

Activity: **Caterpillar Race**

Objective:

The objective of this activity is to help the children develop teamwork, co-ordination and leadership skills. This game involves tying children's legs together in teams to simulate a caterpillar. They then have to compete against other caterpillar teams to get to the end of the course and thus get the food.

What you will need:

- Material to tie children's legs together.
- Items to create an obstacle course (eg cones)

What to do:

Butterfly and moth eggs will hatch out into hundreds of caterpillars. These caterpillars will eat a lot (usually plant leaves) and grow bigger. Once fully grown, they spin a cocoon around themselves. Inside the cocoon, their bodies are re-built and, months later, they emerge as a butterfly.

- Divide the group into their teams and tie one leg of each team member to the next team member so that they stand in a line. Connect the first two by their right legs, the second and third by their left legs, the third and fourth by their right legs, and so on.
- Once tied together, each team member should put their hands on the shoulders of the team member in front.
- Note that the closer together the feet are tied the easier it is to walk but ensure knots are not too tight. Use a bow as it won't come undone under pressure but will be easy to untie at the end, or if the children fall over. Let them practice walking together in a straight line before trying the course.
- Explain to the children that they are caterpillars and that in order to survive they have to get down the obstacle course (cones previously set-up). In doing so they must act as a team with the lead person being the brain telling the rest of the team where to go.
- Line the team up and on the word 'Go' they race down the course, but not too fast until they are used to the movement. (The lead person is the brain and gives orders to the rest of the body. For example "left, right, left, right, stop!") The team member's hands must always be on the shoulders of the person in front.
- The teams are scored on their finishing position. First place receives 5 points, second place 3 points, and third place 1 point.

Risk Assessment:

- Children could fall on top of each other and cause injury. - Ensure that the game is carried out on a soft surface e.g. grass and that no children are wearing jewellery.
- Twisted ankles - make children aware that the aim of the game is to be careful and the winner will be likely to be the team that doesn't fall over. If they go too fast they may fall over and hurt their ankles!
- Soft materials should be used to tie the children together and remember to use bows not knots.

Additional activities

- Various different courses can be created. You could use different items to create the course other than just the cones.
- You could start at one end of the course with say 5 members, when they get to the other end of the course a new member is added, simulating the growth of the caterpillar. The winning team could then be the caterpillar with all the team members attached (i.e. it is fully grown).

Activity: **The Danger Song**

Objective: The objective of this activity is to allow the children to learn about the use of warning sounds by birds and how this is critical to their survival.

What you will need:

- Blindfolds for all children except one from each group.
- A set of animal/bird pictures (several copies of each - see list at end for ideas)
- Level open ground - enough to fit all children with their arms spread out.

What to do:

Birds can frequently be heard singing and making a variety of different sounds. Different bird species often have very unique sounds, but understand other species danger warnings. Birds (like humans) use sound to communicate. Communication can be used:

To warn of danger

As a defence mechanism against danger

During courting

To help identify each other

To help locate each other, especially where they are trying to keep in a flock.

- Ask the children to imagine they are all little birds. Ensure that they understand that they cannot talk. Tell them if they are to survive they need to communicate by creating sounds e.g. to warn of danger.
- Explain to the children that they are to be split into their groups and each group is to pick a "lookout bird". The "lookout bird" is to be the eyes of the flock, whilst the others could be feeding or resting.
- When the "lookout bird" sees danger they make a clapping noise. The danger will be shown in the form of pictures. Some of the pictures will show dangerous animals and others will show harmless ones. (See list at the end of this section.)
- Show all the children the six different pictures, get them to work out what each picture is and whether the animal is dangerous and why.
- Now tell the children to imagine they are flying around by flapping their arms. It will be easier if they do this on the spot, ensure that they are all standing at least arms length away from each other. The children will now need to be blindfolded or must close their eyes so they cannot see the danger. (Real birds would be sleeping or eating, not blind.) When the "lookout bird" sees danger, it claps and the other birds must then freeze still. The last ones to freeze will be eaten and eliminated from the game. When the clapping has stopped and thus the danger has gone they must start flapping again.

- Split the children into their three groups and assign an adult to each group. The adult must identify the last to freeze in each group.
- Blindfold the children or tell them to close their eyes and go through the next four pictures as a practice. Go through the four pictures again until the children have grasped the concept of the game. (If you don't want to blindfold the children, you could make them turn their backs - any that 'cheat' could be eliminated).
- Start the game, by going through the next set of pictures. Eliminate the slowest to react in each team by tapping them on their shoulders. Keep going until you have a winning bird (or flock). If you reach the end of the provided pictures start again.
- Once each team is down to their last surviving member, they compete against the other two teams (surviving members) in a play off. The winner of the play-off gets 5 points for their team, second place gets 3 points and third place gets 1 point.

Risk Assessment:

- Accidental harm: Children may hit each other when pretending to fly - ensure there is sufficient distance between them.
- Disorientation: Children may become disorientated whilst blindfolded. Make sure that they understand that they are to stay on the spot.
- Level ground: Try and pick a level part of the site to do the activity. This will ensure that children do not fall down a slope.

Additional activities

- The game could be played, without "lookout birds" (or blindfolds). In this instance the children have to react to the different animal pictures:
Sparrowhawk: Flap arms frantically to fly away.
Fox: Freeze to hope they are not seen.
Cat: link arms together and hiss to scare the cat away.
- The game can also be played without blindfolds with the children's backs turned instead.
- Instead of clapping the lookout birds for each group could have a different warning sound. Each group could then be shown separate pictures. Some of the groups will see danger whilst some will not. This will require the children to listen to their particular warning sign; it will add confusion and cause children to get caught out.

List of Danger Song creatures:

Red Fox

Danger - eats birds

Field Vole

No danger - does not eat birds

Wood Mouse

No danger - does not eat birds

Grey Squirrel

Danger - it raids birds' nests to eat eggs and young birds

Sparrow Hawk

Danger - feeds on chaffinches, great tits, blue tits and pigeons

Kestrel

Danger - feeds on many birds, including larks, pipits, finches, turtledoves and lapwings