Facultad de Educación

Alexandra Santamaría Urbieta
Rhythm, play and games
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RHYTHM, PLAY AND GAMES

UNIT 5: Play activities in the Infant Education classroom (II). Games

Versión	Fecha	Motivo de modificación	Elaboración	Revisión	Aprobación

GLOBAL CAMPUS
NEBRIJA

GLOBAL CAMPUS NEBRIJA

UNIT 5. PLAY ACTIVITIES IN THE INFANT EDUCATION CLASSROOM (II). GAMES

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GLOBAL CAMPUS NEBRIJA

UNIT 5. PLAY ACTIVITIES IN THE INFANT EDUCATION CLASSROOM (II)

What are the main goals of this unit?

1. To reflect on the benefits of introduce games in Infant Education lesson plans.
2. To know how to choose and to put into practice games with young learners.
3. To classify games according to their aims.
4. To choose the right game for an Infant Education group.

Unit 5. PLAY ACTIVITIES IN THE INFANT EDUCATION CLASSROOM (II).

1. GAMES IN THE INFANT EDUCATION CLASSROOM

1.1. BENEFITS

According to the current law (LOE, Organic Law, 2/2006, 3rd of May. 14.6), one of the pedagogical principles in Infant Education establishes that "The work methods will be based on experiences, activities and play and they will be put into practice in an affective and safe environment, in order to promote self-esteem and social integration". Thus, we should carry out games with Infant Education children in order to support their development in a safe and pleasant atmosphere.

*"**Play helps children to grow and develop in many ways**"*. (Brotherson, S., 2009: 1). As we have seen in the previous unit, games are a great resource in the Infant Education classroom as they promote cognitive, physical, and social-affective development. **When children play they cope with challenges, and this produces new brain connections that support children cognitive development**. Moreover, children are intrinsically motivated towards playing games, so we can take advantage of this in order to include some curricular contents through games and to facilitate relationships in the group. Sometimes games tend to be repetitive but children can spend much time playing without getting bored.

It is a fact that **children learn when they play**. In this sense, we should plan a variety of activities that include individual and group games. Brotherson, S. (2009) established relationships between types of play and what children learn.

When Children...	*They Learn...*
Smile and coo at people	How to engage others in interaction
Shake a rattle	Their actions produce results; to distinguish sounds
Throw toys on the floor	Principles of gravity; cause and effect
Look at picture books	Pictures represent real objects; words label objects
Roll a ball	How to gain control of muscles; round stuff rolls
Cuddle a stuffed animal	To rely on their own ability to seek comfort; to nurture
Build with blocks	Concepts of size, weight, symmetry, number and balance; muscle control and coordination
Dress up and play house	Small muscle, self-help skills; to recreate their own world
Pretend to be firefighters	Social roles; to work with others; share materials and communicate with other children

(Brotherson, S. 2009: 1)

Games can also facilitate language development. In fact, children need time to feel confident enough to speak in a second language. Krashen called this stage "The silent period". According to him, children "faced with a new language are silent for a long period of time, their output being limited to a set number of memorized phrases and sentences that they hear frequently and whose meaning they do not understand completely" (Krashen, 1985: 87). **Games provide children with the opportunity to use English in the ESL classroom without feeling embarrassed, in a spontaneous and natural way.**

Another benefit of including games in the Infant Education classroom is that children use the language unconsciously and match words to objects and actions. *"Through their sense of fun and play, the children are living the language for real".* (Halliwell, S., 1992: 6). **Children play and use language without worrying about mistakes.** This situation makes fluency in language possible because "*Most language games make learners to use the language instead of thinking about learning the correct forms"* (Lee, W.R. 1979:2).

As regards the cultural development, Lev Vygotsky established that "*every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first on the social level, and later on the individual level; first between people (interphychological) and then inside the child (intrapsychological)"*. (Vygotsky, 1978: 57). Therefore, **cultural features acquisition is produced when children play**.

Moreover, games involve interaction among children. Games are an effective social resource as they involve all children and are aimed to different learning styles. Therefore, **relationships are reinforced and social skills are acquired and improved in a natural way.**

For Lee Sue Kim games benefits are:

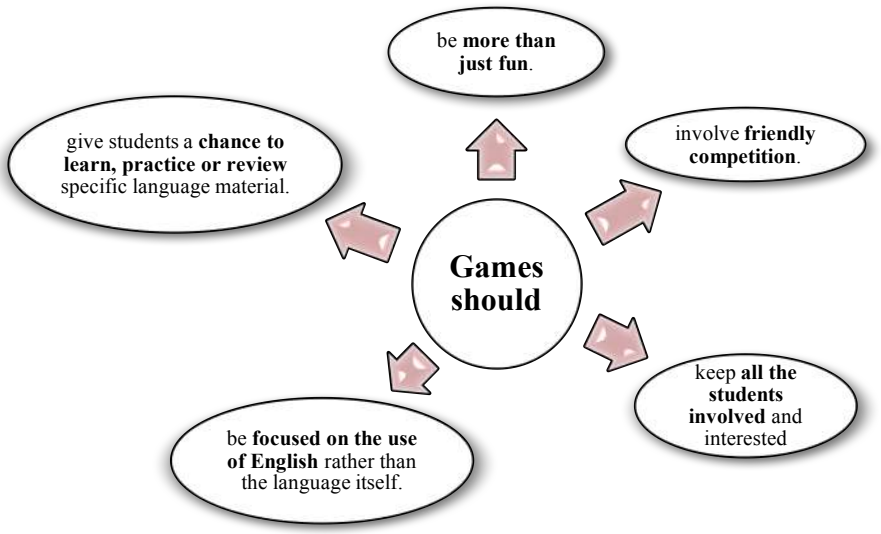
- "*Games are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class.*
- *They are motivating and challenging.*
- *Learning a language requires a great deal of effort. Games help students to make and sustain the effort of learning.*
- *Games provide language practice in the various skills-speaking, writing, listening and reading.*
- *They encourage students to interact and communicate.*
- *They create a meaningful context for language use*."

Lee Sue Kim (1995: 35)

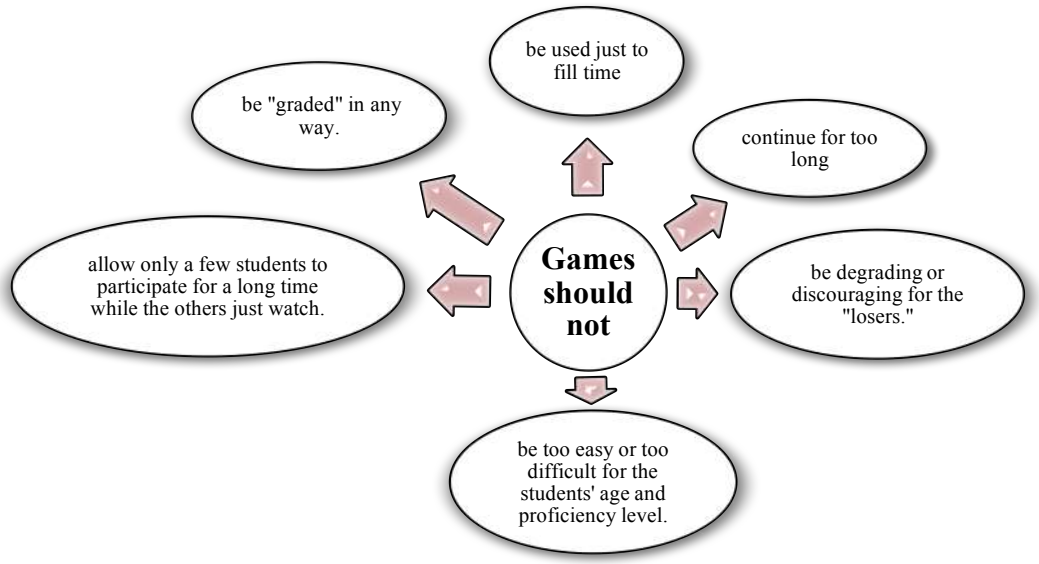
Summarising, we can say that *"children who are active in pretend play and other types of play are usually more joyful and cooperative, more willing to share and take turns, more creative in their activities and have larger vocabularies than children who are less involved in imaginative play or other play activities. Play provides the foundation for learning in a child's world and opens the door to a world of learning opportunities"*. (Brotherson, S. 2009:6).

1.2. HOW TO CHOOSE A GAME

Tyson, R.E. (1998) established the characteristics to take into account when choosing games for teaching English:



On the contrary, games in the classroom should not:



1.3. GIVING INSTRUCTIONS

One of the challenges a teacher has to face when teaching English to young learners is to make it easy to understand. EFL teachers tend to think that giving instructions to young learners is a complicated task to carry out as they have to adapt the language level to the group. *"However, learning to give effective instructions in the target language is well worth the effort. It provides an opportunity for children to acquire language naturally in an authentic, purposeful context, and at the same time it gives them the satisfaction of being able to show understanding through their responses"*. (Bradshaw, C. 2005:23). Because of it, we should make an effort and give instructions in English, avoiding translation and scaffolding children in different ways to facilitate comprehension.

Liruso & Villanueva (2003) prepared an observation tool with a list of the common problems teachers usually experience when giving instructions:

- *Talking without engaging students' attention.*
- *No demonstration or modelling.*
- *Students asking for an explanation before hearing the whole instruction.*
- *No organization of pairs or groups.*
- *No checking understanding.*
- *Speech modification:*
    - *Phonological distortion*
    - *Un-English discourse*

(Liruso & Villanueva, 2003:139)

Instructions should be carefully planned, especially with young learners groups. Otherwise we will not transmit the information correctly and children will feel confused. Teachers usually spend much time planning an activity but do not consider preparing the instructions carefully. Sometimes these activities do not work because the instructions were not clearly explained, but the activities were suitable for the group. Therefore, teachers should pre-plan effective instructions at the same time they plan the activity.

Coralyn Bradshaw (2005) pointed out some strategies to plan and deliver instructions for young learners' activities:

Planning:

1) **Only include essential information that the children need to carry out the activity**. This information should include the final purpose of the activity.
2) **Use simple vocabulary and structures that the children will be familiar with.** The level of the language in which the instructions are given should match with which they have already been exposed.
3) **Break the instructions into short sentences, each containing a key step.**
4) **Make sure that the steps are in a logical order, and that no steps are missing.** Remember that once the children are asked to move places or look at materials, their attention will no longer be on you!
5) **Don't include information about what you are doing.**
6) **Plan which gestures you can use to accompany the steps.** The art of giving effective instructions relies heavily on the use of clear gestures to accompany the steps.
7) **Plan the actions you want the children perform.** Organize the steps as far as possible in lock-step so that you can demonstrate and the children can carry out that part of the instruction.

Delivering:

1) **When you are ready to begin the activity, make it obvious that you are about to give instructions.** You need to make sure that the children are listening before you start.
2) **Remember to use silent pauses and gestures to punctuate and clarify the meaning.** Repeat the instruction, if necessary, until you see that everyone is following you.
3) **Always use a demonstration wherever possible.** With a child, with a pair/group of children or alone.
4) **Don't forget to check that the children have understood the instructions.** Questions such as "Do you understand?" are not enough. Children who have not understood are unlikely to let you know for fear of appearing foolish. One way to check understanding is to ask one or two children to tell you quickly, in their mother tongue, what they are going to do.

SUMMARY

- Benefits of playing:
  - When children play they cope with challenges, and this produces new brain connections that support children cognitive development.
  - Games provide children with the opportunity to use English without feeling embarrassing.
  - Children play and use language without worrying about mistakes.
  - Cultural features acquisition is produced when children play.
  - Relationships are reinforced and social skills are acquired and improved in a natural way.
- A game should be:
  - More than just fun.
  - Involve friendly competition.
  - Give students the opportunity to practice the target language.
  - Keep all the students involved.
  - Be focused on the use of English.
- Instructions should be carefully planned, especially with young learners groups.
- Instructions involve: Planning and Delivering.

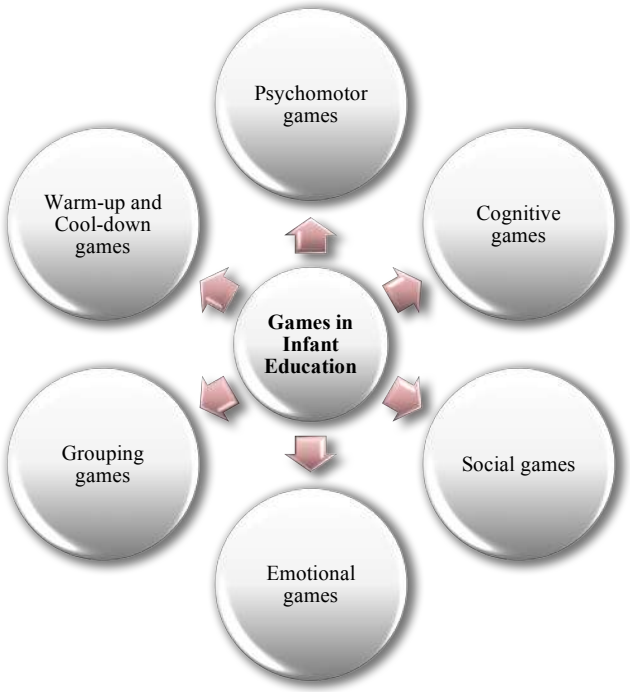
2. INFANT EDUCATION GAMES CLASSIFICATION.

There are many different ways to classify games in Infant Education although we are going to consider the main aspect developed through it. Thus, we can classify games into four groups:

- Psychomotor games.
- Cognitive games.
- Social games.
- Emotional games.

(Adapted text from Romero, V. & Gómez, M. 2003:137)

We include three more groups of games: grouping games and warm-up and cool-down games, as they are very useful in the Infant Education classroom.



2.1. PSYCHOMOTOR GAMES

The main aim of these games is to promote the children motor skills. We can classify psychomotor games in 4 groups:

- *"**Body games**. This group of games allows children to be aware of the different body parts.*
- ***Motor games**. These games support a balanced body development, laterality, tonic control and relaxation and spatial organization.*
- ***Sensory games**. Playing these games children work on auditory, visual, tactile, gustative and olfactory discrimination.*
- ***Physical condition games**. These games support the general muscles strengthening."*

(Adapted text from Romero, V. & Gómez, M. 2003:137)

Most of these games are played outdoors. Regarding outdoor play, we can say that these activities foster children physical and motor development at the same time that connect the child with the surrounding environment. Physical activity is necessary in order to be healthy. Thus, we should include some outdoor games that involve physical activity such as running, jumping, skipping or throwing objects in our school plan. Brotherson (2009) pointed out that "*outdoor play helps kids learn and develop:*

- *Balance and coordination (jumping, climbing, skipping, etc.).*
- *Strength in all muscle groups (large motor skills).*
- *Healthy lifestyle and activity habits.*
- *Social interaction skills through taking turns, outdoor games, etc.*
- *Creativity.*
- *Awareness of the world around them and nature (sun, trees, wind, etc.)*
- *Observation and use of their senses (seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, moving, etc.)*

(Brotherson, S. 2009: 4)

2.2. COGNITIVE GAMES

Most authors have pointed out the relevance of playing in creativity and abstraction development. Cognitive skills such as memory or creativity may also be developed through these games.

According to Virginia Romero and Montserrat Gómez (2003), we can divide cognitive games into five groups: Manipulative games, Discovering games, Memory games, Imaginative games and Linguistic games.

1) **Manipulative games.** The child needs to build his world and he does it through manipulative games. Manipulative games let children express the way they understand the world and experiment about Physic concepts, such as gravity or cause and effect, for instance. Some examples may be block games or jigsaw.

   Regarding block games, Brotherson (2009) established that "*playing with blocks can help children learn:*

   - Scientific principles and concepts (balance, gravity, cause and effect, etc.)
   - Mathematical concepts (symmetry, shape, geometry).
   - Small-muscle skills; hand-eye coordination.
   - Feelings of competence and self-esteem.
   - Life skills – concentration, abstract thought.
   - Social interaction with others.
   - Creativity and organization of materials."

   (Brotherson, S. 2009:5)

2) **Discovering games.** This group of games involves contact and experimentation with objects. Scientific games are included in this group; through this type of games children experiment with matter and discover its physical properties (matter states, weight, flexibility, …).
3) **Memory games.** As we have seen, memory (remembering) is a low order thinking skill that young children need to develop. Through these games children can practice it unconsciously.

4) **Imaginative games.** These games promote the ability to find new answers to a problem, what is called divergent thinking. As we have previously seen, this type of thinking is directly related to creating, which is a high order thinking skill that children need to develop.
5) **Linguistic games.** This group of games improves the communicative and expressive skills; because of this, they become a very useful tool for ESL teachers.

2.3. SOCIAL GAMES

The main aim of this group of games is to promote the social skills: cooperation, assertion, responsibility, empathy and self-control. Some examples of social games may be pretend play, rule games and cooperative games. For example, rule games show children the importance of rules in society, and through pretend play, as we have seen previously, children learn about society roles, habits, jobs, etc. Finally, cooperative games promote cooperation among children in order to achieve a final goal; thus, children need to negotiate and to reach agreements as a group.

2.4. EMOTIONAL GAMES

Sometimes Infant Education children do not feel good because they do not understand their emotions. They are learning how to control feelings such as anger or sadness and understand that they are part of their lives. They need to learn about feelings in order to accept their reactions (and the others' reactions too). Because of this, we include feeling games in this group.

These games may offer children the opportunity to cope with some difficulties and solve them. For this purpose, children pretend to be another person in order *"to express conscious and unconscious desires as well as to test different solutions for a problem. Role play and dramatic games are emotional games. Self-esteem games facilitate that the child accept himself, promoting positive feelings."*

(Adapted text from Romero, V. & Gómez, M. 2003:137)

2.5. GROUPING GAMES

In order to start playing, sometimes we need children organized in teams, pairs or small groups. The best way to do it is playing grouping games because children are not aware of the process.

"Whistle Mixer

Have students jog on the spot. When the whistle is blown a certain number of times, students form groups. The number of students in the groups corresponds to the number of whistles. (The number of students in a group can also be changes by simply calling out numbers).

Partners into Teams

"Select a partner": If students choose their own partners, two teams can be created either by choosing several pairs to form one team and other pairs to form the other team, or by splitting partners so that one partner goes to one team and one partner goes to the other. Designate an area to be the "lost and found" where anyone without a partner can go to find one. Encourage the class to make sure that the same students do not go to the "lost and found" on a regular basis. If this happens, the teacher should use other methods for dividing the students into groups.

Line A, line B.

Have students to form two lines; line A becomes one team, line B the other team. For the next time a team is needed, students in the first half of each line will form one team, and students in the second half of each line will form the other team.

Back to back.

Have students stand back to back (or shoulder to shoulder, or elbow to elbow) with another student as quickly as possible. The emphasis is on frequent and rapid selection. For example, to make two teams at any point, have one partner sit and the other stand; those students who are sitting move to one area, those who are standing move to another.

Similarities.

Ask students to find a partner with the same shoes, the same colour shirt, the same birthday month, and so on."

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005:27-28)

2.6. WARM-UP AND COOL-DOWN GAMES

First of all, we should consider the necessity of including a warm-up game at the beginning of the ESL session and a cool-down game at the end.

Warm-up games. The main aim of these games is to engage children to the activity. In psychomotor games, they are also useful to warm muscles and joints in order to avoid physical injury. In this case, warm-up games are low-intensity aerobic activities in which children use the large muscles, stretching them and moving joints.

Cool-down games. The main goal of these games is to return to normal after a play activity. *"After physical activity, a cool-down period involving a more gentle activity helps the heart and body to return to their normal state"* .

(Ontario Ministry of Education, 2005:29)

SUMMARY

- According to their main aims, we can classify games in 7 groups: psychomotor games, cognitive games, social games, emotional games, grouping games, warm-up games and cool-down games.
- Psychomotor games.
  - Main aim: To develop children motor skills
  - Classification: Body games, Motor games, Sensory games and Physical condition games.
- Cognitive games.
  - Main aim: To develop children cognitive skills.
  - Classification: Manipulative games, Discovering games, Memory games, Imaginative games and Linguistic games.
- Social games.
  - Main aim: To develop children social skills.
- Emotional games.
  - Main aim: To promote emotions knowledge and self-esteem.
- Grouping games
  - Main aim: To group children.
- Warm-up games
  - Main aim: To prepare children towards an activity.
- Cool-down games
  - Main aim: To relax children after playing.

3. PSYCHOMOTOR GAMES

3.1. BODY GAMES

Mirrors
Duration: 10 minutes
Materials required: --
Skills practiced: Body control
Level: Beginners
Procedure:

1. Children are organized in pairs. Each student is facing the other.
2. One child moves a part of the body slowly and the other follows the movement like a mirror. (5 minutes)
3. After 5 minutes, they change roles so both students play the mirror role during 5 minutes.
4. Children express their feelings in an assembly.

3.2. MOTOR GAMES

Touch something…
Duration: 5-10 minutes
Materials required: Coloured space
Skills practiced: Vocabulary, reaction speed, coordination.
Level: Beginners
Procedure:

1. All children stand up.
2. The teacher says "Everybody touch something (colour)!". Then, all children have to find this colour in the classroom and touch it.

Variation 1: Students can take turns saying the sentence aloud (instead of the teacher).

Variation 2: The teacher can work on different vocabulary such as shapes, days of the week, animals, etc. using flashcards or objects.

3.3. SENSORY GAMES

I spy with my little eye…
Duration: 15 minutes
Materials required: Objects from the classroom
Skills practiced: Sight and vocabulary.
Level: Beginners
Procedure:

1. The teacher revises some vocabulary with flashcards or realia from a box.
2. Then, one student comes in front of the group and says "I spy with my little eye something…" aloud, adding an object characteristic (colour, shape, size, etc.).
3. Children take turns to guess the object.
4. When a child guesses the object, becomes the leader and starts the game again.

Variation: We can play with classroom objects in general.

The senses lab / Touch and guess
Duration: 15 minutes
Materials required: boxes with objects and scarfs or similar.
Skills practiced: attention, inductive thinking.
Level: Beginners
Procedure:
The group is organized in small groups. Each group is given a box with objects inside. One student covers his/her eyes and puts the hand inside the box, trying to guess an object. Once he/she guesses it, another student covers his/her eyes and repeats the action.
Variation:

1) Boxes with scents.
2) Classifying objects into two/three categories (cold/hot, square/triangle/circle, smooth/rough), …).

3.4. PHYSICAL CONDITION GAMES

Relay races
Duration: 15 minutes
Materials required: --
Skills practiced: Physical condition, vocabulary.
Level: Beginners
Procedure:
There are many different relay races games. It consists in a race between two or more children teams. Each child is relieved by a teammate after running a distance. Children are organized in lines. We can add different challenges in order to make it funnier and to put into practice the learned vocabulary.

1) **Objects.** Teacher can place a box with objects/flashcards/word cards at a distance from the group. Then, teacher names an object and the first child of each group runs the distance from the group to the box, picks up the object/flashcard/word card and runs back to the group. When the first child reaches the group, the teacher names another object and the second child runs to the box in order to find it. The game finishes when all children have found at least one object in the box.
2) **Animals.** Teacher asks children to mime different animals when running the distance.
3) **Body parts.** Teacher asks children to touch/raise/move a body part when running the distance.

4. COGNITIVE GAMES

4.1. MANIPULATIVE GAMES

Matching games: Domino
Duration: 10 minutes
Materials required: domino pieces
Skills practiced: attention and memory.
Level: Beginners
Procedure:
Children play in small groups (4-5 children). Each child has some domino pieces with words and images. He/she has to place each piece next to the right image/word.

1) **Animals.** We can prepare a domino with animals and their written names or their sounds.
2) **Colours.** Children have to match a drawing with its colour (word).
3) …

4.2. DISCOVERING GAMES

There are many discovering games we can put into practice with young learners. Through these games children discover the world, understand physical processes such as the cause and effect rule.

Bowling
Duration: 10 minutes
Materials required: bowling
Skills practiced: attention, deductive thinking
Level: Beginners
Procedure:
The teacher places the bowling on the floor/ground. The group of students is on the other side of the classroom (or playground). One student throws the ball against the bowling, trying to knock them down. The next student tries to knock down the remaining ones. They can share strategies and guide other students to do it better.

4.3. MEMORY GAMES

Matching games: Bingo
Duration: 10 minutes
Materials required: Set of bingo cards and counters
Skills practiced: attention, memory and vocabulary.
Level: Beginners
Procedure:
Children are given a bingo card (with images or written words) and some counters. The teacher calls out words and the students check them off. Once one student has crossed off all the images/words he/she yells BINGO!!

We can play this game individually, in pairs or in small groups.

Kim’ s game
Duration: 10 minutes
Materials required: different objects and a tablecloth or similar
Skills practiced: attention, memory and vocabulary.
Level: Beginners
Procedure:
The teacher places different objects on a table and calls one, two or more students to have a look at them for a period of time (30 seconds or 1 minute). The teacher covers the objects and tells the children to look back. Then, the teacher removes one object (the students do not see it) and asks the students to guess the missed object.

4.4. IMAGINATIVE GAMES

Inventors
Duration: 15 minutes
Materials required: Objects from a box
Skills practiced: Vocabulary and Creativity
Level: Beginners
Procedure:

1. The teacher places a basket/box with objects (nuts, a brush, a plastic cup, etc.) in the middle of each group of students.
2. Let the children take one object and find out its real name (in English) and its use.
3. Leave them time to invent another use for this object (they can also change the name of the object).
4. Children take turns to explain their inventions to the rest of the group.

Secret colours
Duration: 10 minutes
Materials required: colour and black crayons
Skills practiced: creativity.
Level: Beginners
Procedure:
First, each child colours a sheet of paper with different colour crayons. Secondly, they cover the coloured part with black crayon. Then, using a toothpick each child draws on the black crayon layer letting the colours arise.

4.5. LINGUISTIC GAMES

Handmade phones
Duration: 10 minutes
Materials required: plastic cups and strings
Skills practiced: attention, inductive thinking, creativity, vocabulary.
Level: Beginners
Procedure:
Each child decorates his/her own plastic cup. Then, the teacher makes a handmade phone connecting two plastic cups through string and explains to the children how to use this device as a phone. Children can play this game in different ways:

1) The teacher shows a flashcard to one child of the pair, asking him/her to tell what he/she sees to his/her classmate through the "phone".
2) The second child listen to his/her classmate and says the word aloud (draw it, point at it,⋯).

STICKWORDS
Contributed by Rebecca Mercer
Learning objective: Spelling previously introduced vocabulary
Age: Young learners mainly.
Level: Any
Interaction: Pair work
Class Time: 10 minutes
Procedure: Give out generous bundles of sticks to each pair. Reach out a word from list. Award points for correct spelling and speed. The pair with most points wins.
Further commentary: Demonstrate activity first for YLs showing them easiest way to form letters. Sticks cannot be broken. Students must use capital only.

(British Council, 2017:9)

Hammer Phonics
Duration: 10 minutes
Materials required: Toy hammer and Phonics cards.
Skills practiced: Phonics revision and quick response
Level: Beginners
Method:

1. The teacher introduces a few phonic cards to the learners (not more than 8 at a time).
2. After a proper introduction and teaching of the phonic cards put them on the floor.
3. Hand toy hammers to two students at a time.
4. Students should be instructed to raise their hammers as high as possible.
5. Read out the phonetic sound that is related to a particular card.
   Example: CARD 1: A for Apple, CARD 2: B for Ball, CARD 3: C for Cat, etc.
6. The first learner to hit the right card and properly pronounce the right phonetic sound associated with that card is the winner.
7. Transfer the hammers to new students and repeat the process.

(ESL Kids, DavidM., 2017)

ESL Animal game
Duration: 10 minutes
Materials required: cards with written sentences
Skills practiced: Reading comprehension and non-verbal language.
Level: Beginners
Procedure:

1. A student reads a sentence that includes an animal and an action.
2. The student mimes the sentence or part of it while the other students guess what the sentence is.
3. Students take turns miming different sentences.

(ESL Kids, DavidM., 2017)

Pictionary
Duration: 10 minutes
Materials required: word cards, whiteboard, markers and eraser.
Skills practiced: Reading, vocabulary and hand-eye coordination.
Level: Beginners
Procedure:

1. A child takes a word card.
2. He/she draws on the board an image that represents the word.
3. The group has to guess the word from the card.
4. Students take turns to draw on the board.

5. SOCIAL GAMES

5.1. PRETEND PLAY

As you already know, in pretend or make-believe play children tend to copy adults behaviours and habits. Some typical pretend play may be: doctors, schools, mums and dads, etc. Thus, children imitate what they see in this type of play. Pretend play may be played directly (children assumed different roles) or through toys, puppets or similar.

5.2. GAMES WITH RULES

One characteristic of an Infant Education child is his/her short spam attention. For this reason, children at this age are not able to play games with complex rules. On the contrary, games should include simple and understandable rules.

Some traditional games have simple rules, such as "Duck, duck, goose", "What's the time Mr Wolf?" and "Freeze".

Duck, duck, goose
Duration: 10 minutes
Materials: --
Skills practiced: attention, gross-motor skills and taking turns.
Level: Beginners
Procedure:
Children sit down in a circle (ducks). One child becomes the "goose" and goes around the circle. First, he/she pats on someone's head saying "duck". Second, he/she pats on someone's head and says "duck" again. And finally, he/she pats on someone's head and says "goose". Then, this child has to chase the "goose". If the goose gets back to the seat, he/she becomes a duck and the second child becomes the "goose". If the "duck" catches the "goose", the goose starts the game again.

What's the time, Mr. Wolf?
Duration: 10 minutes
Materials:--
Skills practiced: attention, gross-motor skills and taking turns.
Level: Beginners
Procedure:
The teacher is Mr Wolf. He/she stands opposite the children. One child asks "What's the time, Mr. Wolf?" and the teacher answers "It's + number of steps + action (hop, walk backwards,…). The students do this action towards the wolf. Another child asks "What's the time, Mr. Wolf?" and the teacher answers the same way. In the end, a child asks "What's the time, Mr. Wolf?" and the teacher answers "It's dinner time!!" and chases children trying to catch them.

Freeze
Duration: 10 minutes
Materials:--
Skills practiced: attention and gross-motor skills
Level: Beginners
Procedure:
Children dance a song. When the music stops they have to freeze. If someone moves, he/she will dance in a particular way next time (raising hands, covering his/her ears, etc.)

5.3. COOPERATIVE GAMES

As we have previously seen, cooperative play is the last stage for Infant Education children play (from 4 years old onwards). In this type of games collaboration among children is a crucial element. Children cope with different obstacles that they have to overcome together in order to achieve a goal. Through these games children develop the Social and Civic Competence, that is one of the 8 key competences established by the current educative law in Infant Education (LOE).

There are some guidelines to put into practice a cooperative game. Thus, the teacher should...

1) Explain the final purpose of the game beforehand.
2) Involve all children in the game.
3) Provide children with clear instructions.
4) Check understanding.
5) Monitor children during the game.
6) Let children debate and create strategies.
7) Check all children are participating.
8) Evaluate the game with the group.

Cooperative games are an amazing tool to train children in cooperative learning skills. Moreover, as we have seen in the previous unit, Infant Education children tend to be egocentric, so we should start cooperative activities in a very simple way, introducing cooperation in grouping, daily routines, roles in groups, games, etc.

Cooperative hoops
Duration: 10 minutes
Material: coloured hoops
Skills practiced: gross-motor skills and cooperation
Level: Beginners
Procedure:
The teacher places a few hoops on the floor. Then, he/she plays music and all children dance. When the music stops all children have to put (at least) one foot inside a hoop. The teacher can remove some hoops to make it more challenging.
Variation: the teacher can say a colour when stopping the music and all children have to put a foot inside these colour hoops.

Building together
Duration: 10-15 minutes
Material: Building blocks
Skills practiced: fine-motor skills and cooperation
Level: Beginners:
Procedure:
Children are organized in small groups (4-5 children). Each group has to build something with the blocks. For this purpose, they should follow a rule: they have to take turns to place each block. In order to do so, they can talk and decide what they want to build in advance.
At the end of the game all children will visit the others' buildings.

Flying balloons
Duration: 5-10 minutes
Material: Balloons
Skills practiced: gross-motor skills and cooperation
Level: beginners
Procedure:
Children are organized in small groups. Each group is given a balloon. They should complete a walk together keeping the balloon in the air and taking turns to push it up. If the balloon falls down, they should start the path again.
Variation: the whole group plays together and there are many balloons to keep in the air. Children take turns to push up the balloons.

6. EMOTIONAL GAMES

6.1. ROLE PLAY AND DRAMATIC PLAY

We will treat these types of games in deep in unit 7.

6.2. SELF-ESTEEM GAMES

These games have the aim of promoting the child's self-esteem through positive feedback from group mates. It is important to create a safe and pleasant environment in the classroom where children feel good about themselves and confident enough to express feelings and opinions and where mistakes are seen as part of the learning process. Children should accept themselves when making mistakes and this group of games can support this idea.

Our purpose with this type of games is to help children to understand their feelings and to point out the positive qualities of every child and the importance of all children in the group.

The magic garden
Duration: 15 minutes
Materials: poster board, scissors and crayons
Skills practiced: fine-motor skills, self-esteem, cooperation, empathy.
Level: Beginners
Procedure:
The group is divided into small groups (6 children). Each child is given 5 "petals" made of poster board. He/she writes his/her name in all of them. Then, the child shares petals in the group. Thus, all children will have one petal from each group mate to write a positive characteristic of him/her. Once all children have written about their five group mates, each child collects his/her 5 petals and creates a flower with his/her picture/name in the middle.
All flowers can be showed on the walls of the classroom.

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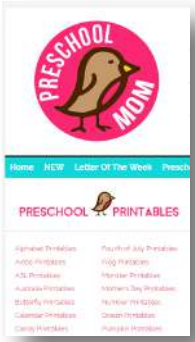
Do you want to go further?

Here you can find some videos and websites with games to put into practice in your Infant Education classroom.

- **How to play "I spy with my little eye"** : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z9d8_IDmNm0



- **Preschool mom. Printables. Bingo cards:** http://preschoolmom.com/preschool-resources/free-preschool-bingo-games/



- **National Geographic: Games with flashcards:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yU5VcteTA0k



- **National Geographic. Senses lab / Touch and guess:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Z6eViHimTI



- **Vocabulary race (Bárbara Hoskins Sakamoto):** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GeTlSCeYjQQ



- **Snake game (Little early bird):** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0blkwRvHH64

