

RECESS AND GAMES

A report from the PVS Pedagogical Committee

The purpose of this document is to discuss our guidelines and recommendations for Portland Village School recess and games. We hope to address some concerns that relate to the age-appropriateness of activities in which we promote at school. The pedagogical Committee has been working for the past few weeks collecting data and research from some trusted sources. This document is an attempt to synthesize the findings of our study. In the following format, we will list many specific recess games, the age or grade for introducing them, and provide some ideas for developmentally appropriate games and activities.

We found this work to be important to the growth of our school for several reasons. As we grow, we have more classes on the playground at each recess. It is essential that these groups are able to exist harmoniously. It is important to understand not only how healthy play may happen with your class, but also for others in a mixed-age setting. Another reason for bringing this recommendation is that the job of the teacher is to promote the development of the child and her basic fundamental skills. Consistency in playground guidelines before and after school will help us to maintain a healthy school culture as it provides clarity for the parent body as well. These guidelines are intended to be used in school and for activities on school property, not after school.

We asked several sources about the following recess games: Four Square, Kickball, Soccer, Tag, Team Sports, Dodge ball and other ball games. Here is a list of recommendations that our groups found when conducting our research.

Four Square

- Ball games should be kept in an imaginative realm (with humans as the focus) until grade four
- Introduced in late 3rd/ early 4th
- Competitive games need to be introduced at these middle grades with attention to the class social dynamic
- Should be played with loose, not strict rules, for early grades
- *Downball- movement teachers and other sources were not familiar with this British game, but we would recommend that the same guidelines apply

Jump Rope and Harness

- Great for early grades (1-3)
- Exercises imaginative play
- Skipping rope is great for rhythm and speech work
- Double-dutch once children have mastered

Kickball

- Introduced in grade four (when they have had more practice with fundamental skills and a more mature social dynamic)
- Explore different ways of playing the game to reduce the competitive aspects in grade four- keep loose rules, not strict

Soccer

- Not recommended as a school organized activity at PVS

Other Team Sports (Baseball, Football (Tag), Basketball)

- Usually organized and initiated by movement teachers in Waldorf schools. Not until after pentathlon in 5th grade
- Looking at the curriculum, we see 6th as learning rule, consequence and justice. This would be the time to bring team and rule-bound sports

Dodge ball

- Humans should not be targets, but variations of this game can be played in younger grades (Poison Blueberry is one example)

Tag Games

- Should not be governed by complex rules in early grades (1-3)
- Whole group participation and ability to regain spot in the game are key.
- More than one “it”

Other new ideas for PVS (???)

- Volleyball for grades 6 and up
- Basketball for upper grades
- Shed for recess equipment, ability to transform playground
- Hay bales, tires, hiding places, recycled material for younger grades
- More jump rope for younger grades
- Limit times for competitive games (blacktop schedule for 4 square, etc)
- Use a checklist for fundamental skills when selecting games for class
- Equipment for playground that promotes imaginative play (stumps, pots, pans, wagon, ropes)
*get teacher input

Resources: “Fundamental Fun”- article by Vern Gambetta; “The Effects of Soccer on the Developing Human Being”- Karl Reinhard Kummer, 1997 [Art of Education](#); Nancy Peirce- PWS 4th Class Teacher; Tedra Dobbs- Movement teacher at So Cal Waldorf Charter; Arehn McCarty- former PVS Movement; Edmund Knighton- Spatial Dynamics; Lucia Mello- On imaginative play, PVS Kindergarten, Eugene Village School