

Creative Physical Education for Group Activities



Developed by
MSSD P.E. Teachers



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Physical education is a vital asset to our students' health and well-being. Crafting and developing group activities that enhance the skills, abilities and learning of students at Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled can be challenging and sometimes overwhelming. Our P.E. teachers were asked to share successful group activities that work well in their schools. The intention of sharing these activities is to introduce variety into your program and to spark new and creative ideas for a more diverse collection of activities for your students. With some adaptations to satisfy the needs of the students in your program, these activities could be successful in your school's P.E. classes.

BOWLING GAMES

Adapted Floor Bowling

- **Number of students that can participate:** Individual or small group
- **Equipment:** Lane (use 1-inch black tape to mark the lane on the floor), pins (may use empty potato chip cans, empty soda bottles, empty boxes, etc.), bowling ramp, rubber bowling ball
- **Instructions:** Students line up in one center row or two rows on each side of the lane (at least 5 feet away for safety reasons). The game is played like traditional bowling. One at a time, students roll the bowling ball down the lane to try to knock over as many pins as possible. Students roll the ball a second time to try to knock over any remaining standing pins.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Students could use a bowling ramp or roll by bending over and using a two-handed push from between their legs. Students may help to set up the pins.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Hand-eye coordination, manipulation of objects, problem-solving, motor planning, taking turns and others



Adapted Table Bowling

- **Number of students that can participate:** Individual student or a small group
- **Equipment:** Pins (may use empty potato chip cans, empty soda bottles, empty boxes, etc.), lightweight plastic or rubber bowling ball, an 8-foot or 10-foot table, bumpers (for example: two tightly rolled blankets)
- **Setup:** Place one bumper on each side of the table to form the bowling lane. Arrange pins as in bowling.
- **Instructions:** Play the game like traditional bowling. One at a time, students push/roll the bowling ball down the lane and try to knock over as many pins as possible. The students push/roll the ball a second time if any pins are standing after the first roll. Have other students help set up the pins after each turn. (Keep waiting students at least 5 feet away from the lane for safety reasons.) You do not need to keep score. Participation and effort should be applauded while reinforcing appropriate skills improvement.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Students could use a bowling ramp or roll by bending over and using a two-handed push from between their legs.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Hand-eye coordination, visual tracking, manipulation of objects, problem-solving and others

Bowling for Clean Teeth



- **Number of students that can participate:** Small group
- **Equipment:** Pins (may use empty potato chip cans, empty soda bottles, empty boxes, etc.), pink and white cardboard, lane (use 1-inch black tape to mark the lane on the floor), bowling ramp, rubber bowling ball
- **Setup:** Cut out teeth and gums (using pink cardboard for the gums and white cardboard for the teeth). Outline the edges with a black marker and laminate the cardboard for durability. Attach the teeth and gums to the pins.
- **Instructions:** Students line up in one center row or two rows on each side of the lane (at least 5 feet away for safety reasons). Have students pretend that the ball is the toothbrush and the pins are the teeth. Brush the teeth by rolling the ball and knocking over the pins. (Other than the setup, the game is played like traditional bowling.) Discuss the importance of brushing one's own teeth during the initial presentation.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Students could use a bowling ramp or roll by bending over and using a two-handed push from between their legs. Keep the lane short to hold the players' attention or to fit the skill level of each player. (It might be more motivating to get quick feedback from falling pins.)
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Hand-eye coordination, visual tracking, manipulation of objects, problem-solving and others

Car Bowling

- **Number of students that can participate:** Individual student or a small group
- **Equipment:** Large plastic toy car (16 inches works well), ramp made of a 6-foot or 8-foot board, pins (may use empty potato chip cans, empty soda bottles, empty boxes, etc.), rubber bowling ball
- **Instructions:** Students line up in one center row or two rows on each side of the lane (at least 5 feet away for safety reasons). Students push or roll the car down the ramp to try to knock over as many pins as possible. The game is played like traditional bowling.

- **Adaptations made for participants:** Use a remote control vehicle to try to knock over pins or to maneuver around scattered pins. Shorten the lane if necessary.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Hand-eye coordination, visual tracking, manipulation of objects, problem-solving, motor planning, taking turns, staying in a designated location with a group, balance improvements

Collision Bowling

- **Number of students that can participate:** Any number
- **Equipment:** Bowling ramp, two plastic or rubber bowling balls (one for students and one for teachers/aides), four to 10 plastic bowling pins placed on the endline either spaced equally apart or clustered together
- **Instructions:** Students form a single-file line 30 feet from the pins. One at a time, students roll the ball or push it down the ramp to knock over the pins at the other end. As a student rolls the ball, the teacher/aide rolls another ball from the sidelines to collide with the student's ball. Students want to knock over the pins while the teacher attempts to block each try. The game is over when all of the pins are knocked down.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Arrange the pins in various formations to make each game different and interesting.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Hand-eye coordination, visual tracking, manipulation of objects, problem-solving, motor planning, taking turns, staying in a designated location with a group, balance improvements

Hula Hoop Bowling/Bear Trap Bowling

- **Number of students that can participate:** Small group
- **Equipment:** Hula hoops, adapted ramp, adapted low-roll balls or deflated balls
- **Instructions:** Students roll or push the ball down the ramp and attempt to land it in a hula hoop.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** To increase difficulty, use various colors of hoops and call out a color for students to aim at. Set up the game by a wall or in a corner; allow the ball to deflect off the wall and knock over pins. Kick the ball instead of rolling or pushing.

- **Skills taught through this activity:** Hand-eye coordination, visual tracking, motor planning, taking turns, staying in a designated location with a group and others

Kickball Bowling

- **Number of students that can participate:** Small group
- **Equipment:** Lane (use 1-inch black tape to mark the lane on the floor), pins (may use empty potato chip cans, empty soda bottles, empty boxes, etc.), coated foam ball
- **Instructions:** Form a circle with the pins set up in the middle. Have students kick the ball to try to knock over as many pins as possible. (Be careful of flying pins!) Make sure the circle is large enough to keep all players safe, and remind students to kick easy.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** If a student is unable to kick the ball, set the ball on his/her foot and lift, move or drop the ball onto the pins.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Leg development, foot-eye coordination, visual tracking, manipulation of objects, problem-solving, teamwork

Pumpkin Bowling

- **Number of students that can participate:** Small group
- **Equipment:** Lane (use 1-inch black tape to mark the lane on the floor), pins (may use empty potato chip cans, empty soda bottles, empty boxes, etc.), bowling ramp, a round pumpkin (not ripe – a ripe pumpkin could get smashed if it hit a wall) with the stem cut off to use as the bowling ball
- **Instructions:** Students line up in one center row or two rows on each side of the lane (at least 5 feet away for safety reasons). The game is played like traditional bowling. One at a time, students roll the pumpkin down the lane to try to knock over as many pins as possible. (Be careful of flying pins and a heavy pumpkin.)
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Students may use a bowling ramp or roll by bending over and using a two-handed push from between their legs.



- **Skills taught through this activity:** Hand-eye coordination, visual tracking, manipulation of objects, problem-solving, motor planning, taking turns, staying in a designated location with a group, balance improvements, counting

Pin Attack

- **Number of students that can participate:** Small or large group
- **Equipment:** Two basketballs (or similar objects), 10 pins (may use empty potato chip cans, empty soda bottles, empty boxes, etc.), two adapted bowling ramps
- **Instructions:** Each team is 30 feet apart and facing each other. Each team has a ramp, a ball and five pins. Each team places its pins equally spaced apart and 5 feet away from the opposing team's pins. The objective is to be the first team to knock over the opposing team's pins. Students roll the ball down the ramp to try to knock over their opponent's pins while being careful to not knock down their own. Teams alternate turns.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Students may roll the ball without using the ramp.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Hand-eye coordination, visual tracking, motor skills, social skills involved in group interaction

Scattered Circle Bowling

- **Number of students that can participate:** Any number
- **Equipment:** Playground or slow-motion ball, 10-20 pins (may use empty potato chip cans, empty soda bottles, empty boxes, etc.)
- **Instructions:** Students sit in a circle with the pins arranged in a random pattern in the center. One student rolls the ball at the pins to knock over as many as possible. The student then passes the ball to the next student in the circle to try to knock over the remaining pins.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Decorate pins with shapes and/or colors. The teacher could call out a shape or color, and the students would try to knock over that type of pin. Use a bowling ramp if needed. Adjust the size of the circle.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Hand-eye coordination, visual tracking, manipulation of objects, problem-solving, motor planning, taking turns, staying in a designated location with a group, balance improvements, counting, reinforcement of recollection of colors/shapes

Team Scattered Circle Bowling

- **Number of students that can participate:** Large group
- **Equipment:** Playground or slow-motion ball, 10-20 pins (may use empty potato chip cans, empty soda bottles, empty boxes, etc.)
- **Instructions:** Students sit in a circle with the pins arranged in a random pattern in the center. When the teacher says, "Hurry, hurry, hurry!" the students quickly roll the ball at the pins until all of the pins are knocked over. (The ball should be rolled, not bounced or thrown.) More than one pin may be knocked over with one roll. Players should cooperate to see how quickly they can knock over all of the pins. Depending on the amount of supervision, you could have one, two or three balls in play at one time.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Hand-eye coordination, visual tracking, teamwork, manipulation of objects, problem-solving, motor planning, taking turns, staying in a designated location with a group, balance improvements from either sitting or standing

Tunnel Bowling

- **Number of students that can participate:** Individual student or a small group
- **Equipment:** Four or five chairs, adapted ramp, rubber or plastic ball, three bowling pins
- **Instructions:** Line up the chairs in a row. Place the pins at the end of the row of chairs. Students roll or push the ball down the ramp and through the chairs to knock over the pins.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Students may roll the ball without using the ramp.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Hand-eye coordination, visual tracking, motor planning, taking turns, setting up bowling pins

Wrecking Ball Bowling

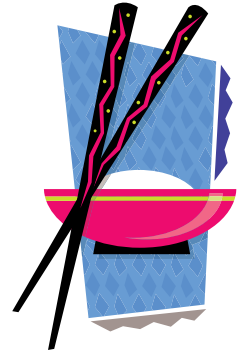
- **Number of students that can participate:** Small group
- **Equipment:** A tetherball or a soft 8-inch ball attached to rope or string suspended from the ceiling, 10-20 pins (may use empty potato chip cans, empty soda bottles, empty boxes, etc.)
- **Instructions:** One at a time, students swing or release the tetherball at the pins to try to knock over as many as possible. (Keep students away from the pins for safety reasons.)

- **Adaptations made for participants:** Use a soft 8-inch ball pushed into the toe of one leg of pantyhose to make a tetherball. Use different colors of hose and textured or auditory balls.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Hand-eye coordination, visual tracking, manipulation of objects, problem-solving, motor planning, taking turns, staying in a designated location with a group, balance improvements

OTHER GAMES

Chopstix

- **Number of students that can participate:** Pairs or a small group
- **Equipment:** Two sticks for each player (Lummi sticks, rolled newspapers, dowel rods, etc.) and a non-latex balloon
- **Instructions:** Holding one stick in each hand, players catch the balloon with the sticks and then toss it to their partner or another player.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Pairs or groups may be stationary or may move around.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Use both arms together (bilateral integration), touch, visual tracking and awareness, cooperative play



Dice Game

- **Number of students that can participate:** Any number
- **Equipment:** Large foam dice (or small dice), score card
- **Setup:** Make a score card with two columns. Title the first column "Team 1" and the second column "Team 2." Under each column, write the numbers 2 through 12.
- **Instructions:** Divide students into two teams. The first student on each team rolls the dice. Mark off the number that the student rolls. Teams alternate rolling dice as each student takes a turn trying to get each number on the score card. The first team to roll and mark off all the numbers on its score card wins the game.



- **Skills taught through this activity:** Visual attention, grasping dice, releasing/rolling dice, counting, marking off number rolled, taking turns, exercise by retrieving dice, social play

Exercise in Motion

- **Number of students that can participate:** Up to 10
- **Equipment:** VCR or DVD player, music
- **Instructions:** Play an exercise tape or DVD to music. Have students form a circle. All students follow the directions on the video.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Hand-over-hand for some to complete the exercises
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Reaching/grasping, following directions, gross motor and fine motor skills

Follow the Arrows

- **Number of students that can participate:** One to 10
- **Equipment:** Colored tape for arrows, available equipment (mats, bolsters, mini-tramps, wedges, stairs, etc.) to be used as obstacles
- **Setup:** Set up obstacles throughout the course area. Place colored tape on the floor to make arrows directing students from one obstacle to another.
- **Instructions:** Students form a line facing the teacher. The teacher describes and demonstrates the obstacle course. Every 10 seconds, a student is told to begin the first obstacle and then complete the course. Students who need assistance are guided by aides (not other students because of safety issues). A continuous line of students moves through the course until all students have participated.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Students in wheelchairs propel themselves around all the obstacles and over mats.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Demonstrate body awareness, walk up an inclined surface, ascend and descend steps, follow simple requests, perform sequential steps of a task and others

Ghost Tag

- **Number of students that can participate:** Five to 30
- **Equipment:** Music, several soft stuffed objects, decorations or objects to make boundaries

- **Setup:** Make a good-sized boundary using seasonal decorations.
- **Instructions:** Place one student in the middle of the boundary area as the thrower who will use several soft stuffed ghosts (or another soft object named in the title; you can replace the word ghost with a seasonal name) to throw at students walking around the boundary area. Mats may be used as a safe place where students cannot be tagged. Music may also be played while students are walking. If students are tagged by the ghost, they are out and must wait until another thrower is chosen to start a new round. Everyone gets a chance to be the thrower. If a large group is playing, multiple throwers may be assigned.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Some students could need help throwing or retrieving objects. Students in wheelchairs might need to be pushed.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Walking, dodging, fleeing, throwing at a target, overhand and underhand throwing, good sportsmanship

Hit the Lonesome Trail Dance

- **Number of students that can participate:** Any number
- **Equipment:** Music
- **Instructions:** Inform students that the teacher will give instructions for the dance. When the teacher says, "Hit the lonesome trail" (or another instruction of your choosing), the students scatter and dodge the other dancers. Like a square dance, provide instructions (turn in a circle, clap your hands and stomp your feet, hit the lonesome trail, everyone form a circle, go right, go left). Repeat or mix up the commands until the music stops.
- **Variations to the game:** Use pillows or soft objects that can be passed from student to student during the dance. Give different commands (crawl, walk, run, hop, jump, twist, pivot, slide feet, stretch) or use animal movements (kangaroo, bird, elephant, turtle).
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Provide appropriate assistance to keep the students moving.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Listen, follow directions, concepts, motor planning, problem-solving, visual and spatial awareness, directionality, dodge, rhythm/timing, coordination, balance

Intersection

- **Number of students that can participate:** 10-20
- **Equipment:** Four soft foam balls (8 inches in diameter)
- **Setup:** Students form a circle arms-length apart or set around a circular table.
- **Instructions:** To start the game, the teacher says, "Intersection, ready ... go!" The students then simultaneously roll the balls as close to other balls as they can, keeping the balls moving but without letting them touch. Students must roll at various speeds but cannot bounce, throw, hold or kick the balls. Students also cannot roll the balls to players on their immediate left or right. Students need to adjust speed and timing when they see another ball moving.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Force and motion, follow requests, recognize a pattern related to an activity, cooperative play

Musical Scarves

- **Number of students that can participate:** Individual student or a large group
- **Equipment:** Scarves, music, ribbon wands (for those who need hand-over-hand)
- **Instructions:** Students move scarves around to music or follow the instructions given by the teacher. The teacher may have a routine for the music and may give instructions for each movement in the routine, or students may freestyle to the music.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Ribbon wands with foam handles for students who need hand-over-hand
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Following directions, reaching/grasping, starting/stopping an activity, understanding directionality, communicating through the use of eye gaze, completing a task, appropriate posture, balance

Musical Spots

- **Number of students that can participate:** 10-20
- **Equipment:** 10-20 circular spot markers, music
- **Setup:** One spot marker for each player is placed in a circle on the ground. (This activity is a variation on musical chairs.)
- **Instructions:** Each player stands on a spot. When the music plays, the players move around outside the circle of spots. When the music

stops, each player must hurry to a spot. Only one player is allowed on a spot. Inform the players that one spot will be removed each round; when the music stops, the person not on a spot is out. Place the removed spots on the sideline, and have the eliminated players sit on a spot until only one player is left.

- **Variations to the game:** Use spots with several different colors. When the music stops, the teacher calls out a color. Each player must stand on that color of spot. More than one player can be on a spot, and no spots are removed at the end of the round.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Players in wheelchairs might need assistance to push around the circle. Use some indication of when to stop (word, signal, noisemaker). Textured spots may be used for players who are visually impaired and need assistance. Use a flashlight for students who are hearing impaired to indicate when the music stops.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Improving fundamental motor patterns and skills, agility, balancing, muscular strength, enhancing speech and language skills, following directions, listening skills

Painting by Themes

- **Number of students that can participate:** Group project (one to two students at a time)
- **Equipment:** Table, bedsheet, washable paints, warm water to wash hands, towels to dry hands
- **Instructions:** Working with classroom teachers and using the monthly themes, have students turn an ordinary bedsheet into a wall hanging. Sketch, or ask the local high school to have an art student sketch, a picture based on the theme. During P.E., students can paint the sketch using the palms of their hands or fingertips.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** More involved students might need to use a finger instead of the hand/palm for painting.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Taking turns, sensory integration, colors, body parts

Parachute to Music

- **Number of students that can participate:** Eight (small parachute) or 12-16 (large parachute)
- **Equipment:** Small or large parachute, balls, music

- **Setup:** Students either sit or stand to form a circle; teachers and aides stand between the students. For those in wheelchairs, the parachute may be attached to the chairs.
- **Instructions:** Start the music slowly to warm up as the students begin to move the parachute in an up-and-down motion. Increase the tempo, and have students begin making rippling motions with the parachute. Add balls on top of the parachute, and have the students try to keep them on the parachute.
- **Variations to the game:** Instead of adding balls, students can run underneath the parachute or raise the parachute and count to see how long it can stay over their heads. Or, use Airlites or large, air-filled balloons instead of a parachute; keep the balloons in motion in the air.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** The parachute may be attached to wheelchairs if the students cannot grasp.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Rhythm, counting numbers, developing muscles, teamwork, group cooperation, laughter, basic motor skills

Peanuts and Tunes

- **Number of students that can participate:** Limited only by space, staff and equipment
- **Equipment:** Physio-rolls (size depends on student size), playground balls of different sizes, beanbags, tethered balls, music
- **Instructions:** Have students sit down while straddling the peanuts (physio-rolls) and lightly bounce to the music. Have students face a partner and bounce while playing catch or while striking a tethered ball.
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Staff may support students on the peanuts and assist in catching, throwing, striking and bouncing. Students with higher balance skills may use a round physio-roll.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Body awareness, balance, rhythm, catch, throw, strike, motor endurance, cooperation

Pickup Time

- **Number of students that can participate:** Four to 20
- **Equipment:** 100-200 small plastic balls with different colors (like those used in ball pits)

- **Instructions:** Scatter the balls in a designated area. Have the students pick them up and place them in a basket or large barrel. Students in wheelchairs may be positioned by the basket, and a partner can hand them balls to be placed in the basket. To make the game more challenging, divide the students into color teams and see how quickly they can find their color. One ball may be specially marked, and the student who picks up that ball wins an extra prize.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Teamwork, completing a task, motor endurance, bending/grasping skills

Pinball/ Flipperball



- **Number of students that can participate:** Four to 10 per group
- **Equipment:** Coated foam balls (8 inches in diameter)
- **Instructions:** Students form a circle at arms length from the person on both sides. They use their arms to act as flippers to strike the ball. The teacher places one ball in play (more may be added later), and students use their arms to keep the ball moving inside the circle. The ball should be rolled, not bounced or moved too fast.
- **Variations to the game:** It may be set up on the floor or on a circular table.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Cooperative play/teamwork, timing, accuracy through touch, visual attending

Rapid Fire

- **Number of students that can participate:** Pairs (of one student and one teacher/ aide)
- **Equipment:** Beanbags or other soft objects
- **Instructions:** Form two lines (students on one side and teachers/aides on the other) spaced shoulder-to shoulder and facing partners 5 feet (and then 10 feet) away. Each student tosses the beanbag to his/her partner, and then the partner tosses it back. Continue tossing back and forth while developing a rhythm. Increase the speed of tossing and the distance between partners as students are able.

- **Adaptations made for participants:** Add or remove objects as needed. Sit or stand to play the game. Allow students to toss the objects first, which will free up their hands for catching.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Visual attention, catching, throwing/tossing, social play, exercise, timing

Square Dance

- **Number of students that can participate:** Four to 8
- **Equipment:** Switch ensemble program with square-dance calls, computer that is switch accessible
- **Instructions:** Students form a square. Number the couples 1 through 4 with one or two students on each side of the square. Follow the directions on the CD (do si do, promenade, everyone to the center, swing your partner).
- **Adaptations made for participants:** Students may take turns being the caller by activating the switch. Set the program to random, or step down for the calls.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Listen, follow directions, change directions while walking, activate a switch for group participation

"Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving" Obstacle Course



- (Adapted from a lesson plan on <http://www.pcentral.com>.)
- **Number of students that can participate:** Any number
- **Equipment:** Cones, ropes, balls, bowling pins, scooters, plastic food items and plates, large wedge/mat, parachute, hockey goals and sticks, and the book "Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving" by Dav Pilkey
- **Instructions:** Set up the obstacle course stations based on sections of the book. Students complete a variety of activities – moving through cones in a zigzag path using scooters, bikes, walking, etc.; stepping or jumping over ropes or balance beams; shaking a parachute up and down; rolling down an inclined wedge to

knock over bowling pins or pushing a ball down a bowling ramp; pushing, rolling or dribbling balls from one goal to the other; and tossing healthy food items onto plates.

- **Adaptations made for participants:** Use larger targets and/or sticks. Position and assist students who need help.
- **Skills taught through this activity:** Balancing, walking on an uneven surface, taking turns, pushing a ball, throwing at a target, listening and following directions

- **Many of these activities** were featured in the November 2007 and January 2008 issues of Staff Highlights. For an archive of newsletters published by Missouri Schools for the Severely Disabled, please visit our Web site at <http://dese.mo.gov/divspced/stateschools/>.



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