the shark's ability to tag them out. The safe area is the outside perimeter of the gym. This area is the No No Land and good safety precautions are followed. For most facilities this is the basketball court / or half court. In these games we refer to this, our outer area as **"the beach."** For the swimmers, the unsafe area is inside the perimeter (basketball court) where the hungry sharks (blue) are located and waiting for them. Each shark should wear a jersey and spread out on the court. All the swimmers will scatter around off the court in No No Land / the beach. You may want to ask the swimmers a question like, *"How does the water feel?"* And they will place their feet or hands in the water to test it! *"Ah, warm!"*

Start the game by saying, *"The pond is open for swimming!"* After a couple minutes of play the teacher will stop the mini game and call for a new group of sharks and the next mini game begins as soon as all the *"swimmers are on the beach."* An excellent cue command is *"Four new sharks in the middle and all swimmers on the beach."*

### Saving

Two saving techniques are used for inclusion and social integration as discussed previously. As with Character tag and other games, the Hero must make it to the tagged out player before getting tagged out himself by a shark. Therefore, once a tagged out player gets touched by a Hero, then he/she may be saved by one of the following two methods.

1. **Hold Hands and Walk Back:** Easier level/younger children. (Grades 1-2)  
The tagged out and seated player is saved by simply walking the out player back to the **safe area** by **holding hands**.



**Holding hands and walking back.**  
*“Safe while saving.”*

**This works nicely for the younger kids.**

2. **Cooperative Bands:** Each student carries a **poly strap** or **cooperative band**. Works ideally for older students to use cooperative bands so that they do not have to hold hands and also on a larger play area like outside on the grass field or pavement. If you don't have these, you can buy this strapping material at hardware stores and cut to length. Shorter lengths work very well.



*“Safe while saving...”*

Each student carries a **poly strap** or **cooperative band**.  
It works well as a savings device.  
Student pair walk back to the **safe area**.

As the diagram above shows in Shark Attack, the safe area is the No No Land (the sandy beach) of the play court. Players must use extreme caution, and must not run and not to touch the walls. We call the walls **Poison Ivy** and this stops dangerous play.

Below is a visual tour of the save system in Shark Attack



Tagged out! – *“Help! Save me from sharks!”*



*“Thank, again buddy, you saved me from those mean sharks!”*  
*“You’re welcome, I don’t like them either, but it’s fun to go swimming...”*

### Two elements to the saves

1. Both players are safe while saving. They may not be tagged out.
2. The saved player shakes hands and thanks his/her hero after they arrive back to the **safe area**. *“Thank you, you’re welcome.”* The social process we used previously is still in effect.

## Shark Attack

### Rules

1. **Careful running!** Eyes forward and use eye scanning.
2. **Fall down = Out.** Wait to be saved.
3. If using the taggers, sharks use the taggers softly. **Gently tag with the taggers.**
4. **Tagged = Out.** 10 F’s. “Feel, friend’s finger (taggers), fairness, flash, freeze, five, flop down, fold, focus.” The swimmers need to sit at the exact spot where tagged.
5. **Poison Ivy Wall = Out.** If you touch the wall, you are out.
6. **Sharks = Out if No No’s Land.** Sharks cannot survive on land...
7. **Lifeguards/Heroes:** Safe while saving. *“Thank you, you’re welcome!”*
8. **Honesty Policy.** We always play honestly, and we do not call others out; even the teacher does not need to do this. *“Why would we want to rob you the opportunity to show us how honest you are?”*

### **Safety concerns**

1. Use eye scanning skills.
2. Run at a personal safe speed.
3. Do not dive, or do knee slides when tagging. Stay on feet.
4. Soft and safe tagging. (Fingers or taggers)
5. Sharks, no playing in No No Land, play in court/water.
6. Stop running near No No Land and walk into safety. (It is better to be tagged then to get hurt...)
7. No touching the walls, poison ivy.

### **Variation**

Experiment by using tagging wands, they may be helpful in this game as well as the following couple games. Tagging wands assist “offensively,” therefore, help the sharks and later on the pirates. They have proven effectively in these games and the following games for safety and assisting the few sharks and pirates. Try them out and see how it works, by cutting swimming pool noodles to about 10 inches is effective.



**Finger Tip Tagging or Tagging Wands?**

## Teaching Tip

After the kids play the offensive position, sharks, it's not a bad idea to have them get water before returning to the game.

**Closing comments:** After the students successfully play Shark Attack, they are now prepared for the next level challenge; our original game, **Island Hopper**, that intensifies the running and chasing fleeing risk reward experience.

## Island Hopper (Grades 1-3 Sarratt)

*It's time for vacation and adventures...*



## Introduction

This game came to me while watching an episode of ER on NBC and the character *John Carter* played by the actor *Noah Wyle* said he had been “*Island Hopping*” on his vacation. I wrote it down that night and created the game and played it with my students the next day.

Island Hopper is part of my series of running, chasing and tagging and risk taking games but now with just five specific locations “**tropical islands**” where the players may run to and are “safe.” Island Hopper is more difficult than Shark Attack therefore a natural progression.

## Why are we playing Island Hopper?

- ✓ to practice being honest
- ✓ to practice social and character skills of saving a player
- ✓ to practice caring
- ✓ to practice our saving skills (empathy) of saving other teammates

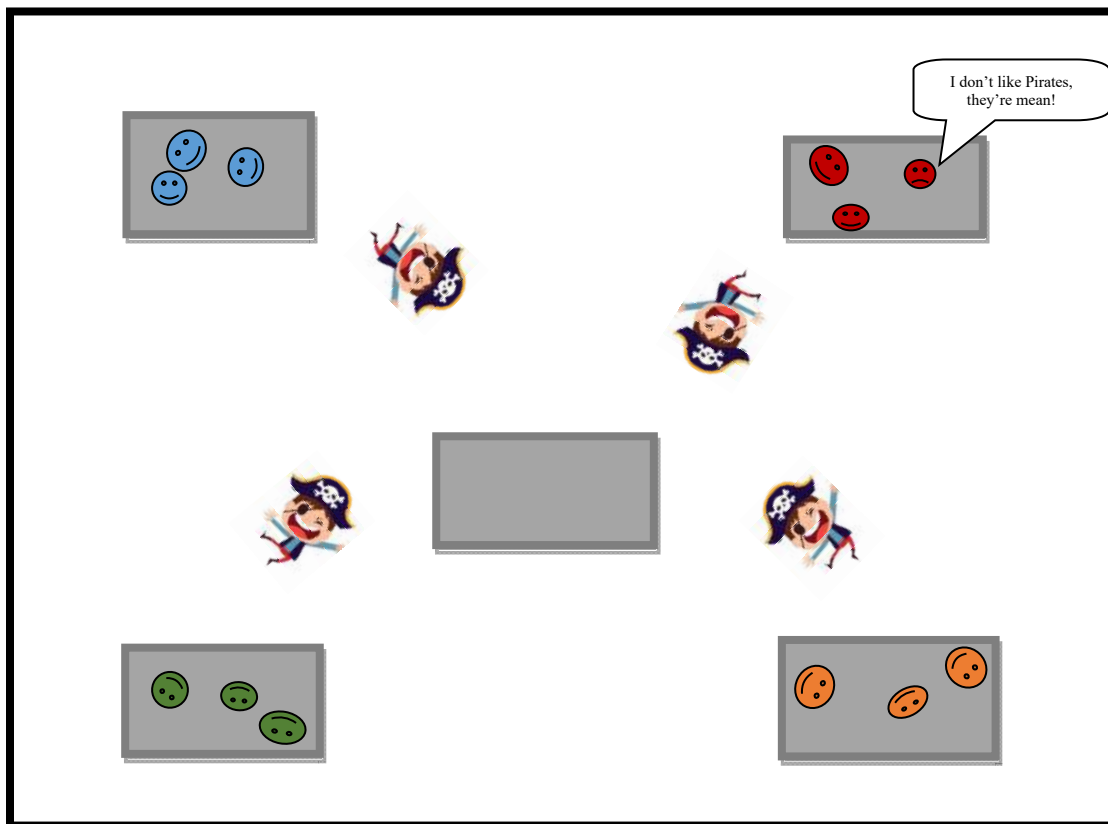
### Equipment

- Pinnies-five colors
- Five medium size tumbling mats
- Cones for No No Land
- Rules poster & diagrams
- Tagging wands

### Organization

As the diagram below shows, place five tumbling mats, “Tropical Islands” on your gym floor; one in each corner and one mat in the center. Divide the students into five heterogeneous teams. All five teams will wear different colored jerseys to distinguish themselves apart from the other teams.

One group will be the pirates for the first game, and will switch around, taking turns being the pirates for each mini-game.



### How we play

Tell a story about **vacationers** vs **pirates**. After the story time and rules have been taught, each team will report to a mat and be prepared to play. The team starting near the center mat, as the story indicated is the mean pirates, but they are not allowed on any island. Only the vacationers are permitted on an island.

Demonstrate how to save in Island Hopper, just like Shark Attack but by bringing the tagged out player on to a tumbling mat/tropical island. Also, that players must not dive or drop to knees on the tumbling mats. They are to remain on their feet. The tumbling mats are not a place to be dangerous- no flips, flops or cartwheels. Again, the kids must use excellent eyes scanning skills due to student convergence.



**Safe running to island, not diving or knee slides...**

Once each mini game begins and the new pirates are off all mats, they guard their islands/mats and chase and tag the **vacationers** like the swimmers in previous game. And conversely the **Vacationers**, are safe when on any of the five mats like the swimmers were on the sandy beach, but the area is greatly diminished. (See below)



***“Do I or do I not take a chance with this pirate...”***

**Game goal:** So vacationers are going to run to as many islands as possible for the duration of the mini game. The pirates, are attempting to tag-out as many “*irritating*” vacationers as possible. After the mini game is complete, which is only couple minutes or so, all the players will return to the mat/island in which they started that mini game. After they return, one of the vacationer’s team is selected to switch mats with the pirate’s team and the new team will play the role of the pirates.

**Note:** the vacationers’ teams will not always start on the same original island. Play at least five mini games so that all the teams have a chance to play the pirate position.

### Variation and progressions

**Choice and character time:** Teammates are expected to save a tagged out teammate and we have worked diligently on this ethic. However the game specifically does not state whether or not a vacationer from another team can be saved. Character question: How long will it take for this to happen? It is a moral/character test? How is our empathy going? How is our caring program? Compassion for others? If I’m doing a good job as a teacher, it should happen without the kids asking me. But it’s not always going to happen naturally and sometimes they just ask me if it’s okay and I say, “*Sure you can save other teammates. That’s a really kind thing to do!*” And then all the vacationers are rescuing each other regardless of team from those pirates. If some classes don’t get it initially, dropping a few subtle hints works to get it going.

### Teaching Tips

Exploratory learning, allow the student the time and opportunity to problem solve. All I’m doing is setting up the game rules and structure. I call it, ***framing the game...*** Providing the structure and system and good learning takes place.

Just like Shark Attack, Island Hopper really sets-up some amazing running, chasing, tagging and saving challenges. It’s the vacationer risking to leave on vacation, but they are perfectly safe where they are, and the funny thing is, they don’t need to go anywhere. They are fine shopping, playing golf, enjoying the tennis, doing their make-overs, eating lunch and doing what suits them contently on the island and on vacation. How could life be any better for the little darlings! But it’s like life itself, that is the lovely paradox. The risk-reward is meant to meet new life challenges for adventure and doing new things.

And that’s what **Island Hopper** does so beautifully, narrows the challenge down just enough. Your kids will adore this game.

## Island Hopper

### Rules

1. Vacationers are safe when on the islands.
2. Pirates are not allowed on any island, but may travel anywhere else.
3. When tagged by a pirate, (10 F’s) sit and wait to be rescued.
4. Tagged out Vacationers may be saved by a teammate.
5. Safe while saving and being saved.

## Safety

1. Use eye scanning skills.
2. Run at a personal safe speed.
3. Do not dive, or do knee slides on the mats. Feet on the mats.
4. Soft safe tagging. (Fingers tips or taggers)
5. No playing in No Man's Land, play in play court. Readjusting the mats will be necessary after they slide- after each mini-game.
6. No touching the walls, poison ivy.

After the students successfully play Island Hooper, they are now prepared for the next challenge, the next game, Pearl Diver, which adds **capturing** and intensifies the running, chasing and fleeing risk reward experience.

## Pearl Diver (grades 1-3) (Sarratt)

Adding capturing to the puzzle...



## Introduction

Pearl Diver is the same game structure as Shark Attack, but now requires a new skill set or physical education **theme** of **capturing** or in many games a commonly used term **collecting**. And naturally if you capture or collect items, players will need to **defend** the items. A new conflict.

Therefore, there is a paradigm change for the next three games as we now focusing on **capturing** and **collecting** and **defending**. We still have the risk-reward when come to students invading the landscape/territory but now with an added capturing

challenge. Does he or she just invade, or does the player take a fun risk to collect? How willing is he/she to chance it? It's scary at first like it was in the previous games, but now to venture out and grabbing an item... That takes more time and skill and athletic ability.

The player must use her/his eyes even better; anticipate the moves of the sharks more, even reading the body language and facial expressions of the sharks. Some kids love to play the shark/pirate position, as you have discovered by now, and now they have to be better at defending and more patient because these games last longer.

**Sharks have three roles**

- Guarding their landscape/personal space/territory
- Guarding their oysters
- Guarding their tagged out players!

**Pearl Divers have three roles**

- Collecting oysters
- Making a small pile of collected oysters
- Saving other players, being a Hero

And yes, fitness becomes more of more of an issue. Maybe some players feel more comfortable saving; that is their natural personality. They prefer to help others. Maybe with time they will become slightly more offensively assertive. We have seen children grow confidently over game play.

As stated, our story with the pond, sandy beach and sharks also continues like before, but we add on the ocean floor beanbags, which represent tasty **oysters**. (What did you expect? We are from Maryland!)

**Why are playing Pearl Diver?**

- ✓ to practice being honest.
- ✓ to practice social and character skills of saving a player.
- ✓ to practice guarding the territory
- ✓ to practice our offensive and defensive skills, chasing and fleeing.
- ✓ to learn and practice collecting
- ✓ to practice caring with saving / rescuing skills.

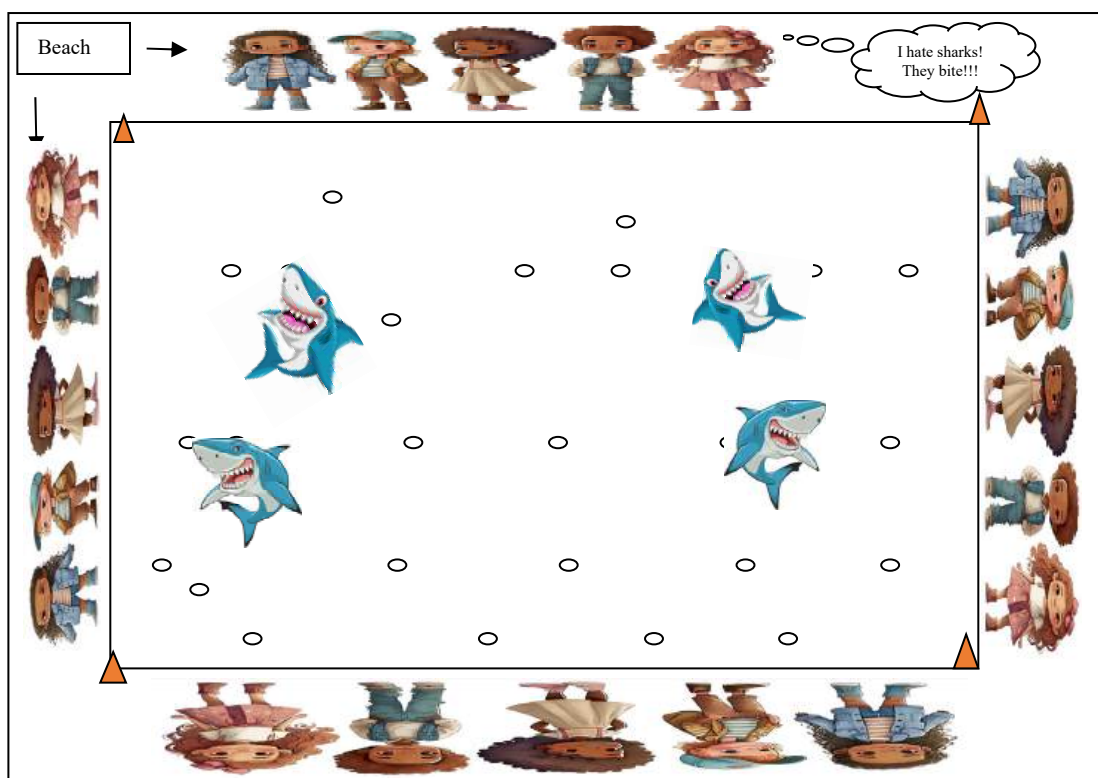
**Equipment**

- 30-50 bean bags
- Cones to mark boundary
- Pinnies- two colors
- Taggers
- Poly Spot Sharks (optional)
- Coop bands/straps (nylon straps at Home Depot/cut to size)
- Rules Poster/Diagrams

**Organization**

Set-up game just like Shark Attack except for the addition of the bean bags. For Pearl Diver, spread about 40-50 **beanbags** around the play area. Have the student practice collecting the bean bags. (See below)

## Pearl Diver



### Pearl Diver - game set-up



40-50 bean bags/oysters scattered throughout the entire play court.  
Note the sharks / poly spots that add a little flair.

### How do we play Pearl Diver?

**Practice before play:** This is a good little fun drill. The safe skill of oyster/bean bag capturing/collecting and placing it against the wall. Practice collection one at a time a making a pile. In fact for younger kids like 1<sup>st</sup> grade just have them practice capturing / collecting and placing 3-5 bean bags and making a pile against the wall prior to play.

#### Practicing making a pile prior to play



#### A fun drill!

**Story time:** Begin by asking the kids a series of questions to set the dramatic PE stage. *“What are oysters? Where do they come from? Can you eat them if hungry? Are they tasty? Where do pearls come from? Are the oysters valuable then? What are the sharks going to eat for dinner? That’s right; the sharks are planning to have oysters for dinner too! So what you are telling me boys and girls **both** the swimmers and the sharks want the oysters!”* Another conflict/conundrum, wow, what do you know...

With our dramatic “story” in place set-up, the **swimmers**, now pretending to wear a mask and snorkels or scuba gear and now dive down to bottom of the pond and grab an oyster. Just like before, start scatter around and on the beach and the 3-5 Sharks will be in the middle of the pond ready to defend their tasty oysters and lovely water. *“How dare those swimmers...”*

On the teacher’s start signal, the swimmer’s will attempt to run out a pick one oyster and return to personal spot on the beach/wall, as they practiced, where they may set the beanbag gently down, no sliding, and make a little pile (against the wall). No throwing or sliding it, set it down. The students may collect as many oysters per game as possible; but only one oyster at a time, per trip.

For all capturing/collecting games  
only one item is taken at a time and per trip



The honesty of taking only one oyster at a time per trip

A tagged player must sit down at that exact spot. If they were holding a beanbag they set it down next to them where they were tagged. They do not slide or throw or hand it off to anyone, etc. Of course, once on the floor, anyone else may quickly swoop it up.

**Saving:** Any player /swimmer may save any a tagged out player, just like in previous games. But in this game, it shows utter selflessness due to the fact that it takes play time away from the rescuer, when he/she could be collecting oysters. When we see it in action, it truly demonstrates a higher level of caring and empathy for the tagged out player so that they can reenter into play, and this means that they will have more competition for the limited oysters. Young kids know it and still do it. Even with this paradox, pupils have grown even more compassionate and make this moral judgment. To this day, it still amazes me.

**Creative conundrum:** Item or Saving? Hero nor person being saved brings a bean bag with them during the rescue; it's one or the other. Item or saving? These games creates creative character choices!

Play for a couple minute or so for each mini game or until most the oysters are collected, but not all. Congratulate the sharks, **honesty** players, and the **Heroes** for saving and caring and taking their time. Tell all the swimmers to go back to their personal spot and count how many oysters they collected. Ask them to open the oysters up and to see if there are any pearls inside! Wow! Now, they can eat them! *Yuck!*



*Does your oyster have a pearl inside...  
It's almost time for dinner...*

After each mini game, we like to clap for the sharks; that's tough duty being a shark and defending those oysters. Ask the sharks if they caught any swimmers! Ask them if they like it when those swimmer come take their oysters from them...

Rotate 4-5 the new sharks in as in Shark Attack. Play until all students have played both roles: the Pearl Divers and the sharks. The kids just love the adventure of this game!



## Pearl Diver

### Rules

1. **Careful running!** Eyes forward and eye scanning skills.
2. **Fall down = Out.** Wait to be saved.
3. If using the taggers, sharks use the taggers softly. **Gently tags with the taggers.**
4. **Tagged = Out.** 10 F's "Feel, friends fingers (taggers), fairness, flash, flash, five, flop, (down), fold & focus." The swimmer need to sit at the exact spot where tagged.
5. Collect only one oyster at a time.
6. If tagged with an oyster, drop oyster on the floor next you.
7. Take collected oyster to sandy beach next to wall and make a private pile.
8. Do not take oysters from anyone's pile.
9. Do not take an oyster with you while saving or being saved.
10. **Sharks = Out if No No Land.** Sharks cannot survive on land...
11. **Lifeguards/Heroes:** Safe while saving. *"Thank you, you're welcome!"*
12. **Honesty Policy.** We always play honestly, and we do not call others out; even the teacher doesn't need to do this. *"Why would we want to rob you the opportunity to show us how honest you are?"*

### Safety

- Use eye scanning skills.
- Run at a personal safe speed.
- Do not dive, or do knee slides. Stay on feet.
- Soft safe tagging. (Fingers or taggers)
- No playing in No No Land, play in court.
- **Poison Ivy Wall = Out:** If you touch the wall, you are out.

### Variations

Experiment by using tagging wands they may be helpful in this games as well as the following couple games. Tagging wands assist "offensively" therefore, help the sharks and later on, the pirates. They have proven effectively in these games and the following games for safety and assisting the few sharks and pirates. Try them out and see how it works by cutting swimming pool noodles to about 10 inches.

### Teaching Tips

Exploratory learning is allowing students the time and opportunity to problem solve. All I'm doing is setting up the game rules and structure. ***Framing the game...***

Just like Shark Attack, Island Hopper, and now with Pearl Diver, we set-up some amazing running, chasing, tagging and saving challenges. This give the learners the final decision when to collect an item and when to save a buddy!

The journey continues. After the students successfully play Pearl Diver, they are now prepared for the next challenge-the next game, **Treasure Island**, which is a combination of Island Hopper and Pearl Diver. It challenges both the pirates and vacationers. Or that's how the story goes...

## Treasure Island

(grades 1-3) (Sarratt/et al)

*Capturing get complex...*



### Introduction

From Island hopper we lead directly into the game **Treasure Island**. This game also goes by the name Pirate Island. This is our version/adaptation and the origin is unknown. As you can see from the diagram and pictures below with the game structure, the pirates are still fully tested to defend the items. But the vacationers must take on a further risk and enter a smaller area to capture an item and only one place to return it- their island. But now there's a team cooperative element- they must work together. By competing against the other three teams and the pirates! So again we up the challenge ante... Don't worry, it's worth the risk and adventure!

#### Why are we playing Treasure Island?

- ✓ to practice being honest
- ✓ to practice social and character skills of saving a player
- ✓ to learn about space and territory
- ✓ to practice our offensive and defensive skills, chasing and fleeing
- ✓ to learn and practice collecting
- ✓ to practice caring
- ✓ to practice our saving / rescuing skills

### Equipment

- 40-60 bean bags
- Cones to mark boundary lines
- Pinnies-five colors
- Taggers
- Poly Spot Sharks (optional)
- Coop bands/straps (nylon straps at Home Depot/cut to size)
- Rules Poster/Diagrams

### Organization (see photo below)

Treasure Island is set up identical to previous **Island Hopper** except the center gym mat is removed. The center circle area is now called the Treasure Island or Pirate Island. On Pirate's Island is where the pirates are, and there are many **valuables** that were taken / stolen from the vacationers islands, hence the name **Treasure Island**. Again, like Island Hopper, there are still five teams and all five will get the opportunity to play the role of Pirates and Vacationers.

#### Guard those valuables!



*Pirates, don't let those vacationers get those valuables back...*

### How do we play Treasure Island?

I explain to the children, *“Over the years the pirates have taken/stolen your “valuables” and taken them to their Treasure Island and you are going to try to get them back! Right?* You will get your valuables (toys, cell phones, Xbox, lap tops, I Watch, etc.) back by sneaking up to the Pirate's Island and grabbing one of the valuables and bringing it back to your island.

Place 40-60 bean bags valuables atop the perimeter of the center circle of the gym. A 12-foot diameter circle is a perfect size. This cannot be too big or too small or it will not work. (See below) One of the five teams will play the role of the pirates and start by standing near the center circle (Pirate Island) and the four “Vacationers” will be ready, standing on top their islands placed in the four corners of the gym.

On the teacher's start signal, all the vacationers are free to leave their safe island and attempt to take one valuable from the center circle and run it back to their island. Each team creates a pile on their mat/island. The pirates, of course, are not going to just let the vacationers take the valuables without a fuss, therefore, they are free to run about the gym and tag the Vacationers!

Each team plays separately from the other four teams and are trying to get as many as valuables possible during each mini game. When a vacationers is tagged while running with a bean bag they are out and must perform the flash hand, freeze sit down and set the bean bag on the floor next to them, just like in Pearl Diver, for another Vacationer to retrieve. Naturally the Vacationers are safe on their own island and the Pirates may not trespass on the islands. They will be in trouble by the **Island Police!** Vacationers may not trespass on other Vacationer's island. (Silly stories seal the rules.)

Each mini game is played for several minutes or until all or most the valuables are taken. After each mini game the Vacationers report back to their island to count the captured beanbags. The Pirates will report back to the Pirate Island, rest and count, if any, bean bags remaining. The teacher asks the four teams one at a time, how many beanbags were captured. Again, compliment and clap the pirate's team for their effort, and safety and gentleness. This is extremely difficult for the pirates to defend the valuables for long. Switch them with one of the vacationer teams. Repeat until all five team has played the role of the pirates.

## **Treasure Island** (grades 1-3) (Sarratt/et al)

### ***Rules and Safety***

1. **Careful running!** Eyes forward and eye scanning skills.
2. **Fall down = Out.** Wait to be saved.
3. If using the taggers, Pirates use the taggers softly. **Gently tags with the taggers.**
4. **Tagged = Out.** "Feel, finger (taggers), flash, five, flop, fold, focus." The vacationers need to sit at the exact spot where tagged.
5. Collect only one valuable at a time.
6. If tagged with a valuable, drop it next to you.
7. Take collected valuable to your island and make a team pile.
8. Do not go on anyone else's island or take valuables from there.
9. Do not take an oyster with you while saving or being saved.
10. **Honesty Policy.** We always play honestly, and we do not call others out; even the teacher does not need to do this. *"Why would we want to rob you the opportunity to show us how honest you are?"*

### **Safety**

- Use eye scanning skills.
- Run at a personal safe speed.
- Do not dive, or do knee slides. Stay on feet.
- Soft a safe tagging. (Fingers or taggers)
- No playing in No Man's Land, play in play court.
- **Poison Ivy Wall = Out.** If you touch the wall.

### **Variation and progression**

**Saving:** Without a doubt, Treasure Island ups the ante being cooperative and thinking skills-problem solving puzzle, and teammates must save one another to keep their team in the mini game or their entire team can be eliminated. But one they usually master, but not always... As in Pearl Diver any team may save any a tagged out player just like in previous games. And once again, it shows utter selflessness due to the fact that it takes play time away from the rescuer when he could be collecting valuables for their team and it shows a higher level of caring and empathy. If a team gets eliminated, during a mini game watch how long it takes for another team to notice it. By now they may automatically may just help each team out. Or just dropping a couple hints are all that's needed. And a nearby team should come to rescue and reengage the eliminated team. Your players have grown on many levels.

### **Teaching Tips**

It will be important to address concepts of risk taking and most importantly, stealing, as part of your daily closure. But before leaving Intermediate games, we did not want ignore these critical concerns; they should be addressed, not avoided as part of our lessons. Positive moral and ethical messages should be learned while playing games as we know, imagination is one of the lovely parts of childhood. Therefore, placing dramatic physical education games in the proper education context is an honor.

### **Closure**

We turn our attention to an advanced running, chasing, tagging adventure game dedicated for older students and the final one, Blueberries and Strawberries!

## Blueberries and Strawberries

(Grades 3-5) (Winters/Sarratt)

Basic game originally created as *Blueberries for Sal* by Kathy Winters  
in *Great Activities Magazine*, fully developed by D. Sarratt

*Let the adventure begin...*



### INTRODUCTION

When asked by colleagues, parents, coworkers and even friends what is the most fun physical education game kids like to play in our classes, Blueberries and Strawberries is way at the top, maybe the top of the list, year after year. It's a distinctive game for 3<sup>rd</sup> - 5<sup>th</sup> grades due to the fact that it is active, cooperative, competitive, exciting, and risky. It includes drama, humor and definitely requires physical skills, teamwork and thinking. Also due to the uniqueness of the game, every child, regardless of physical talent, finds a "home" in this game and feels a sense of contribution. And I'm sure I've left out lots of things that the kids and staff members have told me over the years.

Considering scope and sequence, B & S is the culminating activity of our Invasion Games Unit. However, B & S can be a stand-alone game or mini unit played in middle or towards end of the school year. It can be combined with many units even the cooperative challenge unit. Keep it simple for the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders, and completely challenge the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders with the additional modifications.

Also for me, it's considered a celebration for many of the skills and concepts I've worked towards that year. As for teaching technique, progressively adding new challenges, rules and dramatic themes/stories from game to game to each new class as the youngsters are able to handle the modifications keeps the learners enticed.

From the instructor's personal perspective, this game is a pleasure. It's one of those unique lessons we fondly encounter with the learners as they experience physical education creatively. It's especially rewarding to see the students growth and development using character education skills and problem solving integrated into daily lessons and how these concepts and theory affects the experience and overall outcome.

### Why are playing this game?

- ✓ to practice being honest
- ✓ to practice social and character skills of saving a player
- ✓ to practice our offensive and defensive skills, chasing and fleeing.
- ✓ to learn and practice collecting
- ✓ to practice caring, by saving / rescuing skills
- ✓ to learn game tactics through problem-solving & with your teammates

## EQUIPMENT and FACILITY

**Basic game:** Honesty Blueberries and Strawberries

**Equipment should be divided as Blue and Red**

- Divide the teams down the length of the gym. (see enclosed diagram)
- Two sets of pinnies- red and blue
- Two complete sets of bean bags 20-30 for each side, depending on class size, different colors; red and blue. Bean bags are needed because balls roll away.
- Two buckets or milk crates. One for each side both same color helps.

## Creative / Extension Games

- Two scooters per side; colors to match team
- Two sets of flag football flags; Sonic Flag A-Tag blue / red.
- Four tumbling mats, two each team, placed in the corners. If the mats are rather large, it's best to fold mat in half. Advanced game.
- Rubber chickens:



- Four small buckets. Four little baskets, *medical bag*, each with a plastic drinking cup, small ball air pump, (with needle removed) and a toy band aid (large band aids laminated). Advanced game.

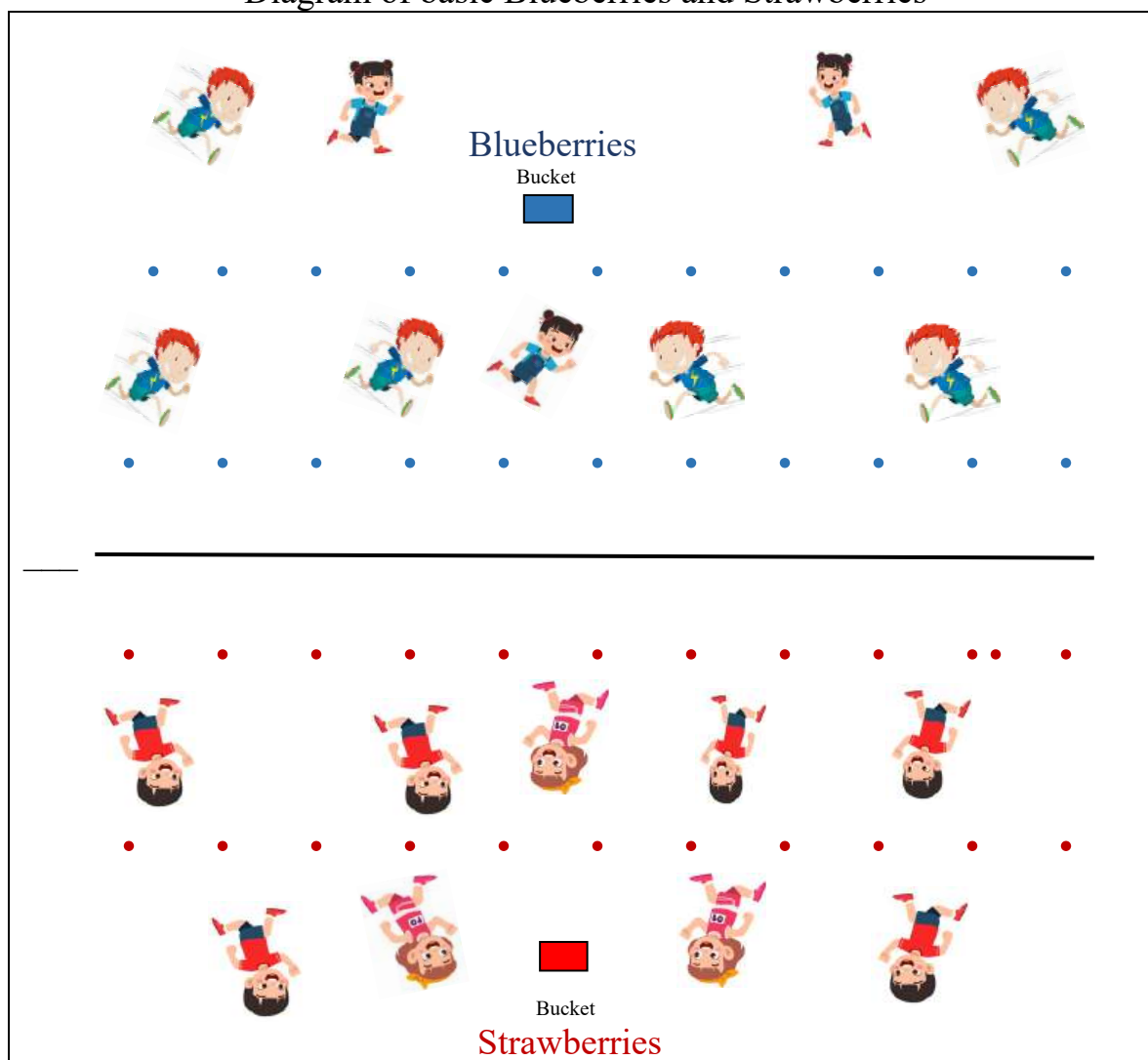


- Various posters and word walls, flash cards. (Some enclosed)
- **Note:** The following discussion focuses on the indoor games and modifications. See below for outside game.

## Organization-

Basic Game- set up

Diagram of basic Blueberries and Strawberries



## How we play Honesty Blueberries and Strawberries

### Theme

With drama, briefly describe the game setting something like this: *“Once upon a time there were two different families of farmers living in the country. One family lives on one side of a field and the other lives on the opposite side of the field. Neither family likes the other that much and unfortunately had been feuding over the years. There is a tiny stream separating the two sides. (Dividing line)”*

*One family has a bunch of blueberries in their field but they are allergic to them! They cannot touch them! The other family has a bunch of strawberries also spread all over their field and they are allergic to them as well. They cannot touch them. However, both families are protecting their valuable berries in hope that they can sell them to hikers. But both families are getting hungry, and want to eat the other families' berries. The kids think it fun to sneak over to the others' farm and, "get those berries!" Maybe make some berry pie!*

- *Boys and girls what do you think the farmers' kids did?*
- *Would you like to play a game called Blueberries and Strawberries and be able to sneak over to the other farm, and "get some of those berries?"*

### **Blueberries and Strawberries**

For simple clarity B & S has several progressions / gamify systems in the way we can teach to our students. Using part, part to whole method works wonders.

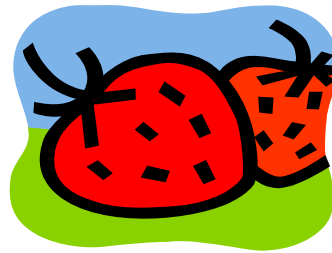
1. **Drills:** practice collecting the berries
2. **Basic Game Honesty:** test game/rules/learning game/single elimination (if you feel your pupils need to practice this)
3. **Regular Game:** with reentry/saving/hero systems (see below)
4. **Creative challenges:** modification / gamifying

### **Basic Honesty Game and Rules:** the learning game

The regular game with reentry/saving and no single elimination is the recommended method for playing. So if the class/students have learned basic safety, honesty, saving, hero, collecting, caring and empathy skills from previously Invasion-Territory Games, by all means, begin with the Regular Game. Think of the **Basic Honesty Game** as just the **learning game** for a super quick honesty and rules "test game" if you will. For Regular Game and rule description see following page for saving.

1. Safety check: Students must have experience in the prior stopping game, tag, invasion-territory games to play B & S effectively. Students will continue safe play from other games including: good stopping skills, controlled running, not running near or into the walls, knees slides or hard tags. They will use gentle fingertip tags only. For this game, it is critical the students run with complete control and watch where they are running and where others are running.
2. Students must demonstrate complete trust and honesty.
3. When the player is on his/her side of the court they are SAFE.
4. When a player invades over the midline to the opponent's court (trespassing) they are off-sides and can be tagged-out. The player is out for the remainder of the game only in the basic/learning game. (Basic game only uses single elimination; reentry method is the advanced and again the preferred game.)
5. When they are tagged out they must perform the **F's** system (feel tag & flash hand, etc.) and will sit down at the exact spot where tagged. This often will require students to turn around, walk back several steps and then sit down.
6. A player may run to the opponent's side and *capture* the opponent's bean bag (blueberry or strawberry).
7. Each player may only take one at a time berry at a time. Once a player makes it "safely" back to his/her side of the court/field he places the captured berry in his/her bucket and may continue to play.

8. If a player is tagged while capturing a berry, he/she must sit down and set the berry down next to him/her at the exact spot where tagged. He/she may not slide it, hand it to a teammate, or throw it over to his/her side. Note: Players will discover to *sacrifice* themselves by advancing the berry toward their side, which of course helps the team. You may elect to explain this concept to the students before play, the students are naturally more willing to play fairly, sacrifice and accept being tagged out.
9. Players may not touch, kick, throw or move in any way their own berries. Her/his berries are allergic to them.
10. When the game is stopped, the team with the most berries wins. Any player that is still running with a captured berry on the opponent's side must drop-it and leave it behind.



You will know when to “graduate” into regular game; it’s when your students reach a readiness level and competency of the basic safety practices, rules and skills and of course the **honesty policy, independent play theory** concept discussed throughout section. Usually for older grades such as 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade only one or two basic practice game(s) is needed, if that.

**Regular / Normal Game:** Therefore use your judgment if you feel confident, initially begin the game with the regular rules and progress from there.

**Saving:** As with intermediate invasion-territory game there are three saving techniques used for inclusion and social integration as discussed previously. And as in Character tag and other games, the Hero must make it to the tagged out player before getting tagged out himself. Therefore once a tagged out player gets touched by a Hero, then he/she may be saved by one of the following three methods.

**Level 1. Hold Hands and Walk Back:** Best for outside on grass or pavement or for an easier level challenge. The tagged out and seated player is saved by simply walking the out player back to the **safe area** by **holding hands**.



Holding, and walking back.

*“Safe while saving.”*

(This works nicely for the younger kids - 3<sup>rd</sup> graders)

**Level 2. Cooperative Bands:** Each student carries a **poly strap** or **cooperative band**.

This works ideally for older students to use cooperative bands so that they do not have to hold hands and also on larger play area like outside on the grass field or pavement or again if you wish to modify the game to an easier level.

If you don't have these, you can buy this strapping material at hardware stores and cut to length. Shorter lengths, 12” work well.



*“Safe while saving and being saved”*

Each student carries a **poly strap** or **cooperative band**

It works wonders as a savings device 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> graders

Students, pair, must walk back to the **safe area**, their starting side

**Level 3. Hook and Drag (DHS)** (see below). Teachers, if you have not tried the Hook and Drag (H & D) technique yet, I highly recommend it. It truly tests the kids when rescuing in B & S and in tagging in advanced adventure games by adding a more difficult cooperative flair to the game.

The H & D is best used for inside only, for sure, a more difficult level challenge, for players 4th grade on up. As mentioned earlier but bears repeating in this section our theory that the save should be difficult, but not too strenuous, and the hook and drag is my creation for most of our upper level territory games. We really want to work the kids!

It also provides a function that children play much more seriously- **being tagged out adds more significance** to the game.

You'll note that it also has more mature cooperative element. After the saving player has safely reached the out player, she/he will stand behind the out player squat down and reach up and under the out player's underarms and pull her/him back to her/his side of court. The saving player does not try to lift the out player but slides her/him on her/his gluts. The out player assists by **pushing** and **pumping** legs. However, the tagged out player's **gluts** must remain **sliding** on the floor. With just a little practice the kids become excellent at this. Just another skill.

Yes, the smallest child can save the largest child does it all the time. And yes again, it is difficult to save someone like this, and it takes a tad bit of strength, not to mention, time and effort away from capturing berries. Just what we want! Both teammates are safe from being tagged-out during the rescue. We use the expression/cue, *"Safe while saving and safe while being saved."* If the rescue operation is not performed correct, both players need a quick visit to the instructor for rules refinement and maybe a quick practice session. As discussed, no berries may be brought back during the rescue. So now an invading player is either saving or grabbing berries. Once both players arrive safely back on their side they may resume normal play.

#### Visual tour of the Hook and Drag saving in Blueberries and Strawberries



Hook under arms/shoulder, do not lift, slide backwards



*"Thanks buddy, you saved me from those mean old farmers!"*  
*"You're welcome, I don't like them either, but it's fun to get those berries!"*

### Two key elements to the saves

- Both players are safe while saving and coming back to their side. They may not be tagged out.
- The saved players are welcome to shake hands and thank his/her hero after they arrive back to the **safe area**. *“Thank you, you’re welcome.”* The social process we used previously. But it’s not required anymore.

### Four Game Challenges:

1. **Secret Play Plan:** After the students have played with saving teammates for several games it is fun to allow the students to huddle up and devise a **secret play plan (SPP)** (DHS). Team cooperatively create and self-assign players' positions with specific responsibilities. The three typical positions and duties are naturally created over the years are: First, the **Grabbers** whose job it is to trespass and capture the berries. The second position is the **savers or Heroes** who will rescue the grabber after they have been tagged-out. The third position is the **guards**, who will stay back on their side and protect the teams' precious berries from the opposing grabbers. Each position is equally important and difficult. After each game the kids can huddle-up for a new **SPP** and they may wish to rotate positions after each game.
2. **Doctor, Hospital and Tractor:** Substitute two - four scooters per team for saving depending on class size. Don't worry the kids love it! And we now modify saving to the story and to a specific job: you got it - a **Farm Doctor**. Each team will need between 2-4 doctors on a scooter/tractor, depending on class size, who will now carefully sit and ride their **tractor / gym scooter** to their tagged-out teammate and gently place her on the tractor and carefully push him/her back to their farms' **hospital**. If the wounded player falls off the tractor during the saving mission, both players need to report to the teacher for a brief rules redirection and safety clarification session.

Designate a small tumbling mat or half folded mat for the two **hospitals** for each team. Once the doctor and the saved player reach the hospital, the doctor turns the scooter over, pretends to pull out his trusty medical bag / small basket, a gives his patient an “imaginary” drink of water with the **cup** (gulp). The medical service ends with a make-believe shot of medicine using the small ball pump (ouch!) and the Doctor must also pretend to place a toy band aid on where he/she received her shot of medicine. Furthermore, the injured player who is now magically recuperated can thank the doctor for his/her caring efforts and especially performing these medical duties, by shaking his hand or verbal gesture. *“Thanks Doctor \_\_\_\_\_, You’re welcome \_\_\_\_\_.”* Both players go quickly back into action. The suddenly healed and rescued player rushes back into action and the doctor back onto the scooter to rescue another tagged out player.



### Visual of doctor: *scooters*



*Honesty, she waits for the Doctor...*



*Here comes the Doctor...*



*Heading back to the Hospital...*

3. **Chicken Coop and Hospital:** (see diagram below) Oh no, our dramatic story takes a turn for the worse... The mean old farmers caught those sneaky little kids and locked them up in the stinky chicken coop! “*Yep, that’ll teach ‘em a lesson!*” The farmer thinks if they have to spend the night in there, they’ll never sneak his berries again. However, these kids are quite tricky... In corners are the two Chicken Coops. When a player gets tagged out while trespassing, the tagger escorts the trespasser over to the chicken coop and locks her/him in. An imaginary turning of the key is needed for dramatic purposes. “*Click!!*” To save a player from the horrible stench, any teammate may attempt to save a teammate by running to her/him, imaginarily unlocking the chicken coop using his make-believe key, “*click,*” grabbing hold of the locked in teammate’s hand and escorting her/him back by holding hands, or using *partner bands*. Both players are safe while saving and being saved like with the hook and drag and no berries are brought back as well. The hero must walk her/him all the way back to their team’s **Hospital** and perform the emergency services on his buddy. Once she/he is has recovered from her/his visit to the Chick Coop, she/he is instantly back in the game.

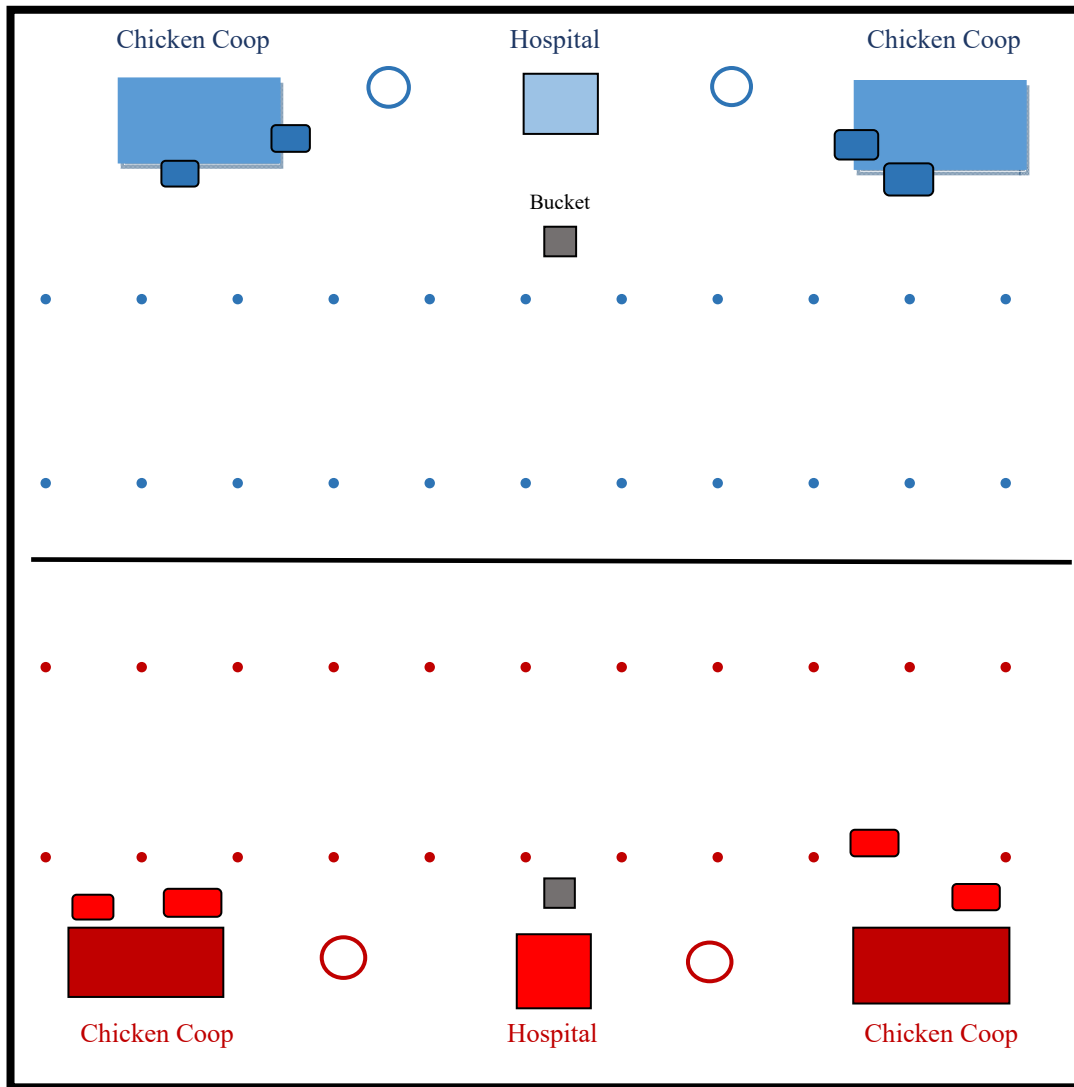


**Chicken Coop**

4. **Flags and Hula Hoops:** (See [Snatch-It](#)) Adding flags to the games greatly excites and challenges the players. The students will no longer wear the pinnies, but flag football flags. By using conventional flag chasing rules, the students will now get opponents out by snatching/pulling a flag. Only one flag needs to be snatched off to get out. Snatching a flag off is significantly more difficult than tagging, as a result, it creates a more offensive game. Furthermore, the flag modification can be taught and played in conjunction with many of these previous challenges/progression. Experience will be your best indicator if you choose to add both simultaneously. The player tossed the flag at the player's feet, and the player reattached his/her flag. Waits to be saved. I've also added hula hoops in the back for the snatched out flag to go into. (See variations/progressions.)



**Diagram with Chicken Coop, Hospital and Tractors/Scooters**



**Diagram with Chicken Coop, Hospital and Tractors/Scooters**

**Procedure and Helpful Hints:** The previous rules section along with the enclosed diagrams has extensive enough information to play the game, and I debated to include this section at all. But, it is incorporated for those instructors new to Invasion Games who may wish for additional insight on set up and game procedure.

1. **Introduce the game and the theme.**
2. **Introduce basic safety** rules and procedures. Explain your consequences for rules infractions, rough and dangerous play.

3. **Set-up game:** spreading out the two different colored berries / bean bags on the two sides. Each team will need the exact amount of berries. (Please see enclosed diagram) Younger students, 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, may need to practice several times, just picking up the other team's berries and placing them in their bucket. Practicing this without defenders guarding the berries will make a graceful transition into the basic game. Make a timed race out of it; the students love this little challenge, as well. It also offers a test for safety.
4. **Introduce Basic Rules:** Briefly cover and demo the basic rules.
5. **Practice before play:** Each team, one at a time practices grabbing, collecting the other team's berries without any defenders. How fast can they do it without falling down? Just one at a time!
6. **Play single Honesty Game?** Single elimination. No saving? Test game of honesty. Is this needed in your program?
7. **Play basic game with saving:** Each basic game will take between three to five minutes. At first it will take longer until they solve the problems of tactic and strategy. Watch for rules breaking due to frustration when the players are tagged out initially. Occasionally, a player may slide or throw the bean bag across in frustration. This fades once the students discover they are helping their team by advancing the berry toward their side when they are tagged out (this is called a *sacrifice*). Play the game until one team has collected all the opponents berries, or until a **stalemate** occurs, and there is no chance of player(s) getting the final berries. The team that collects the most berries, of course, wins. While the players get a quick breather, scatter the two sets of berries for next the game. Play more basic games. They will dramatically improve after several games.
8. **Practice Time:** Play lots of games with the rule of **saving / rescuing and Hero**. Explain and remind the class that saving teammates is supposed to be difficult. It takes time and effort away from capturing berries. *"That's why you're a... Hero..."*
9. **Modify scoring:** This can be fun and a highly effective way to maintain game control. It's accomplished by deducting captured berry points for infractions. Also for creative scoring, deduct berry points for teammates not saved by the end of the game, left stranded, or in other ways to challenge the students to your overall lesson goal.
10. **Make the Secret Play Plan: (SPP)** It's appealing to watch our learners discover game tactics. After several advanced games and while the teacher is setting-up for the next game, the students take a brief rest period while they huddle and make a SPP. They will create great game tactics and strategies. Each class will be different in their play styles and develop creative game plans. As they play more games, and with more planning they will discover excellent strategies with their thinking skills.
11. **Add the Doctor, Tractor and Hospital:** Set up needed equipment and mini poster. Also kids will pick new Doctors each game.
12. **Add the Chicken Coop:**
13. **Add the flags and Hula Hoops:** Snatched flags are placed into the hula hoops. Now teammates have to collect his/her teammate's flag from the hula hoop back to the out players to save them. This sets-up advanced running, defending, saving challenges. Experiment and see how it works for your program.

## Variations

Modify the game with new and different creative changes. Maybe create an entirely new theme: down in tropical islands, Alaska with igloos, and sled dogs, etc.

## B & S Outside Field Play/Field Day

- **Bottles not bean bags:** Kids bring in a clean smaller and (20 oz. *Gatorade* bottle works the best) and tape the tops with yellow and red colors and it worked remarkably well as opposed to bean bags which really can't be seen in the grass. Just let a little water remain in of the bottle and they will stand-up tall in the grass. And yes, you got it, one long rope and several tall cones on top, as the dividing line does the trick. A few cones in the corners doesn't hurt either.





- **B&S as a FD Station:** And you may not believe this, but once your Honesty Policy is so well ingrained, your classes can play along with classroom teachers and volunteers as a field day station.

### Teaching Tips/Closure

Culminate each lesson by gently explaining or reminding them that this is a game, and stealing and trespassing in “real life” is wrong and illegal. In games, it is for imagination, fun and play.

In closing this game discussion, you may initially feel the game is “*too much*” for your students. It could if you try to progress too quickly. Also, like all new games or units it takes a little while to feel competent teaching this game. However, it is a fairly simple game to play and easy to teach if we don’t make it too complicated.

Also, you may feel hesitant thinking that this game requires too much of a time commitment. The majority of times playing the game with our students, it is for only a couple classes and we can start out using the advanced rules with saving. Some years we invest more time and play all the way through using most the progressions, including the flags, and discover the potential of students. Enjoy!



*Dude! Blueberries and Strawberries rocks!*

## 2 Bonus games-See below>>

**Bonus fun creative tag game** (grades 2-5)

# Grinch Tag

Created by D. Sarratt – MVES – USA

**Theme:** Our students are enjoying a wonderful winter time. All of a sudden, the **Grinch(s)** comes along and makes a mess of it. He doesn't want us to enjoy the holiday season and be happy!

Well, little **Cindy-Lou Who** and **Sandy-Lou Who** are going to fix that! They are going to save our holiday. They have the most special gift of all, and it's not a present, but something more powerful.

Would like to know what it is... **Kindness!**

## Rules and Procedure:

1. Game starts when the song, *"You're a mean one **Mr. Grinch**"* plays. Turn it up!
2. A few green **Grinch's** tags the town citizens of *Who*-ville. (Use long green taggers about 2' long-Candy Canes!)
3. When tagged, you must flash & freeze and are sad. Sit and sing along to the song, *"You're a mean one **Mr. Grinch...**"*
4. A few **Cindy-Lou** or **Sandy-Lou** of *Who*-ville will come and help you. They will make you feel welcome. They save them.
5. Thank little **Cindy-Lou** or **Sandy-Lou** from *Who*-ville and you may go back to town. Shake hands & thank you!
6. Rotate in a few new **Grinch's** - "Its"
7. Rotate in a few new **Cindy** and **Sandy Lou's**
8. Play until everyone got to play all positions!
9. Close game with positive messages.
10. **Game tip:** buy a few green **Grinch** tee shirts just this game! Kids will love it! The Cindy-Lou Who and Sandy-Lou Who can use any another color pinnie like **yellow**.



Sneak-A-Tag games>>>

Please see **Snatch It** section for more information.

## **Sneak-A-Tag** (Grades 1-3) (Sarratt)

### **Mini games progressions**

1. **All it:** scatter formation and may chase anyone. Everyone is it, can chase everyone.
2. **Four Team All It:** four separate teams and games going at the same time, each team scatters and plays in their home quarter of the gym. Four mini games played simultaneously. Blue VS blue, red VS red, green VS green, yellow VS yellow.
3. **Blue Team It:** blue team chases the other 3 teams. “Home Base” formations to begin for each team. Home courts starts. Go get them blue!
4. **Red Team It:** Home courts starts. Go get them red!
5. **Green Team It:** Home courts. Go get them green!
6. **Yellow Team It:** Home courts. Go get them yellow!
7. **Blue VS Red and Green VS Yellow:** “Home Court formation” to begin and 2 separate games at the simultaneously, each team is it and able to get the other.
8. **Red VS Green and Blue VS Yellow:** “Home Court formation” to begin and 2 separate games at the simultaneously, each team is it and able to get the other.
9. **Blue VS Green and Red VS Yellow:** “Home Court formation” to begin and 2 separate games at the simultaneously, each team is it and able to get the other.
10. **Four Teams VS Four Teams:** “Home Court” starting formation and one game, each team against the other three teams.
11. **Blue and Red VS Green and Yellow:** one game, two teams, “Combination Home Court” formation to begin to play against the other two combined teams, both combined teams are it and may play against each other.
12. **Red and Green VS Blue and Yellow:** one game, two teams, “Combination Home Court” formation to begin to play against the other two combined teams, both combined teams are it and may play against each other.
13. **Blue and Green VS Red and Yellow:** one game, two teams, “Combination Home Court” formation to begin to play against the other two combined teams, both combined teams are it and may play against each other.
14. **Blue> Red> Green> Yellow> Red:** from their “Home Court”, the four teams must be in the proper order for this to work, each of the four teams points to the team to their left (clock wise), this is the only team they go after...but the team behind them is coming for them!
15. **Blue> Yellow> Green> Red> Blue:** Reverse the order. From their “Home Court”, the four teams must be in the proper order for this to work, each of the four teams points to the team to their right (counter clock wise), this is the only team they go after...but the team behind them is coming for them!

