



Name of Activity: “Squirrels and Trees”

Book Used: *A Squirrels Tale* by Richard Fowler

Music Used for the Activity: Music is not required for this activity. However, it is fun and helpful for a “stop” and “go” signal.

Purpose of the activity:

1. To associate a book with a movement activity in which squirrels move from tree to tree.
2. To improve on exercises and rhythmic skills in a fun and unique way.

Benefits of the Activity:

1. Children tend to remember both the book and the activity better because physical activity is associated with a story, thus reaching more of the multiple intelligences.
2. A story often adds meaning and purpose to the activity. This helps children remember both the book and the activity better.
3. There is an atmosphere of competition in this game but, yet, children must cooperate and work together to make the game more fun.
4. Children improve on various exercises drawn from a deck of cards.
5. Children more readily share information with parents and family members if they have more ways in which to remember the information. This is good public relations for the physical education department.

Suggested Grade Level: Pre-K-2

Materials Needed:

1. Music – if desired
2. Hula hoops – if children are uncomfortable holding hands with a partner
3. A deck of exercise cards like Fit Deck or Yoga cards

Organization of students:

1. Children are divided into groups of three. Two children hold hands (or the side of a hula hoop placed between them) and are the tree. The third person is the squirrel.

2. Any children who are left without a tree are the squirrels who are looking for a tree. They wait to the side by the music and the deck of cards. (Note: There must be children who are left without a tree, even if it means a group of three.)

Description of the Activity:

Before the game begins, one of the squirrels that does not have a tree will draw a card from the deck and show it to the class. This will be the exercise or locomotor skill that the trees have to do in place when the music is playing. When the music plays, the trees will do the exercise pictured on the card and the squirrel will leave the tree and move about the forest pretending to collect acorns. The teacher will designate a locomotor movement for the squirrels. (I sing, "When you hear the music play, move around in a skipping way," or whatever way I choose.) When the music stops, each squirrel hurries to get inside a new tree. A tree is made when partners stop exercising and hold hands to make a circle or pick up the hula hoop to make the tree. Either way, the squirrels must go under the tree and come up inside of the tree. What makes this game fun is the extra squirrels that do not have a home. When the music stops, they attempt to find a tree, thereby leaving a different squirrel without a home. All squirrels, even those without a home, move around when the music plays. After a short time, have students move back to their original tree and trade places with a person in the group who has not yet been a squirrel. Each time the game is played, a card is chosen by a squirrel that designates the exercise for the trees, and the teacher chooses the methods of movement for the squirrels.

Adaptations:

1. Instead of exercises for the people who are the tree, use bean bags and add skill cards like overhand or underhand throwing to a partner or individually, figure 8's between the legs, pass around the waist, etc. (Balls could be used but they tend to roll away when the trees put them down to join hands.)
2. The activity provided for the trees can be individually tailored to whatever skills the teacher is currently working on. It is helpful, however, if there are skill cards from which the squirrel can choose. If not, the teacher can give suggestions to the student and let him/her announce the required skill.
2. Set a limit on how many times in a row a person can be without a tree. Anyone exceeding the limit should trade places with a person who has never been left without a tree. This gives people an opportunity to be in both positions.

