

## **BEAN BAG ACTIVITIES**

Promotes eye-hand coordination, following directions, and listening skills.

If making bean bags, put one small wooden bead inside to search for with one's sense of touch (Raccoon Touch fingers). Children can make a bean bag out of felt using an overcast stitch or whip stitch. A simple to make bean bag with no sewing can be made out of a sock that is tied at the end.

### **RHYME FOR PASSING OUT BEAN BAGS**

Give and take, Take and give,  
Each to the other, As long as we live.

### **TO GET STARTED**

When passing out bean bags, begin with "Apart, together, apart, together..." along with the corresponding hand motions. Then pass out one bean bag at a time using these words. After a short while, switch to "Give and take..." This is done sitting. When all children have a bean bag, they must put it on their heads and try standing up without dropping it. If it falls, the child must freeze until another child picks it up and places it back on the frozen child's head. If it drops again, then both children must freeze until another child helps. When all the children are standing with bean bags on their heads, then everyone drops them into their hands at the same time.

### **PUTTING BEAN BAGS AWAY**

When collecting the bean bags, go around the circle having each child toss the bean bag into the basket, bowl, box, or whatever container that is being used. They only get one try. The last child puts the ones that missed into the container.

### **FOLLOW THE LEADER GAME**

#### **THROW AND CATCH**

Toss the bean bag and catch with two hands.

Toss the bean bag with one hand and catch with the same hand. Put other hand behind one's back. Switch hands.

Place a bean bag on one hand palm up. Toss it and catch with the same hand palm down. Repeat and go from palm down to palm up, etc..

Toss the bean bag with one hand into the other hand, back and forth.

Put a bean bag on a foot. Walk. With the bean bag on a foot, toss it and catch it. Switch feet.

Toss a bean bag to a partner and catch.

Toss a bean bag to a target such as a bucket, a hula hoop, or some other container.

Throw a bean bag up and clap once, twice, etc. before catching it.

## **AROUND THE TREE**

Say the following rhyme while handing the bean bag from one hand to the other going around the body:

"Around the tree, around the tree,  
The squirrel is going around the tree."

Reverse. Go faster or slower.

## **SPACE ACTIVITY**

This is the same movement as **AROUND THE TREE**, but instead of a squirrel, the bean bag becomes the moon. While standing in a circle, the bean bag moon is passed from one hand to the other going around the body, which is the earth. Sing "The moon goes 'round the earth, the moon goes 'round the earth, hi-ho-the-derry-o, the moon goes round the earth" to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell." I usually put a paper sun or something else that represents the sun in the middle of the circle. The next verse to the song is "The Earth Goes 'Round the Sun...." Everyone continues to pass the moon bean bag around their bodies while walking in the circle around the sun. Another verse is "The Earth Spins Around...." in which everyone spins around slowly in their places while continuing to pass the bean bag moon around their bodies. The final challenge is to walk around the sun (orbit), spin around (rotate), and keep passing the moon bean bag from one hand to the other. To simplify this activity for young children have them just pass the bean bag around their bodies as the moon while singing "The moon goes round the earth...." The bean bag becomes the earth while singing "The earth goes round the sun...."

## **DROPPING THE BEAN BAG FROM HIGH TO LOW**

The bean bag becomes a nut that falls from a tree while the lower hand is the squirrel that catches the nut. The switch hands and keep repeating movement. Sing the song "Acorns Falling From a Tree" substituting "Nuts are" for "Acorns." Substitute other things that fall from trees such as leaves, fruit, or apples.

## **BALANCE A BEAN BAG ON YOUR HEAD WHILE WALKING**

Read a book such as *Handa's Surprise* set in Africa that shows someone carrying a basket (of fruit in this case) on his or her head. Then pretend a bean is a basket or a jug or some other container that balances on one's head while walking. You can also put a bean bag on your knee and hop with it there.

## **PARROT AND PIRATE BEAN BAGS**

Balance a bean bag on one shoulder without using hands when walking for a while. Switch shoulders. Greet other pirates with a pirate greeting of some sort ("Arrrg" or "Ahoy, Matey," for example).

## **PASSING BEAN BAG UNDER EACH LEG**

While standing up and holding bean bag in the right hand, lift the right leg and pass the bean bag underneath the leg into the left hand. Lift left leg and pass the bean bag to the right hand. Alternate this movement pattern. Another way to do this is from the inside. Hold the bean bag in the left hand. Lift the right leg. Pass the bean bag under the right leg to the right hand. Repeat alternating legs and hands. This can also be done in a figure eight around the legs while keeping both feet on the ground.

## **PASSING BEAN BAG IN A CIRCLE**

Standing in a circle, everyone have palms facing up. Right hand is placed on top of left hand of person standing to the right. Left hand is placed under the right hand of the person standing to the left. "Place your right hand palm up on the left hand of the person standing to the right. Your left hand with palm up is under the right hand of the person standing to your left." Pass just one bean bag around the circle. This becomes a frog if you sing the following song, or you can recite it as a rhyme or choose a different one. There are many variations of this one.

*VERSION 1: Down by the banks of the Hanky Panky,  
Where the bullfrogs jump from bank to banky.  
With an eep, op, soda pop.  
She (or he) missed the lily pad and went kerplop.*

*VERSION 2: Down by the banks of the Hanky Panky,  
Where the bull frogs jump from bank to banky,  
With a hip, hop, hippity, hop,  
Leap off a lily pad and go KERPLOP!*

*VERSION 3: Down by the banks of the Hanky Panky,  
Where the bull frogs jump from bank to banky,  
With a flip, flop, flippity, flop,  
Leap off a lily pad and go KERPLOP!*

*VERSION 4: Down by the banks of the Hanky Panky  
Where the bullfrogs jump from bank to banky  
With an eep, ipe, ope, op,  
Leap off a lily pad and go KERPLOP!*

## **PASSING GAME**

Sit in a circle with a bean bag in front of each person. While singing a song ("Make New Friends," for example) and in time to the steady beat, pick up the bean bag directly in front and pass it to the person on the right all together. Using the dominant hand (usually the right hand) works the best. This can be done with rocks or other natural materials like pinecones.

## **"OBWASIMISA" SONG ("OBWISANA")**

Passing game for older children

### **CAT AND MOUSE GAME**

Sitting or standing in a circle, pass one bean bag around the circle. This is the pretend mouse. After a short time, add another bean bag, which can be a different color. This is the cat. Try to have the cat catch up to the mouse. There can be a signal spoken aloud that indicates that the cat and mouse switch direction. Either the cat and mouse can change roles or the cat has to now go all around the circle to catch up.

### **HIDE AND GO SEEK**

Hide a bean bag. Give clues to the finder(s), such as "cold, cool, warm, and hot."

### **MEMORY ASSISTANCE**

Pass from one hand to the other when reciting a poem or any list of facts (i.e. days of the week or months of the year).

### **BEAN BAG JUGGLING**

This can be done with two bean bags to begin. To make it even easier, use homemade nets. These can be made from fine netting that can be purchased in fabric stores, cut into 12 inch squares. The size can vary and still work well. Nets will float giving more time to catch and toss them.