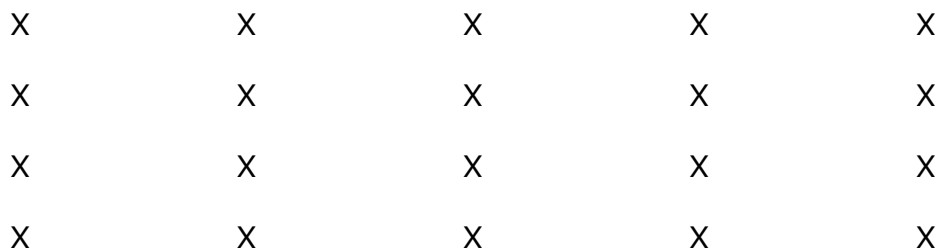


20 WAYS TO BETTER PLAY!

1. **DEMONSTRATE/MODEL everything!!!** Show it AS you tell it EVERY time! Students will not hear anything you say without a demonstration. Show the activity either by demonstrating it yourself (for an individual activity), with a partner to help you, or with a small group to serve as your "demonstration team." Demonstrate every aspect of the activity as much as possible - from boundary lines to finish lines. It may seem very simple to you - but students "get it" much faster when they can see it. *You should not ever be speaking without moving along with the words.*
2. When giving instructions, always say, "**When I say go...**" or "On my signal I want you to..." Otherwise the students will begin to do it while you are still talking.
3. Use a DIFFERENT **attention-getting signal** for "GO" and "STOP." Make sure the students know what to do when they hear it. Don't use the same signal for both "go" and "stop." This tends to cause confusion for some students and you end up with some starting and some going! To begin the activity use "**GO!**" To end the activity, use a long whistle. When the activity is over, the students gather around you as fast as possible (or get "in formation" as described below), with the students closest to you taking a knee so that those in the back can see. To get students to freeze on the spot (for rule reminders or game variation instructions), use a short, sharp whistle.
4. **Never allow STUDENTS to pick teams OR team captains.** YOU are the coach and it is your job to establish groups and to appoint a team captain. You may ask for volunteers from each group to be captain for an activity - but do not let it turn into a popularity contest. During the next activity, or for the next round of the current activity, have a new person from the group act as "captain."
5. **Find various ways to form groups quickly, fairly, and randomly.** "Mix n' Match" is a fun way to get kids into groups quickly, and also serves as a fun warm up!
 - To use "Mix n' Match" simply have the students travel about randomly in the general space of the playing area. When you call out a command such as toe-to-toe, the students scramble to get toe-to-toe with a partner as fast as they can. Use a different locomotor skill (gallop, slide, hop, jump, leap, bear crawl, crab walk...) for each round.
 - Hold up any number of fingers while you call out your commands to form various sized groups. For example, have the students galloping around, then hold up 4 fingers and call out back-to-back (or elbow-to-knee!). The students quickly form groups of four and stand back-to-back (or elbow-to-knee!).

- If you are actually looking for **FOUR teams**, not groups of four, then you can simply have one member of each group raise their hand: this is TEAM ONE - go stand over there. Have another player from each group raise their hand: this is TEAM TWO - come stand over here...
 - Combining these two methods keeps the students guessing - they never know if they're going to be in the group they're with - or separated!
6. Form groups by setting **random criteria**. If you have a brother, raise your hand/come stand over here. If you have more than one pet... If you are wearing green... and so on.
 7. Use your **Fluffilos** (or colored equipment or nametags or stickers...) to designate teams, groups, or partners. Use matches, mismatches, primary or secondary colors, mixed vs. solids, etc.
 8. Use the **"In Formation"** Technique
Students line up in four, five, or six rows, as deep as need be to accommodate the group size. Establish **"formation"** at the beginning of each class period, or weekly or monthly, placing students in various positions of the formation so that everyone gets a chance to be "line leader" an equal number of times.. It's a great formation to utilize army terms like "ten-hut!" and "at ease"



- Using this formation is an excellent method for **class control**. Practice getting into formation quickly and quietly. The row that gets in line the most quickly and quietly can be selected as your demonstration team for explaining the next activity!!! For even greater efficiency and class control, have students "take a knee" in formation.
- To teach young students how to get into formation, **begin by having hoops** (or Fluffilos) placed in color-coded rows: red line, yellow line, etc. Once students get used to finding their personal space and getting to know their "spot" with the hoop, you can transition to no-hoops when ready.
- "In formation" is also great for **forming groups** of various sizes. Use horizontal lines, vertical lines, half-lines, etc. for various team sizes. Mix it up so that the same people are not always in the same groups, but they DO always return to the same spot when "formation" is called.

9. Don't talk until **EVERY** student is **listening**. Give them something specific to do with their hands, the equipment, and their mouths while you are speaking. "When I say LISTEN UP! I need you to take a knee, hold your equipment behind your back with two hands, and SMILE quietly." Another fun way to get kid's attention is "POPSICLES FREEZE!"... then "POPSICLES MELT..." is a fun way to get them seated. Another good one is "1-2-3 Eyes on ME" with the student response: "1-2 Eyes on You!" There are many ways to get attention. Find one that works for you and use it consistently.
10. Use the **Bust-A-Move Warm-Up** method to get a good warm-up, practice some motor skills, and practice behavioral expectations at the beginning of every class until mastered, and then again as necessary throughout the year. **How it works:** Have students move about in the designated playing area with various types of movements: Walk, jog, skip, hop, bear crawl, lunge walk, etc. On your signal (whistle and count down from 5 or 10), players hustle back into line as quickly and quietly as possible, getting into formation and standing at parade rest. Repeat until you are happy with the hustle and noise level. Compliment, yet challenge the players to get faster and quieter with each attempt. **Award points** to the lines who get there the fastest or the most quietly.
11. **Keep things moving!** DON'T just stand there quietly while you wait for the group to notice. Many players will think this is just fine, and will continue talking and talking and talking. Some will not even notice that you are waiting! If you are waiting briefly for a few to quiet down, and you have good class management to begin with, this can be an effective strategy. Otherwise send 'em on out for some more movement practice!
12. **Keep your playing groups small.** A general rule of thumb is no less than three-four students per piece of equipment. On offense/defense games, team sizes should be no larger than 5 players per team when one piece of equipment is being used.
13. When playing large group games, the equipment/rules should **maximize participation**. For example, if you play our Tandalay "Capture the Fluffilo" game, you will note that there should be one Fluffilo per player, even though it is a large group game with only two teams. If you only have one piece of equipment for the game, please keep those groups small to maximize player interaction, participation, equipment handling opportunities, movement and motor skill experience, and teamwork.
14. In **Cooperative Games** players need to work together to achieve a common goal. Do your best to keep your groups as **diverse** as possible - from ethnicity to skill level. Students learn and perform better when working with peers of various abilities and backgrounds. It helps each student discover his/her own strengths, while learning to accept help and support from the group.

15. **Circle formations** happen naturally with adults, while younger players find it challenging to create a circle. When getting into a circle formation, try these simple solutions:
- Have hoops, poly-spots, or Fluffilos already set up in your circle, and have players each find a hoop to stand in.
 - Play follow-the-leader with everyone following YOU until you've created the perfect circle.
 - Stand close together in a tight group, then have the players join hands, then spread out until arms are taught. Drop hands and step back one or two more steps.
16. When the class is in a circle formation, always stand as **PART of the circle** - not inside of it. This way you will not have your back to anyone, AND your voice will travel to everyone in the circle.
17. Stand with the **sun positioned to the SIDE** of you and your group. You do not want your students to be looking into the sun when you are giving directions, nor do you want to be looking into the sun when trying to see your players. Keep sun position in mind as you set up fields and drills as well.
18. **Be flexible!** Know when to throw in the towel. If an activity is simply not working - skip it - and move on to the next one. Sometimes this happens. No need to fight it. There are too many other games and activities to play to let yourself get bogged down on ONE of them. That's one of the reasons why we have so many! It gives you the opportunity to pick and choose your favorites, skip the ones that don't work so well for you, and have fun playing ALL YEAR LONG!
19. Establish an **emotionally SAFE** and SPORTSMANLIKE environment - free from bullying, intimidation, and harassment. THEN begin to introduce competition. Establish clear consequences for negative behavior and follow through! At the beginning of the year, quarter, or season, bring the players together and have them come up with their own rules for being a good teammate and have them all sign their very own Sportsmanship banner.
20. As a coach and teacher, your job is to produce **responsible citizens** and to teach the importance of honesty, respect for self and others, responsibility, integrity, fair play, and acceptance of self and other's strengths, differences, and weaknesses. When you are out on the playing field you have a unique opportunity.
- **Teach honesty** by stressing the importance of being honest during play. Is it fun to play with someone who cheats? How does it make you feel when the person competing against you cheats? If you cheat to win, have you really won at all? Aren't you cheating yourself and your own personal integrity when you don't play honestly? Doesn't it feel better to lose, but to know that you played fairly and honestly and did your best? Or even better, when you win, doesn't it feel great to know that you played

honestly and won because you gave it your best effort - not because you cheated?

- **Teach respect** for self and others by not allowing put-downs or negative comments about ANYONE - including yourself - in your classroom. Establish a reward system for students who compliment each other. Brainstorm ways to be encouraging. "You are a team in this class. Your job is to support each other, respect each other, and encourage each other to be their best!"
- **Teach sportsmanship** by using the high-five line (teams line up in single file, then walk towards each other, giving high-fives and "good-game" as they pass) after each lesson, or by forming a tunnel (players stand facing each other, hands-to-hands up high) for the winning group to run through, or by performing the "2-4-6-8 Who do we appreciate" chant.
- **Teach responsibility** by holding students accountable for their actions. Whether in word or deed, personal choices result in various outcomes. Emphasize that when you choose the behavior, you choose the consequence. "Expected responsibilities in this class include being a responsible teammate and trying your best. You need to be responsible with your equipment and treat it well so that it will last us throughout the year. You need to be responsible to yourself and always strive to be the very best YOU that you can be..."
- **Teach acceptance** of self and other's strengths, differences, and weaknesses. Acknowledge that all of us are at different levels, that we all have different strengths, and that we all have individual weaknesses. By accepting our own weaknesses, playing to our own strengths and acknowledging our own differences, we will be better able to accept others. "In this class, we will cheer on our teammates at every opportunity. If we are running a timed mile, we will celebrate EACH individual's success. If any of you improve your time by even one second, we will celebrate with you. It doesn't matter if you are first or last - we will cheer you on because we are PROUD of your effort and your contribution to our TEAM."
- **Teach what it means to be a good sport.** For example, if a student accidentally knocks someone down during play, but stops to help him/her up, that is demonstrating good sportsmanship. If a student misses a ball and the team loses the point, but another on his team comes over and gives a high-five and a "good try" or "we'll get it next time," that is good sportsmanship. Talk about how to show sportsmanship as a class and work as a class to achieve a goal.

PLAY WITH PASSION – EMBRACE THE JOY!