

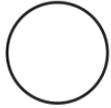


# Indigenous Games for Children



From Indigenous Communities Across Canada

HIGH FIVE® A quality standard for children's programs  
Founded by Parks and Recreation Ontario



## Introduction

The Indigenous Games for Children Resource is a collection of traditional Indigenous games and activities to help front line leaders introduce or reconnect children to recreational and sport activities that reflect the rich cultural heritage of our Indigenous peoples across Canada.

Through consultation with Indigenous communities and cultural organizations, researchers and existing publications, this resource is a collection of activity cards for use by leaders working with children in a program setting. There are several activities that put children in touch with nature. Indigenous people in Canada have always had a special bond with their natural environments and for many years, depended entirely upon Mother Earth for their survival. Many games were introduced to children by elders to help them learn and develop skills necessary for survival, building strength and agility, hunting and gathering food in harsh weather environments. Many of these active games will also help children increase their physical activity levels while strengthening their sense of culture and tradition.

We want to thank the knowledgeable individuals in our Indigenous communities who have willingly shared their history to help create this collection of activities for children. We are also appreciative of the many existing collections of games for children from which we have sourced activities. All are listed in the Acknowledgements section of this resource.

These games have been provided with permission for use in the resource from various communities. While some communities may use these games and activities for play, other communities may view these activities as part of sacred tradition. When using the activities be respectful of the use of the activities in your community. Speak to an elder or community leader to see which games are appropriate to play in their community.

Parks and Recreation Ontario gratefully acknowledges the financial support of the Government of Ontario for the development of this resource.

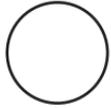


The best way to play™

**HIGH FIVE is Canada's only comprehensive quality standard for children's programs and holds true to the following five Principles of healthy child development that research indicates are essential for providing a positive experience for kids:**

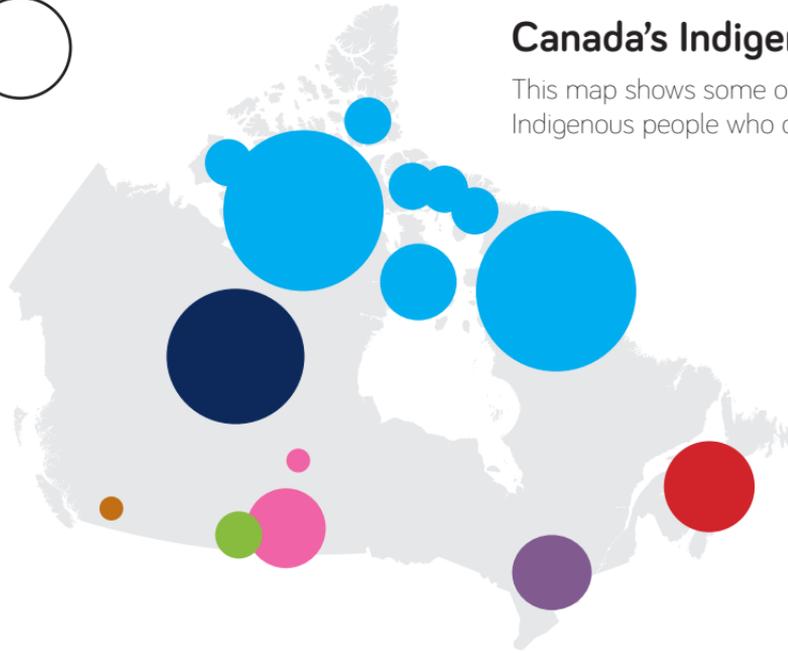
- **A Caring Adult**
- **Friends**
- **Play**
- **Mastery**
- **Participation**

**[www.HIGHFIVE.org](http://www.HIGHFIVE.org)**



## Canada's Indigenous Communities

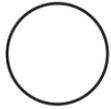
This map shows some of the largest areas of population of some of Canada's Indigenous people who contributed to this resource.



-  **Mi'kmaq**
-  **Dakota**
-  **Blackfoot**
-  **Inuit**
-  **Dene**
-  **Sto:lo Nation,  
Skowkale First Nation**
-  **Inuit, Iroquois First  
Nations, Eastern Woodland  
Natives**

In Canada, the word Indigenous refers to the First Nations, Metis and Inuit peoples of this country. Indigenous peoples were the first to live on the land which is now called Canada. In 2010, there were 615 First Nation communities, 8 Metis settlements and 53 Inuit communities, with unique heritages, cultures and languages. There are currently more than 1.4 million Indigenous people living in Canada.

This map highlights groups that have submitted traditional games for children for this resource. Each card is colour coded to the map, allowing you to match the game/activity to its Indigenous source. Additional submissions are welcome!



# Make the Stick Jump

**Age Group: 6 - 12 years**

## Space

Open outdoor area, like a field.

## People and Groupings

2+ participants.

## How to play

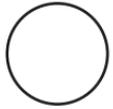
- Use a string to make a line across an open area.
- Give each participant a 6 - 8" stick (you may choose to have each participant decorate their stick with feathers or other materials).
- Participants place their sticks into the ground (one end sticking up), various distances from the line.
- Standing behind the line, participants each receive a set number of rocks or bean bags to throw at the sticks.
- If a participant hits a stick and "makes it jump", that participant is awarded the pre-determined amount of points.
- Numbers of points are awarded to each stick, with closer sticks being less points and farther sticks being more points.
- The participant with the most points wins the game.

## Equipment

- Sticks 6 - 8 inches long
- Rocks or bean bags
- String

## Blackfoot

**This game was a favourite of Blackfoot boys who played it to improve throwing accuracy which was needed when they went out to hunt small game.**



# Line Tag

**Age Group: 5 - 12 years**

## Space

Open area, indoors or outdoors.

## People and Groupings

6+ participants.

## How to play

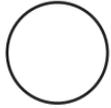
- All participants make a line, holding hands.
- The first participant in the line tries to tag the last participant.
- If the line breaks or the last participant in the line is tagged, another participant moves to the start of the line and the game continues.

## Equipment

None

**Blackfoot**

**This game was played so children could develop skills such as running, chasing and balancing.**



# Rattler

**Age Group: 6+ years**

## Space

Area large enough for group to form a sitting circle.

## People and Groupings

2+ participants.

## How to play

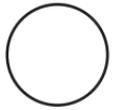
- Participants form a circle, with one participant blindfolded, sitting in the middle.
- A “rattling ball”, or a ball with small rocks, pebbles, beans, etc. contained inside, is tossed around by participants who are forming the circle.
- The blindfolded person tries to catch the ball and once the ball is caught, a new participant is blindfolded and takes the spot in the middle.

## Equipment

- Blindfold
- “Rattling ball” or ball filled with small rocks, pebbles, beans, etc

# Blackfoot

**In the past, the player with the “rattle”, a ball made of hide and pebbles, was the “snake”, and the blindfolded person was the “hunter”. This game allowed children to improve their survival skills and their ability to hunt small game.**



# Bone Game

**Age Group:** 6+ years

## Space

Small open area, indoors or outdoors.

## People and Groupings

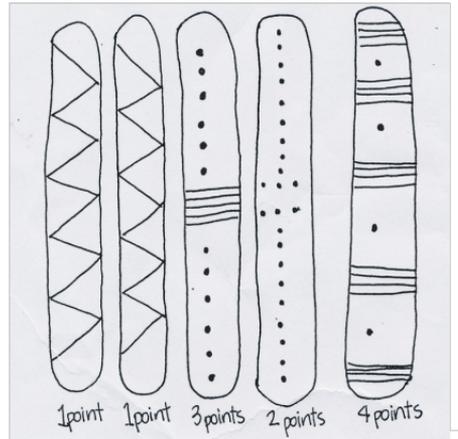
2+ participants or teams.

## How to play

- Each participant takes a turn to throw the “bones” on the floor in front of them.
- The points are counted and then the “bones” are given to the next participant.
- The first person to 20 points, wins the game.
- Participants are encouraged to make their own version of the game, following the patterns on the right.
- Blank sides count as 0.

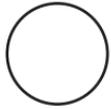
## Equipment

- 5 “Bones” or large tongue depressors
- Markers



# Blackfoot

Traditionally, this game was played with carved buffalo rib bones and was important in helping Blackfoot children learn to add and count.



# Double Ball/Nobbies

**Age Group: 6+ years**

## Space

Large open playing field.

## People and Groupings

2+ participants, 2 teams.

## How to play

- Two 12 foot poles are placed at each end of the field, roughly 10 feet apart
- Participants are divided into two teams, with each player getting one of the yard long sticks.
- Each team starts at one end of the field, opposite of each other and the “Nobbie” is placed in the middle of the field to begin.
- When the whistle blows, both teams race to “Nobbie”, and using only their sticks (no hands or feet allowed), must move/pass the “Nobbie” towards the other teams side.
- “Nobbie” must wrap around one of the 12 foot poles to score a point.
- The team with the most points, wins.

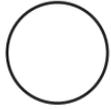
## Equipment

- 2 – 12 foot poles, roughly 1 inch in diameter
- Several sticks, each about a yard long
- Nobbie/double ball: 2 pouches of leather, roughly 2 ½ inches x 3 inches filled with some sand and held together by a 10 inch strip

Played by many Indigenous groups including Cree, Blackfoot, Inuit, Assiniboine and Skowkale

It was originally played by only women, and as sign of respect as the communities “life givers”. Men were not allowed to watch the game being played.

Submitted by Mike James,  
All Aboriginal Healing & Native  
Games Program ([www.aahngp.com](http://www.aahngp.com),  
[mike@aaahngp.com](mailto:mike@aaahngp.com))



# Sticks in the Fist

**Age Group: 5 - 12 years**

## Space

Any quiet area or table top, indoors or outdoors.

## People and Groupings

2+ participants.

## How to play

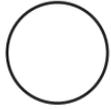
- One participant holds the bundle of sticks in one hand and begins drawing sticks from the bundle.
- The round ends when the participant draws the "marked" stick.
- Bundle can then be passed to another participant who will begin again to draw sticks from the bundle in an attempt to avoid marked stick.
- Game can be repeated in hopes of participants improving their score.

## Equipment

- 10 sticks cut to fit in a fist
- One stick is marked on the bottom



**Historically, hand games, like Sticks in the Fist, were played by women within the group, and later on between communities to exchange horses and cattle.**



# Stick Game

**Age Group: 5 - 12 years**

## Space

Indoor or outdoor space allowing five feet of space between each participant.

## People and Groupings

Individual.

## How to play

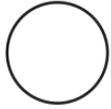
- Tie the rope to one end of the stick and the bone to the other end of the rope.
- Participants then toss the bone in the air and try to catch it on the end of the stick.

## Equipment

- Bone with a hole in the centre (a small rubber ring can be substituted for the bone)
- Stick
- Piece of rope per participant

A Game played by many Indigenous groups including Mi'kmaq, Inuit and Cree

Children would traditionally gather a small stick, sinew, scraps of leather and small bones to make this game.



# Homemade Spruce Tea

**Age Group: 10+ years**

## Space

A kitchen area with stove and enough space to prepare food.

## People and Groupings

Done as a group or in smaller groups based on number of stovetops available.

## How to play

- Bring water to a boil on stovetop.
- Sink spruce needles in water and boil for 10-12 minutes.
- Remove from heat and pour water and needle mixture through strainer into individual cups.
- Discard the boiled spruce needles and enjoy!

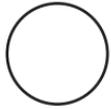
## Equipment

- Large sized pot or kettle
- Fine mesh strainer
- Tea cups
- One large handful of spruce needles, either fresh or dried
- 8 cups of water

Mi`kmaq

**The Mi`kmaq drank spruce tea and taught early settlers to use spruce to prevent the disease known as scurvy, that had killed so many during the early days of settlement.**

Share Our Play



# Waltes

**Age Group:** 10+ years

**Space:** Indoor on the floor.

**People and Groupings:** Pairs

## How to play

- The two participants sit opposite each other with the dish between them, usually on a pad of leather or cloth.
- Each participant takes a turn picking up the bowl and knocking it down with enough force to flip the dice.
- To earn points, a participant must have 5 or 6 of the marked sides showing. They get 5 sticks if all the dice are the same, and one stick if only 5 of the 6 dice are the same.
- If the participant earns points on his or her turn, they go again. If they do not, then it's the next participant's turn.
- The game continues until one participant wins all the counting sticks or both participants decide to end the game.

## Equipment

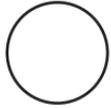
- Shallow wooden bowl
- 6 flat round dice often carved from caribou bone. Each plain on 1 side with a cross on the other
- Sticks to keep score (1 stick shaped like the forward half of an arrow, 3 shaped like the back half with fletching and 50 plain sticks. Each represent different numbers of points)
- Pad of leather or cloth

## Mi`kmaq

**The waltestaqn (bowl) itself was considered to be important in Mi`kmaq spirituality. When filled with water and left overnight, its appearance the next morning could be read to reveal knowledge of the past, present, and future.**

Kekinamuek - Learning about the Mikmaq Of Nova Scotia developed by The Confederacy of Mainland Mikmaq

Submitted by Cathy LeBlanc,  
Physical Activity Strategy Coordinator,  
Acadia First Nation



# Friendship Dance

**Age Group:** 5 - 12 years

**Space:**

An indoor or outdoor space large enough for participants to form a circle.

**People and Groupings:**

8+ participants.

**How to play**

- Participants hold hands in a circle.
- Move in a clockwise direction, taking three steps forward and one step back in time with the rhythm of the drum.

**Equipment**

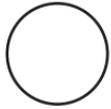
1 Drum or recorded Mi'kmaw music

Mi'kmaq

The Mi'kmaq performed different dances, depending on the occasion. The most common was the friendship dance, a simple dance that everyone could do.

Share Our Play

Submitted by Cathy LeBlanc,  
Physical Activity Strategy Coordinator,  
Acadia First Nation



# Find a Talking Stick

**Age Group:** 8+ years

**Space:**

A wilderness setting that is safe for participants to explore.

**People and Groupings:**

2+ participants.

**How to play**

- Invite an elder or knowledgeable community member into your program to discuss the concept of a talking circle and the importance of a talking stick.
- A 30-minute nature walk will allow your participants to explore the outdoors and find a piece of nature that they wish to use as their token for the talking circle.
- Encourage participants to find something unique that can be used for their token.
- Remember that it must be easily passed around the sharing circle, so sticks, stones and other findings must be of a suitable size.
- An easy follow up activity is to allow your participants a chance to design and decorate their talking stick.

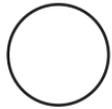
**Equipment**

None

Mi`kmaq

**Talking sticks were often used by Mi`kmaq elders and leaders for discussions on important issues. Everyone sat in a circle and only the person having possession of the talking stick could speak.**

Mi`kmaq History and People: The Talking Circle



# Decorate your Talking Stick or Token

**Age Group: 8+ years**

**Space:**

Table space for each participant to decorate and paint.

**People and Groupings:**

Individual.

**How to play**

- Sit participants at a table with their talking stick or token.
- Divide paint, brushes and other decorating supplies evenly amongst the tables or participants.
- Allow participants to decorate their token with paint, feathers and more.
- Once participants are done painting and decorating, leave the tokens on tables to dry completely.
- When dry, allow the participants to vote on whose token they will use in their next talking circle or create a schedule where all participants' creations will be used at least once.

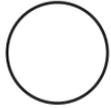
**Equipment**

- Talking stick or token that participants have found in previous activity
- Paints of various colours
- Paint brushes
- Warm water dishes for cleaning
- Feathers, string, sweet grass, beads, linen or other items for decorating
- Glue

Mi`kmaq

**Be mindful of nature as a whole. Even the moss and dirt we step on is a home or life source for other living things. Be respectful of the environment and never take more than you need!**

Share Our Play



# Talking and Sharing Circle

**Age Group:** 8+ years

**Space:**

A space large enough for your participants to form a circle (on the floor or in chairs).

**People and Groupings:**

2+ participants.

**How to play**

- Arrange the participants in a circle, sitting comfortably.
- The leader, or the conductor of the circle, will begin by explaining the ground rules.
- The feather, stick, or other token will be passed around the circle clockwise.
- Each person who receives the talking item will be allowed to speak for as long as they wish.
- When they have finished, they pass the item to the next person in the circle and the process is repeated.
- If a participant does not wish to share anything, they have the option to pass the item.
- The item is encouraged to go around the circle more than once, and each person should have the opportunity to speak as many times as they wish.

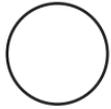
**Equipment**

- Talking Stick, Feather or Token

Mi`kmaq

**“The talking circle is a traditional way for many traditional Indigenous groups to solve problems. It is a very effective way to remove barriers and to allow people to express themselves with complete freedom....”**

Mi`kmaw Spirituality: Talking Circles



# Hand Drum and Beater

**Age Group:** 8+ years

**Space:**

Enough table space for each participant to work on their drum.

**People and Groupings:**

Done individually or in pairs.

**How to play**

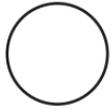
- Begin by taking scissors and cutting off the top of one of your balloons. Make your cut below the 'neck' of the balloon where it begins to widen out .
- Discard the top of the balloon and stretch the remaining part over the plastic container. The balloon should be stretched tightly over the container.
- Wrap an elastic band around the outside of the plastic container to hold the balloon in place. Additional string can also be wrapped around the container to further secure the balloon. Take scissors and cut off the top of another balloon as in step one. Discard top.
- Stuff the remaining part of the balloon with cotton or another soft material.
- Take wooden stick and place end securely in the opening of the balloon stuffed with material. Gather the balloon around the stick and use an elastic band to secure in place. Wrap string around this elastic band to strengthen the hold.

**Equipment**

- Balloons (2 per participant)
- Empty plastic container (lid not needed)
- Elastic bands
- Wooden stick (8 to 12 inches in length)
- Cotton balls or other material for stuffing
- String
- Scissors

Mi`kmaq

**Drums and rattles are percussion instruments traditionally used by First Nations people to provide the background for songs, and songs are the background for dances. Some say, "Drumming is the heartbeat of Mother Earth."**  
Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada



# Tatanka Tatanka

**Age Group: 5 - 12 years**

## Space

Open area like a small field or gym.

## People and Groupings

6 - 20 participants.

## How to play

- One participant is chosen as the Tatanka and the rest of the participants line up against the wall.
- The Tatanka calls out "Tatanka, Tatanka" and the participants run across to the other side of the gym and try not to get tagged by the Tatanka.
- If a participant is tagged they become part of the Tatanka's herd and have to try tag more participants to become part of the herd.
- When there are no more runners the game is over and new Tatanka is chosen.

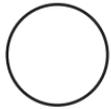
## Equipment

Something to represent a Tatanka head, like a special hat

## Dakota

**Tatanka is the leader of the buffalo. It is a game that is usually played by women and small children; they would mimic their fathers and grandfathers who used to go on the buffalo hunt. The game helped the women and children learn how to lead the buffalo into the compound during the hunt.**

Submitted by Cole Wilson, Saskatoon Public School Divison; Rachel Thomas, Janice Apesis, and Tim Eashappie, ECUR



# Animal Muk

**Age Group:** All ages

**Space:**

Open area, outdoors preferably but could be played indoors.

**People and Groupings:**

Circle of 10+ participants

**How to play**

- Participants do six animal sounds or actions common in the Northwest Territories; a seal, a goose, an owl, a black bear, a moose and a crow.
- The participants form a circle with one person standing in the middle. The person in the middle uses only animal sounds or actions to make someone in the outside circle smile or laugh. Eye contact between the person in the middle and the person they selected in the circle must be maintained at all times.
- If the person in the circle smiles, laughs, or breaks eye contact, he or she will take their turn in the middle to make someone else in the circle try to smile or laugh. Participants are not allowed any physical contact with their opponents.
- Add other animals from around the world.

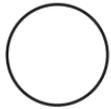
**Equipment**

None.

Inuit

**This “laughing game” was played during social gatherings, especially during the long dark months when blizzards were common. It also gave an opportunity for the hunters to enhance their animal calling skills and become more successful on hunts.**

Submitted by Colinda Blondin,  
Donald Kuptana and Peter Daniels,  
Government of Northwest Territories



# One Foot High Kick

**Age Group: 10+ years**

**Space:**

Open area, indoors or outdoors (preferably outdoors).

**People and Groupings:**

2+ participants and a judge.

**How to play**

- Participants are given three attempts to kick the target.
- A small target is suspended at various heights from a support.
- Participants take turns attempting to kick the target while walking, running or standing still. The target is gradually raised, until only one can still touch it. That athlete is considered the winner.
- Proper technique involves using your arms for momentum and legs to jump straight up. For good balance feet should be shoulder width apart.
- To show balance and control, the participant must hold their stance on the kicking foot for a few seconds or bounce a few times for the attempt to be considered a success.

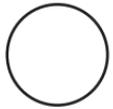
**Equipment**

Something to serve as a target for kickers.

**Inuit**

**This game was played by all to develop skills to deal with the different types of land conditions the Inuit people had to face during their hunting seasons. Hunters had to be quiet, fast and agile to have successful hunts to provide for their families.**

Submitted by Colinda Blondin,  
Donald Kuptana and Peter Daniels,  
Government of Northwest Territories  
and Scott Schultz, RPAN Coordinator



# Leg Wrestle

**Age Group: 8 - 12 years**

**Space:**

Open floor area like a classroom or small gym.

**People and Groupings:**

Participants form pairs with the option to rotate players if there is a greater number of participants.

**How to play**

- Partners lie down on the floor.
- Lock arms around each others elbows.
- Count to three and raise inside legs to lock around each others at the knee, keeping the outside leg extended at all times.
- The participant who pulls the other off their back wins.
- Participants can switch partners and continue until a winner is determined.

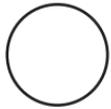
**Equipment**

None

Inuit

**The Inuit needed to be strong, fit and agile to improve hunting and survivability in northern regions. Games like this were also used as a distraction during hard times due to food shortages, etc.**

Beyond Penguins and Polar Bears; Arctic Survival Skills: Traditional Inuit Games



# Siturtaq/Monkey Dance

**Age Group: 8+ years**

**Space:**

Open hard surface area, like an open gym space.

**People and Groupings:**

Small or large group. One or more circles depending on numbers.

**How to play**

- The participants start in a squatting position, facing each other in a circle.
- The dance involves kicking one leg out while maintaining the squat position with the other, alternating legs back and forth.
- The dance ends when the last participant hits the floor.
- Another option would be for the first person to hit the floor to go to the centre and continue playing. In each subsequent round participants who hit the floor go to the centre enabling the one in the middle to rejoin the outer circle. This would ensure more playing time for everyone.
- Can add variations to this game like attempting to maintain the dance while removing and putting on a coat.

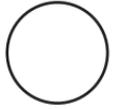
**Equipment**

None

Inuit

**This game is a dance contest. Like many Inuit games, it tests one's agility and endurance.**

Arctic One World Classrooms



# Foot Tag

**Age Group:** 6+ years

**Space:**

Open space indoors or out.

**People and Groupings:**

2 participants.

**How to play**

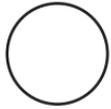
- One person is designated "it".
- The person who is "it" uses his or her own foot to tag the foot of their opponent.
- Once the other person is tagged, the participants switch roles.

**Equipment**

None

Inuit

**Giving children opportunities to practice balance, coordination and speed were very important in Inuit communities as these skills built smart and agile hunters who would bring home food for the community.**



# Shoe Shoe

**Age Group: 5+ years**

**Space:**

Indoor or outdoor space large enough for a circle to be formed.

**People and Groupings:**

2+ participants.

**How to play**

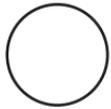
- Participants form a circle and sit down
- One person stands in the middle of a circle of seated people while a shoe, ball or stuffed toy, is passed around the outside of the circle, being hidden underneath people's bent knees.
- The person in the center tries to keep track of where the object is and waits for people in the circle to throw the object at them.
- If the object is caught by the participant in the center, that person is allowed to sit in the circle and is replaced by the person who threw the object.
- If they hit the participant in the centre, that person remains in the center until they catch the object.

**Equipment**

- Soft ball or small stuffed toy or bean bag

## Inuit

**In the Inuit tradition, participants tried to hold back their smiles in games like this for as long as possible until their laughter could no longer be contained.**



# Back Slapping Race

**Age Group:** 8 - 12 years

**Equipment**

**Space:**

None

Preferably an open outdoor area, but could be played in a large indoor area, like a gym.

**People and Groupings:**

4+ participants. 2 runners and 2 judges.

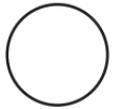
**How to play**

- A square perimeter course is marked on the floor, a few meters apart.
- The runners position themselves on opposite corners outside the marked course. The judges are present to enforce fair play and friendly competition between the runners.
- Once signalled to start by the judges, the runners run around the marked course. The objective of the game is for the runners to catch and (softly) slap their opponents back; therefore the first runner to slap their opponents back is declared the winner.
- Traditionally, the markers outlining the perimeter would be placed at further distances to challenge the runners. Realistically, the course could be the size of a gymnasium and same rules would apply to the runners.

Dene

**To the Dene people, the combination of speed and endurance was a necessity to allow the hunters to run long distances. The Back Slapping Race would test the participants' endurance, speed, and agility skills.**

Submitted by Colinda Blondin,  
Donald Kuptana and Peter Daniels,  
Government of Northwest Territories



# Hand Games

**Age Group: 5 - 12 years**

**Space:**

Small open area, indoors or outdoors.

**People and Groupings:**

2 teams consisting of any number of participants. Optional – participants who are drummers.

**How to play**

- Teams win counting sticks by misleading the opposing team about the location of a small object hidden in either hand.
- The team who wins all the counting sticks wins the round; the game is played best of three.
- The hiding team wins a counting stick for each incorrect guess by the guesser. The guessing side eliminates participants from the hiding team with each correct guess.
- The guesser uses different hand signals to indicate their guess. Some simple hand gestures to use are the left, right, inside, and outside.
- The person making the hand gestures is also called the “shooter”; they make a call and position their hands to a point in the line of the other team. This will continue until all sticks have been taken away from either team.

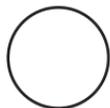
**Equipment**

- 1 large tarp or blanket for the floor
- A smaller cloth or towel to cover the hands of the participant
- Small objects, like jacks
- A large number of sticks (counting sticks) to be collected by winners

## Dene

**This is a popular Dene social game; at any gathering you would have Hand Games, Drum Dances, and feasts. People all over the North would travel long distances to a community to play and socialize.**

Submitted by Colinda Blondin,  
Donald Kuptana and Peter Daniels,  
Government of Northwest Territories



# Snowsnake

**Age Group:** 6+ years

**Space:**

A long, flat snowy open area.

**People and Groupings:**

2+ participants.

**How to play**

- A winter-based game, participants each take a turn throwing a long stick across a flat, snowy area.
- The participant whose spear glides the furthest, wins the game.
- Traditionally, the “spear” is made from birch or willow branch and is up to 1.2 m long, with one end being sharpened to a point.

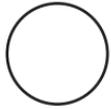
**Equipment**

- Stick the length of an arrow or spear
- Pylons or marker

## Dene

**Snowsnake dates back more than 500 years and was originally a form of communication between villages. Over the years and long winters, throwing “snow snakes” developed into a competitive sport between different communities after the men returned from the annual hunt.**

Submitted by Julia Soucie, Alberta Indigenous HIGH FIVE Trainer, Colinda Blondin, Donald Kuptana and Peter Daniels, Government of Northwest Territories



# Lahal, Slahal (Bone Game)

**Age Group:** 6+ years

## Space

Indoor or outdoor space, large enough for participants to line up facing each other.

## People and Groupings

2+ participants, sitting facing each other

## How to play

- The two teams sit face to face and a captain is chosen.
- Each team is given one set of bones and the captains select one person on their team to hold them.
- In a friendly manner (e.g. flip a coin), choose which team will guess first. The captain guesses in which hand the opposing team's holder has hidden the plain bone.
- The guessing team's holder then places his/her bones so they match the position of the other team's bones; they both then show their bones.
- If they match, the guessing team wins the king stick and the possession of both sets of bones. If they do not match, the other team has an opportunity to guess to win the stick.
- Whichever team wins possession of the king stick and the bones begins the game.
- The object of the game is to win all of your opponent's sticks, plus the king stick. This is done by guessing the position of the bones hidden in different participant's hands.

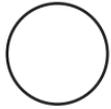
## Equipment

- 10 sticks, 5 for each team
- 4 bones (2 sets)
- Each team has 1 king stick
- 1 or 2 drums - optional

Sto:lo Nation,  
Skowkale First Nation

It is estimated that this game was introduced to the Pacific Northwest around 1880 - 1890. Songs often accompany the game as a diversion to the guessing team and were often handed down from generation to generation, varying by geographical area.

Submitted by Mike James,  
All Aboriginal Healing & Native  
Games Program ([www.aahngp.com](http://www.aahngp.com),  
[mike@aaahngp.com](mailto:mike@aaahngp.com))



# Two Foot High Kick

**Age Group: 10+ years**

## Space

Open area indoors or outdoors.

## People and Groupings

2+ participants and a judge

## How to play

- Same as One Foot High Kick only the target is kicked with two feet and the players must land on two feet.
- Participants are given three attempts to kick the target.
- A small target is suspended at various heights from a support.
- Participants take turns attempting to kick the target with both feet while walking, running or standing still. The target is gradually raised, until only one can still touch it. That athlete is considered the winner.
- Proper technique involves using your arms for momentum and legs to jump straight up. For good balance feet should be shoulder width apart.

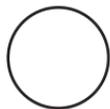
## Equipment

- Something to serve as a target

## Inuit

**Inuit games primarily were born from two different needs. The first being a necessity to be strong, fit and agile which improved hunting and survivability in northern regions. The other need was for entertainment during long hours out on the land, especially during long periods of darkness**

Sourced from Inuit Cultural Online Resource, Vanier, Ontario <http://icor.ottawainuitchildrens.com/node/39>



# Back Push

**Age Group: 10+ years**

## Space

Open area indoors on flat surface.

## People and Groupings

2+ participants and a judge

## How to play

- Two players sit on the floor back to back
- With knees bent, players reach around behind themselves and interlock their arms
- Players begin to push the other player as far as possible
- Players attempt to push each other out of a designated area

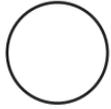
## Equipment

- No equipment required. Designated area marked.

## Inuit

**Inuit games primarily were born from two different needs. The first being a necessity to be strong, fit and agile which improved hunting and survivability in northern regions. The other need was for entertainment during long hours out on the land, especially during long periods of darkness**

Sourced from Inuit Cultural Online Resource, Vanier, Ontario <http://icor.ottawainuitchildrens.com/node/39>



# Bone and Toggle

**Age Group:** 4+ years

## Space

Small indoor space

## People and Groupings

1+ participants

## How to play

- The object of the game is to put the bone or stick through the holes of the leather piece.

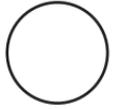


## Equipment

- The bone and toggle is made using a bone or sharp stick with a leather string usually made of deer hide. On the string are weights, bone or antler pieces and on the end is the target, usually a piece of leather with holes in it.

Eastern Woodland  
Natives

This hand game helps children  
develop hand-eye coordination  
and accuracy.



# Lacrosse

**Age Group: 6+ years**

## Space

Large open playing field

## People and Groupings

2+ participants, 2 teams

## How to play

- Lacrosse is typically played with racquets made out of wood, connected to pouches (traditionally made out of hide), which players use to toss a ball (traditionally made with deerskin, now with rubber) back and forth in order to score on the opposing team's goal.

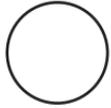
## Equipment

- 2 nets, lacrosse sticks, lacrosse ball

## First Nations Iroquois

Lacrosse as we understand it today was first developed by the Iroquois people, known in their language as dehonchigwiis. It was typically played by men, though both men and women participated in the celebrations and rituals surrounding it. Lacrosse occupies an important place in Iroquois culture, as it is a gift from the Creator.

Sourced from Museum of Ontario Archeology. <https://archaeologymuseum.ca/traditional-games-workshop/>



## Acknowledgements

**Thank you to the contributors credited on each activity card. The following sources were also used:**

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