Name/Title: Follow the Leader

Purpose of Event: This activity will give children the opportunity to move in different directions and pathways using a variety of locomotor skills, while building on cooperative play skills used when leading or following a partner.

Activity cues: Watch your partner, move under control

Prerequisites: Before participating in this activity, children should have experiences where they have individually practiced locomotor skills while safely moving about the space provided.

Suggested Grade Level: Pre-K

Description of Idea

Conduct the activity in a large indoor or outdoor space with marked boundaries so that children know where they can and cannot move.

Introduce the activity to children by demonstrating the roles of the leader and follower. The leader's role is to move in different directions and pathways throughout the space while galloping, marching, crawling, etc., and in general trying to challenge the follower to travel in variety of different ways. The follower's role is to attempt to replicate the movements of the leader. The follower should not get too far behind the leader, and the leader should be asked to slow down if he is getting too far away from the partner.

60 to 90 seconds is sufficient time for a child to be a leader before changing places. Leaders can be changed several times during the activity. A maximum class size of no more than 18 children (9 pairs) should participate in a movement class at one time.

- Give children opportunities to discuss and decide who will be the follower first and who will be the leader. Explain that they will get to take turns being both the leader and follower.
- For safety reasons, suggest that they not get closer than two giant steps from each other.
- Have children find a spot to sit in with their partner.
- Have leaders begin to move about the space using a variety of different locomotor movements.
- Tell followers to follow the leaders, copying their "traveling actions."
- Explain that they can move in different directions (forward, backward, sideways) and pathways (straight, zigzag, curved), as well as use a variety of traveling patterns.
- Emphasize that the leaders should not only create challenging traveling sequences for their partners, but also watch where they lead to avoid bumping into another group.

Variations:

After children become experienced with playing this simple game, challenge them to change environments and play on the playground leading and following their classmates as they travel around obstacles.

More experienced children may also want the challenge of leading and following in larger groups. Up to four children could be in one group with one child leading and three following and copying the traveling actions of the leader.

Assessment Ideas:

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE, 1995) has developed benchmarks in this area that suggest that by the time a child completes kindergarten she should be able to travel forward, backward, and sideways using a variety of locomotor patterns and be able to walk, run, and gallop using a mature form. Participating in activities such as Follow the Leader will provide children with opportunities for skill practice. Teachers can use this time to observe children's locomotor skills and record their progression toward reaching benchmarks in this area.

Teaching Suggestions:

Watch to make sure that groups do not get too close to each other. Teachers may need to stop children and remind leaders not to get too close to other groups of children.

Adaptations for Students with Disabilities:

Children with special needs who are not movement restricted should have little difficulty participating in this activity. Children who have movement restrictions can still participate, but their partners should be asked to move slower. Children in wheelchairs can move themselves or be pushed through the travel pathways. This activity is not suggested for children who have severe movement restrictions.

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