

# PARACHUTE GAMES



**A COMPILATION REALIZED BY  
LIFE YOUTH FOUNDATION**



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## Introduction

Parachute games encourage cooperative, non-competitive play and reinforce turn-taking and sharing. The games are a lot of fun for both young people and adults and allow us to share learning experiences with our participants.

A parachute is a wonderful addition to the play equipment in any youth activities that you are organizing. Beautiful and sometimes calming, a parachute can create soft, whispering sounds or loud, rippling noises, depending on how quickly it is moved. Parachutes are usually made of brightly colored, lightweight nylon and are equipped with strong, reinforced handholds.

*What's so special about parachute games?*

The parachute is a useful way of involving a large group of participants in an activity and because of its novelty even those who would normally opt out, tend to get involved. Between 20 and 50 participants can be directly involved around the perimeter of a 15 foot (4.5 m) parachute. The majority of games are co-operative rather than competitive and so good for generating a group spirit and togetherness.

*Why incorporate parachute play into your program?*

Because parachute games encourage cooperative, non-competitive plays and reinforces turn taking and sharing. While most gross motor activities for young people develop muscles in the lower body more than the upper torso, parachutes strengthen primarily shoulder, arm and hand muscles. When participants work together to make the parachute billow, they also refine perceptual motor skills and develop a sense of rhythm. Language activities can also be incorporated into most parachute games.

Parachutes are a lot of fun for both participants and adults to play with, especially in large, grassy areas in the summertime. The opportunities to encourage participant's overall development with this exciting activity make it an ideal choice for early childhood programming. Parachutes can be purchased from athletic supply warehouses, early childhood suppliers and army surplus stores (although the latter will be less colorful).

Parachute play is educational in the widest sense. The basic concept of parachute play is constant throughout; a means to involve several people in an activity which is non-competitive, where everyone works towards a common goal and has fun! In recent years experts in the field have utilized this basic concept to help address some of the issues facing today's society.



Parachutes can provide a co-operative forum which helps break down some of the barriers and labels built up within peer groups and across cultures:

- Used for co-operative games, parachutes can help develop a wide range of social skills.
- They can help to mould a group into a working unit before progressing onto other projects.
- They can be used for a wide range of therapeutic purposes.
- They can provide for diverse physical exercise including dance and gymnastics.
- Parachutes are a valuable aid in encouraging co-operation and social interaction in the early years and primary education.
- For the elderly, Parachutes are a wonderfully motivational resource for exercise, movement and social interaction.
- They can be used as a tool to overcome language barriers and shyness.
- The use of Parachutes can help address issues such as child abuse, bullying, truancy, racism and sexism in a non-confrontational manner.
- A close group environment can be created by sitting on or under the Parachutes when activities require quiet and concentration.
- Parachutes can provide an attractive backdrop for Open Days and other significant ceremonies

### *Storage*

A parachute is best stored by taking hold of the centre in one hand, twisting the canopy loosely into a rope, rolling it up and stuffing it into a sack - the thin nylon sack sold for the storage of sleeping bags are ideal.

### *Safety*

- Check ground underneath chute. Grass is by far the best surface, but needs to be dry, not slippery.
- A non-splinter floors if participants are removing shoes.
- Space participants out around edge.
- Give everybody clear warnings about head bumping and looking where going.
- Be sure group can sustain the weight of anyone put on the top, no letting go, dropping or kicking.
- Leader needs to be in charge even when young people contributing games ideas.
- A second facilitator helpful to field participants, any balls and generally assist.

### *Warning*

Parachute material is usually highly inflammable. Use with care and keep away from barbecues, fire, cigarettes etc.



## Getting Started

Drop the parachute from the bag and instruct everyone to take hold of an edge with both hands. Once everyone is hanging on, move them around the perimeter until they are evenly spaced out. Holding the canopy with knuckles on top works best. Get everyone to hold the parachute taut and still at waist level. Get everyone moving together by raising the parachute and allowing it to fall. Don't pull it down but allow it to fall naturally so that it billows tip. This is best done to a steady count. On the third lift try to get the canopy as high as possible so that it billows tip. The development of this is to take one or more steps in towards the middle still holding the parachute creating a mushroom shape. As the parachute collapses, move back out. Practice this basic co-ordination until everyone is happy.

A book, which you may find useful for games and ideas, is "Let's play together" by Mildred Masher

**CAUTION** – You will sometimes see games described which involves putting one or more participants on to the parachute. Provided it is suitably reinforced (and most parachutes are strong enough although purpose built play canopies may not be) there is no danger of damaging the chute. However, these games are extremely dangerous and should not be attempted. Particularly dangerous is anything which involves using the parachute rather like a trampoline with the margin held taut and the 'victim' bounced in the middle. The problem is that the player does not know where the ground is and it is all too easy for him to be bounced on hard ground as the parachute is slackened with consequent injury to spine or head. Even games involving walking on a tight parachute are to be avoided as it is possible to damage an ankle by a sudden unexpected contact with the ground even though the drop is 10 cm or less.

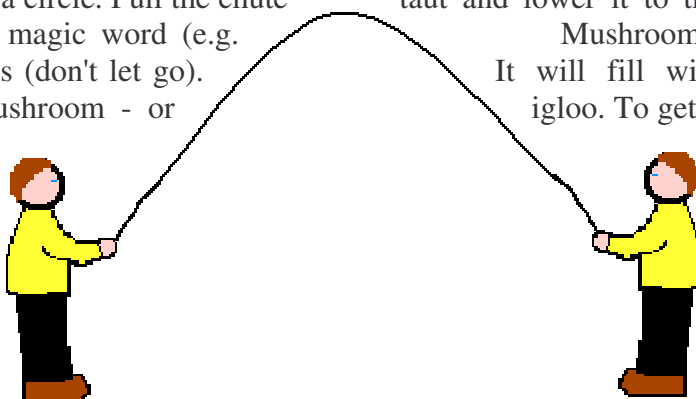
Before you start playing any game it will be best to introduce participants to the parachute and how different moves that you might need to use in the exercise might work.



**The basics moves** are:

## Mushroom

This is not so much a game, more an essential starting point for parachute play. Get everyone to spread out the parachute and hold the edge, spaced out more or less evenly so they're standing in a circle. Pull the chute taut and lower it to the ground (or knee level). On the magic word (e.g. Mushroom!) everyone pulls the chute upwards (don't let go). It will fill with air and rise up like a giant mushroom - or igloo. To get it as high as possible everyone must take a couple of paces towards the center as the chute rises. It's good to practice this so that the group can learn to work effectively as a team and get the chute really high. It won't work without co-operation.



### *Variations on Mushroom*

Once you've mastered the basic mushroom it's fun to experiment. See what happens if:

- Everyone mushrooms and then runs to the center, still holding the chute.
- Everyone mushrooms, then lets go, especially outdoors on a windy day!
- Everyone lets go at exactly the same time. If there isn't any wind, the chute will retain its perfect mushroom shape and rise straight up in the air. Indoors it may go up to the ceiling. To get this right it's best for someone to shout "One.. Two.. Three.. Go!", or similar, immediately after the "Mushroom!" instruction. For everyone to let go at exactly the right instant will take practice and concentration.

Groups of participants who haven't played with a parachute before will probably be delighted and fascinated by the effect for quite a while before you move on to any other games. It's particularly spectacular when the sun is shining down through the chute.

**Inflate** means to lift the parachute over your head

**Deflate** means to let the parachute go into a flat position.

**Float** is when the parachute is in the air and above the student's deltoids and back.

At the game leader's request the group can change the direction to a **dome**. Have the students lower the parachute together to the ground, the children together go under it, and it becomes a dome.

## The Cave

Grasp the edge of the parachute with an overhand grip, and inflate. Take a few steps toward the centre while the parachute is inflated. Release one hand from the



parachute. Pull the parachute down behind the head and back with remaining hand. Kneel down holding the edge against the ground. Stay inside the parachute until it starts to deflate. Hold up the parachute, stand up and duck under to the outside.

### **Under Cover**

Hold onto the edges and inflate the chute. Still holding on, walk under the parachute to the centre and then back to original position. Or, meet in the centre and then all let go so that the parachute gently floats down to cover everyone.

### **Fun Under the Chute**

Grasp the edge of the parachute with an overhand grip and inflate. Bean bags, skipping ropes, balls, etc. have been placed under the parachute. Participants are numbered. Leader calls out a number and those participants run under the parachute and perform before the parachute deflates.

### **Flying Saucer**

Grasp the edge of the parachute with an overhand grip and inflate. Take one step forward once the chute is inflated. When the command "let go" is given, everyone release the parachute. Parachute should remain suspended in the air for a few seconds before it floats to the ground like a flying saucer.

### **Chute Lift**

Ask the participants to lift the parachute high over their heads and down again. Talk about the soft sounds and breezes that are created. Move the parachute faster and notice the different effects.

### **Grand Old Duke of York**

Sing the Grand Old Duke of York while playing with the parachute. Teaches directions up, down, right and left associations.

The Grand Old Duke of York

He had ten thousand men

He marched them up to the top of the hill (Parachute Up)

And he marched them down again (Parachute down)

And he marched them to the left (Walk to the left)

And he marched them to the left (Walk to the left)

And he marched them to the right (Walk to the right)

And he marched them to the right (Walk to the right)

And he marched them up (Parachute Up)

And he marched them down (Parachute Down)





## Games

### 1. Know each other game

#### *All Change*

Facilitators calls out birthday months, numbers, colors. Participants swap places under the parachute before it falls to earth. Make sure that those who remain around the edge allow the canopy to fall rather than pulling it down hard.

#### *All Change (birthday)*

All the participants are spaced evenly round the edge of the parachute grasping it firmly. Start them flapping it in unison - it will need to move slowly, hoist it firmly until it billows upwards and allow it to settle by itself; when it has descended, hoist it firmly upward again. Once they have the rhythm established, the game can begin : call out any month, and participants born in that month have to let go of the parachute and run under it as it is tossed upwards and out of the other side before it falls again (there is actually plenty of time.) Occasionally shout "Christmas!" or "holiday!" to see if anyone runs anyway! No winners or losers, just a bit of energetic fun.

#### *Parachute Tag*

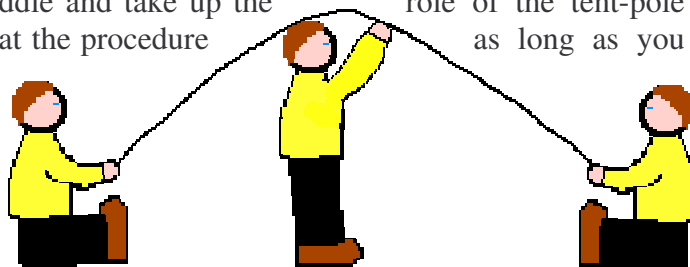
Lift the parachute high overhead. Call one child's name and have her run (skip, hop, twirl or crawl) to the other side before the parachute comes down and tags her.

#### *Tent Pole*

While you're in the tent, try this: One person is selected to be a tent pole and stands in the middle, holding the centre of the chute as high as possible. The tent-pole person calls out someone's name and goes and sits down in that person's place. The person called has to rush to the middle and take up the role of the tent-pole before the chute comes down. Repeat the procedure as long as you feel like it.

There's also a variation of Tent-Pole, which is called Jellyfish. In this version, all the seated people sway about as much as possible for the tent-pole to stay upright.

From the outside, the chute should look like a gigantic quivering jellyfish.





### Upside-down tent

An alternative way to make a tent is to have everyone lie on their backs under the chute, heads to the middle with their feet up in the air. Stretch the chute tight and tuck the chute under your backs so it holds your legs up. You can bring in a soft ball and use your hands to bounce it around inside the tent.

### ***Change Over***

MUSHROOM the chute and call out a command, e.g. "Change over if you are wearing red". Everyone wearing red has to run under the chute to the opposite side, before the chute lands on them (although that is part of the fun).

### ***Same name exchange***

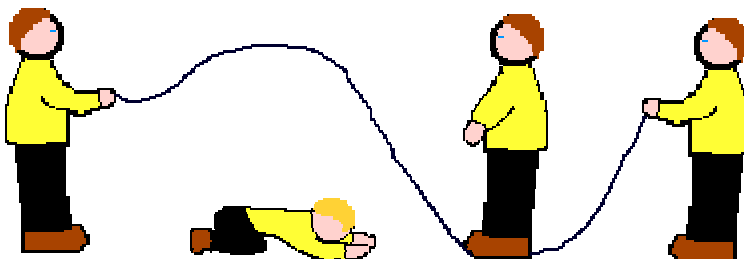
Go around the circle and assign one of the four required equipment names to each participant, until everyone has a name (ie. floatation device, paddles, bailer, sound maker, etc.) Then as everyone has their arms up (Ohh!), call out one name and these participants have to run under the parachute to another spot before it collapses on them (Ahh!). Continue until everyone has been called at least twice. Then try random exchanges such as "Who has been in a small boat?", etc.



## 2. Energizing Games

### ***Cat and Mouse***

(although some might find this dangerous - just make sure the cat is crawling on all fours and not running upright) Everyone should stand in a circle holding the chute stretched out at about waist height. Someone becomes a mouse and goes underneath. Someone else becomes a cat and goes on top. The cat tries to catch the mouse, but with everyone billowing the chute, it is impossible to see where it is.



Someone else becomes a cat and goes on top. The cat tries to catch the mouse, but with everyone billowing the chute, it is impossible to see where it is.

Every now and then you can give the cat a clue by lowering the chute to reveal the mouse, then raise it again to help the mouse get away. You can try the game with two or three mice and two or three cats.

### ***Cat and Mouse a variation***

Stand holding the canopy at shoulder height making sure there is a space between each child around the perimeter. Place an empty can - the cheese - in the centre of the circle under the canopy. Choose one child to be the cat and one to be the mouse. The cat starts off under the canopy guarding the cheese - the mouse starts off outside the canopy and has to get to the cheese running in between the participants holding the canopy. If you have already numbered the participants 1 or 6 around the canopy then choose a cat of one number and a mouse of another. The mouse has 20 seconds to get the cheese, the cat has 20 seconds to catch the mouse. Once the game starts, count to 20 (everyone else counts) score one point to the cat if the mouse is caught or one point to the mouse if the cheese is eaten. Score no points if 20 is reached before either the cheese is eaten or the mouse is caught

### ***Merry go Round***

Turn the body so that the chute is held with only one hand, walk, hop, jump, skip around holding the chute. It looks like a merry-go-round.

### ***Merry Go Round Variation***

It is also neat to let one lie in the middle and go for a ride - when everyone is holding with one arm and facing the same direction and walking.



### ***Poison Snake***

Place four to six pieces of yarn on the chute. By shaking the chute, try to make them hit the players on the other side. Keep track of who gets bitten. Put the pompoms in the middle. Sprinkle various sized pompoms in the top of the chute and try to get them into the middle pocket. You could have teams with different colours and count how many they get in.

### ***One Hand Run***

Have each child hold the parachute with one hand, extending the opposite arm out for balance. Run around in one direction, then change and run around in the other direction. A variation would be to use music as the cue for changing direction (i.e. direction can be changed every time the music stops).

### ***Chute Lift (A co-operative trust game)***

Several participants lie on the parachute, feet to the center. Others lift up the edges, so their bodies rise up (but feet remain down). They can then be swayed gently. Take turns in the middle.

### ***Parachute Run***

Have the participants take turns running on the parachute as it lies on the ground, while the other participants make waves. See how long the participants can maneuver on the waves before falling down. The length of turns can be determined by songs that the participants choose to sing (i.e. everyone's turn lasts the length of one song).

### ***Running number***

Have the participants around the parachute count off by fours. Start them running lightly in a circular fashion holding the chute in one hand. Call one of the numbers (one-four). Participants holding the number immediately release their grip on the chute and run towards the next vacated place. This means they have to put on a burst of speed to move ahead to the next vacated space. (Lots of screams for this one.)

### ***Cathedral***

Everyone lowers the chute and then on the count of three raise their arms high once the chute is quite high - everyone takes 3-4 giant steps toward the center and pulls the chute behind them and sit down with their bottoms on the edge of the chute.

### ***Swap***

Number the participants around the circle, say one to six. Lift the chute and on the third go shout a number, these participants then have to swap places under the canopy before it falls to earth. They need to be told to head for gaps, keep their eyes open and try



to avoid bumping into one another. Make sure that who remain around the edge allow the canopy to fall rather than pulling it down hard.

### ***Shuffle***

Simply passing the chute round in a circle rather like hauling in a rope. This can be quite a feat for small hands, watch out for friction bums, (apologies for the pun!) too

### ***Seek***

One volunteer on top, one beneath, with the idea of the top one catching the other, a bit like cat and mouse only in a different dimension. This can be surprisingly difficult.

### ***Sight***

After lofting the chute several times everyone steps inside, bringing the fabric taut behind their body, either to shoulder height or to ground level with each person sitting on the edge of the chute, thus creating a sort of tent with everybody under the canopy. Once practiced this is a useful technique for getting everybody's attention, storytelling, instruction giving etc.

### ***Shoe Shuffle***

Number around the circle 1 or 6 as before. All of one number remove a shoe and throw it under the canopy. On a count of 3 the canopy is lifted, mushroomed up on the third lift and all those missing a shoe go into the middle, retrieve their shoe and get back to their place.

### ***Lucky Seven***

This is an adaptation of a country-dance but works well with the canopy. Number off round the canopy A, B, A, B etc. Use a lively 'jig' tune, which repeats AA BB AA BB etc. When the music starts: A Hold The parachute with both hands, circle 8 paces clockwise B Holding the parachute with both hands, circle 8 paces anti-clockwise B A's turn to face clockwise; B's turn to face anti-clockwise. A's let go of parachute and to the music go under the arms of the B facing them. They do this seven times until they arrive facing, the eighth 'B'. B Holding the parachute with both hands all go into the middle twice mushrooming it each time. When You are tired on a count of 3 lift the canopy as high as possible, mushroom it and bring it down behind you and sit down. In this way you can make a rather hot airless tent supported on the heads. Once inside you can

And to finish....

When you have finished quickly grasp the canopy at the center, twist it slightly into a rope, wind it round your arm and stow it in the bag. This can be done very quickly and



very cleanly even on damp ground. Or ... (indoors), tell everyone that on 3 they are to let the canopy go and **STAND STILL**. Mushroom it to a count of three let goes when it is fullest so that it soars to the ceiling. You should be able to step into the middle, catch the center and deftly stow it before anyone moves!

### ***Washing Machine***

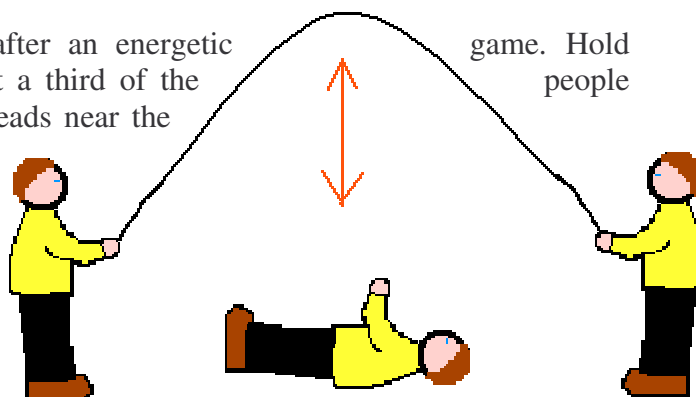
We do a washing machine routine - 1/2 the participants are the machine; 1/2 the washing. Just like washing routine: in goes the washing (participants sit under the parachute) in goes the powder - and mix - give the parachute a good shake. The washing turns one way - run around in a circle turning the parachute - then the other. Rinse (shake) turns (circle) again. Shake and then dry - Up and down in big movements.

Repeat - reversing roles of participants - GREAT FUN!

### ***Air Conditioning***

This game is good for recuperation after an energetic game. Hold people the chute stretched out and have about a third of the lie on the ground under it (best with heads near the middle). The rest mushroom the chute up and quickly pull it down again repeatedly.

Air rushing in and out cools those underneath like a giant fan, and the sensation of watching the chute rise up and then come down on top of you is very strange.



### ***Hammock***

Get everyone to roll the chute up from the edge towards the centre. Stop when you've got a circle about six feet in diameter left. Let a volunteer lie on this and be swung backwards and forwards or side to side. Rolling the chute up like this is also a good way of getting everyone to help when it's time to put away.

### ***Parachute circles***

Pass the parachute round in complete circle without anyone taking their hands off the parachute (they will have to work together for this one to work). Turns the parachute over again working in a group they have to try and turn parachute over by working together.



### ***Musicales Chairs***

Number the participants by threes around the chute, so that you have an equal number of ones, twos and threes evenly spread out. Mushroom the chute, then call out a number and also a description of who you would like them to act as.

For example, if you call out: "Mushroom... Number ones are ballerinas", all of the number ones have to cross under the chute, acting like ballerinas on the way

### ***One Hand Run***

Have each child hold the parachute with one hand, extending the opposite arm out for balance. Run around in one direction, then change and run around in the other direction. A variation would be to use music as the cue for changing direction (i.e. direction can be changed every time the music stops).

### ***The Swamp***

Players sit in a circle on the floor holding a parachute with the edge drawn up under their chins and their legs stretched out straight in front of them. As they sit, each boy says the name of his favorite vegetable. The resulting "noise" sounds like a swamp at night. One boy slips under the parachute to become the swamp monster. The monster gently pulls the ankles of another player who slips under the parachute to become part of the monster. The game ends when all of the boys are under the parachute.

### ***The Canopy***

Grasp the edge of the parachute with an overhand grip, and squat down so the parachute is flat on the ground. On the count of three, stand up and stretch arms above head creating a canopy.

### ***Exchange***

Hold the parachute in overhand grip, and inflate the parachute. Leader calls two names (or a month of the year, an age, a lodge. Appropriate players let go and exchange places by moving under the canopy to an empty spot.

### ***Bird and worm***

In a kneeling position, grasp the edge of the parachute with an overhand grip. One or two participants are chosen to be worms. They go under the chute on hands and knees. Another participant is chosen to be the bird. The bird crawls on top of the parachute on hands and knees and tries to catch the moving worms. To make it more difficult for the bird, the participants around the outside edge are waving the parachute up and down.



Therefore the bird has difficulty seeing the worms, but the worms can see the bird's shadow from underneath. When the bird does catch the worms, a new bird and new worms are chosen.





### 3. Parachute and balls games

Most of these games can be played with balls of different kinds: Tennis balls; footballs; beach balls; and even a giant earth ball. Different sized balls will change the way in which the game goes, so feel free to experiment.

#### ***Ball***

Place a light-weight football on the chute surface and experiment with moving it. What happens when you shake the parachute, can you flip the ball off over people's head? Can you develop a wave technique that will cause the ball to move in a circle? Using a small ball (tennis ball) can you drop the ball through the hole in the middle, can you stop the ball disappearing? These demand fairly sophisticated co-ordination skills, but in short spells can be fun.

#### ***Parachute Ball***

All the participants are spaced evenly round the edge of the parachute grasping it firmly. Number them off alternately into two teams (colors, numbers, anything you like, as long as there are two teams alternating round the parachute.) Designate one team to attack and one to defend. Grip the parachute and hold it taut and level. Place a ball - one of those large sponge ones is ideal, especially for younger participants - on the canopy and blow a whistle to start the game. The object is for the attacking team to get the ball through the hole in the center of the parachute and the defenders to keep it out, both by raising and lowering the edges of the parachute (this takes co-operation and coordination.) Keep score and set a time limit, then change the teams over so they both get a turn to attack and defend.

Parachute Ball #2 : Need a large sponge ball or a lightweight football. Everyone stands round the edge and the idea is to set up a wave in the fabric to make the ball do circuits around the edge of the fabric. Requires a fair amount of co-operation and concentration, seen it work well with YL/SS and the Guides enjoyed it but weren't very good at it!

Parachute Ball #3 : Get several sponge balls, preferably in different colors, or 2 or 3 footballs. Split the people round the edge of the parachute into teams equal to the number of balls, or give each team more than one of the small ones. The idea is to get your ball off the parachute on one of the other sides and stop any of the other teams getting their balls off your side! Chaos ensues, and it's good to have some ball fetches too!

#### ***Roller ball***

Everyone holds the chute taut. Place a large ball near the edge. Try to make the ball roll around the edge of the chute. To do this someone starts the ball rolling. As it comes



towards you, you lower the edge you are holding, and as it goes past you raise your edge. When all the players do this in synchronization it creates a wave going round the edge, pushing the ball round in front of it in a smooth, steady circle. It can not be done without concentration and co-operation! However, it is very rewarding for the group to eventually achieve a smooth, continuous motion. Once you've done this try speeding up - or change direction.

### ***Round The Plughole***

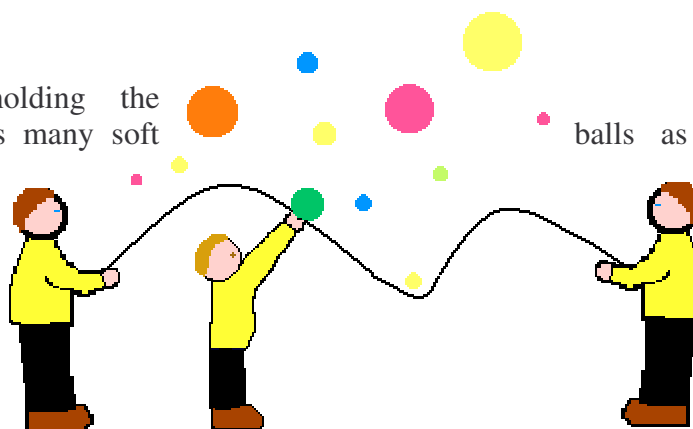
If your canopy has a hole in the center place 3 or 4 light small balls (tennis balls) on the surface and keep them moving around the canopy avoiding dropping them through the holes.

### ***Football***

This works best if the canopy is marked in segments or halves; i.e. 2,4 or 6 teams. Stand around the canopy holding the canopy in both hands at waist level. It can be rippled up and down whilst holding it. Roll a football under the canopy. The canopy must be held tight at all times and the ball kicked under the canopy, a goal being scored when it comes out on any side.

### ***Popcorn***

Start with everybody holding the parachute stretched out. Throw as many soft balls as you can find on to the chute. Then see how quickly you can bounce them off with out letting go of the chute. Alternatively you can have half of the children trying to bounce the balls off and half trying to keep them on.



### ***Ball in the bucket***

Two plastic balls are placed on the parachute while held waist high. Each team tries to shake its ball into the center pocket and keep the other team from putting its ball in the center pocket. A point is earned each time a team puts a ball in the pocket.

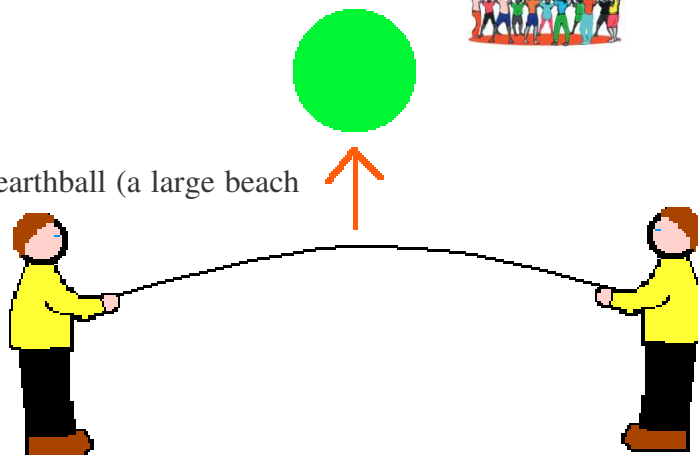
### ***Ball Toss***

Put a ball into the center of the parachute. Raise and lower the parachute to throw and catch the ball. When the Beavers are skilled at this, try adding a second ball.



### **Chute Ball**

This game is best played with an earthball (a large beach ball). You simply place the ball in the middle of the chute and by pulling upwards and outwards throw the ball as high in the air as possible. Replacing the ball with a small child or doll can also play this game.



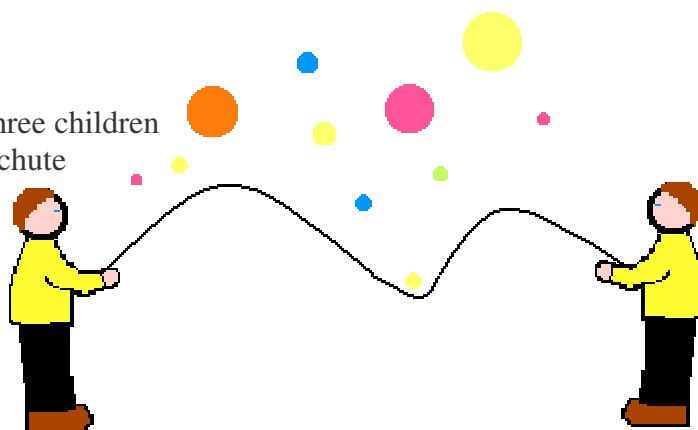
### **Competitive chute ball**

Mark a line across the diameter of the chute. Have equal teams hold the edge of the chute on either side. Throw a ball into the middle. The aim is to get the ball off the chute on the other team's side of the line, and stop it coming off your own side of the line. (i.e. to throw it over the other team's heads). You mustn't let go of the chute or touch the ball with any part of the body. Keeping score is optional.

After several minutes of wild flapping and little progress the group should realize that co-ordination and strategy are needed to flick the ball off the chute.

### **Bouncing balls**

Start as above and this time have two or three children under the chute. The children under the chute have to try and push off the balls while every one else tries to keep them bouncing.



### **Ball Slide**

Grasp the edge of the parachute with an overhand grip. Place one ball on the parachute. Make the ball slide around the chute by slowly raising the chute up and down. Keep the ball rolling so that it does not go off the edge.

### **Toad In The Hole**

Grasp the edge of the parachute with an overhand grip. Place two different colored, small, rubber balls on the parachute. Divide the group into two teams (each team has one



of the colored balls. One team is on one side of the chute and the other team on the opposite side.) Each team tries to shake its ball into the center hole before the other team. A point is scored each time a team's ball goes through the hole.



## 4. Ocean Topic Parachute Games

### ***Make Waves***

While gripping the parachute, everyone moves their arms up and down to make small and large waves. Making waves are large movements to send billow of cloth up and down like waves. Waves can be small, medium or large. Participants can alternate turns to see who can make the best waves.

### ***The Ocean***

We try to let everyone who wants to have a turn 'in the ocean'. Everyone is standing and one or two participants (shoes off) go toward the center and lie down - then we all make waves - it's a neat sensation.

### ***Weather***

We start calm sitting on the floor and its a gentle breeze then rain and move up to a thunder storm with everyone standing up holding handles shaking as hard as they can to make thunder.

### ***Mexican Wave***

One person raises their arms, holding onto the parachute. This action is repeated around the circle to create a wave (like the wave at a baseball game)

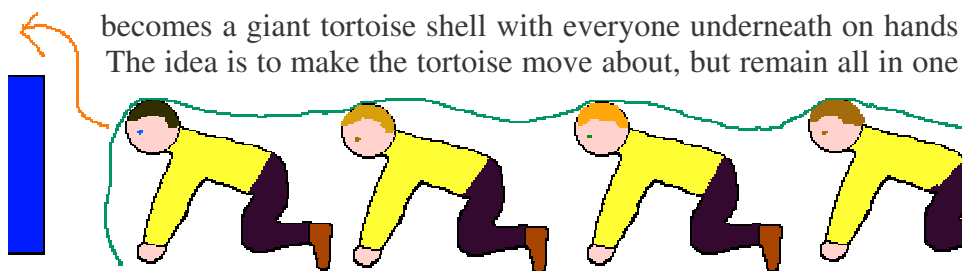
### ***The water pond***

On the count of three participants raise their arms, lifting the chute over their heads, pulling the chute behind them sitting down with their bottoms on the edge of the chute. The participants should now be inside the chute. Start rocking from left - forward-right.

### ***Big Turtle***

The chute and knees. piece. Once it starts to move well, the tortoise can tackle an obstacle course, appropriate to the ability of the participants.

becomes a giant tortoise shell with everyone underneath on hands  
The idea is to make the tortoise move about, but remain all in one



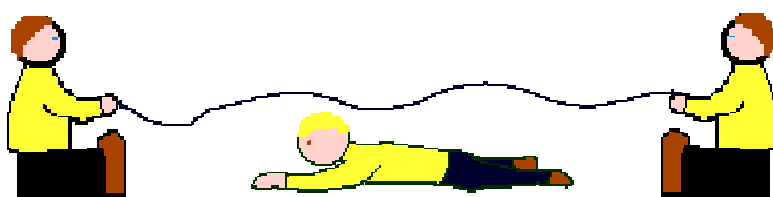


## **The Ocean (*weather*)**

We pretend the parachute is the ocean. I have them give me the name of an ocean. Participants move the parachute in response to the 'weather report' they heard. (Encourages participants to be creative). For example, I'll say, "I heard on the weather report this morning that there was a slight breeze over the Atlantic. What would that look like?" The participants respond by making small waves in the parachute. Other suggestions have been - high winds, snow (we would have to pull it tight to make the ice), twisters, etc. Once they get the hang of it the possibilities are endless.

## **Sharks**

Everyone should sit on the floor in a circle, holding the parachute stretched out with their legs underneath it. The chute is the sea, and the participants are all sitting on the beach, happily dipping their toes in the water. By shaking the edge of the chute, you will produce a realistic rippling wave effect. Utterly pointless but they like it because it gives them an excuse to scream!



Once the waves are going well, choose someone to be the shark, and tell them to disappear under the chute. They should move around underneath, and because of the waves, it is difficult to know where they are. The shark chooses a victim and grabs them by the feet. The victim will then let out a scream and disappear under the chute. The new person then becomes a shark. The old shark can become a bather, or continue being a shark (depending on the teacher's decision).

## **Blob**

Four people hang onto the parachute. Other participants try to get eaten. The four with the parachute run after the other participants. If they succeed in covering the participant with the parachute, the participant is eaten and must now attach himself or herself to the parachute. Now they join in, to catch the other participants.

## **Safe from the storm**

The ball is placed on the parachute, representing a canoe. Participants wave the chute so it ripples. This is the waves and the stormy sea the canoe has encountered. Participants have to get their canoe to safety as soon as possible (through the hole in the center of the parachute.)



## MAKE A PARACHUTE FOR PARACHUTE GAMES

You need 14 yards of fabric either 45 or 48 inches wide and about 17 yards / 15 metres of wide tape for round the top and the hem. The parachute consists of 14 pieces each 5" wide at the top, 38" wide at the bottom and 72" long.

Cut a pattern from paper half width but full length.

Fold the fabric in half and place the pattern to the fold and cut out.

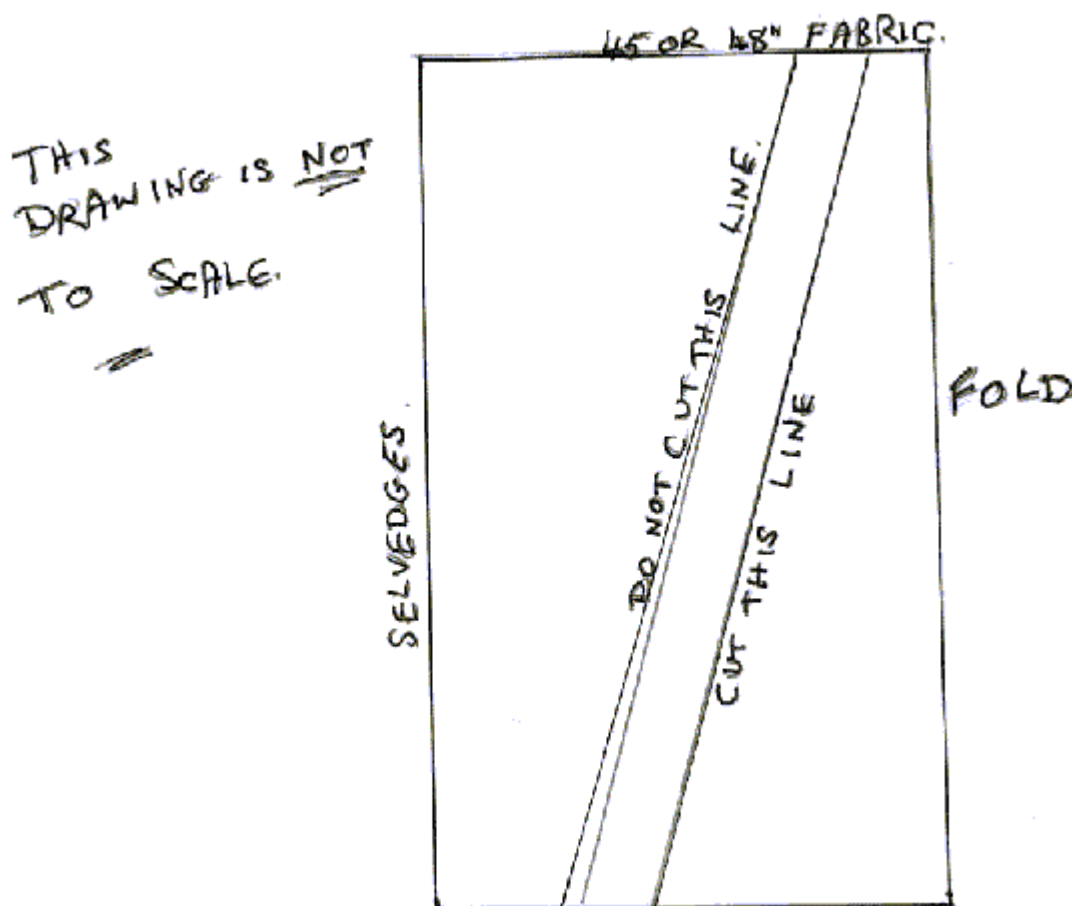
If you then turn the pattern round and place it to the selvages you will see it is just a little too wide : DON'T cut this extra off as it gives seam allowance for sewing it together to make a complete piece.

Repeat this six more times to give 14 pieces (7 with a seam down the middle.)

Sew these pieces together down the long edges, using French seams for strength.

Trim edges if necessary and bind the edges with the tape at both top and bottom (you will have a hole in the middle of the parachute.)

Have fun!





## **TERMS AND CONCEPTS THAT CAN BE INTRODUCED WITH A PARACHUTE**

A) **DIRECTIONALITY** - Forward, Backward, sideways, up, down, clockwise, counter-clockwise, left and right hand, high, low.

B) **LOCOMOTOR SKILLS** - Skipping, walking, hopping, running, jumping, galloping, leaping.

C) **QUALITY OF MOVEMENT** - Fast, slow, accelerating, decelerating, light, heavy.

### **GRIPS:**

1) **OVERHAND** - Palms are facing down

2) **UNDERHAND** - Palms are facing the up

3) **CROSSOVER GRIP** - Right hand over left hand - with both palms down

### **1) MUSHROOM**

Lift the parachute above your head and make it rise higher by taking 3 or 4 steps toward the centre.

The parachute will resemble a mushroom.

### **2) STRETCH**

Using the overhand grip, have the students lean back pulling the parachute taut.

### **3) RUNNING**

Hopping, skipping, grapevine and other various steps either to the right or left (good for directionality: rhythms may be incorporated by adding music). Simple circle folk dances may also be learned and added.

### **4) POPCORN**

The students 'flutter' or make waves with parachute with several light balls in the centre of the chute creating a 'popcorn' effect.

Follow-up activities:

a) Use one ball and divide the parachute into 2 teams-- try to make the ball fly off opposite side.

b) 4 or 5 balls of different colours; count off by numbers & give a point to the team whose ball first rolls down the hole.

### **5) MAKING WAVES**

With younger students tell them the parachute is a pond and that a light breeze is rippling the water. Then ask them to make larger and larger waves as the storm intensifies.

### **6) IGLOO**

Using the overhand grip. Billow the chute, then quickly get down on hands and knees, pulling the parachute down across the back of the neck. Result: all heads will be inside while the rest of the body remains outside.





**CROSS-OVER GRIP:** Throw the chute up, turn, and seal chute to floor while it is still billowed. Result: all bodies will be inside the igloo.

#### 7) TEAM KEEP-UP

2 Teams, one on each side. Make waves to keep a ball up.

Object: Bounce the ball off the chute to go over the heads of the opposing teams.

#### 8) COUNT OFF

Number students alternately 1's and 2's. Make a balloon then call out "one" or "two" - All students with the number called let go and run around the whole chute, back to place, and under the chute.

#### 9) UMBRELLA EXCHANGE

Spread out the chute and have students situated around the parachute. Number the students from 1 to 3. On a signal, the group inflates the chute and the teacher calls out a number. Participants of the number called, run under the chute and switch places with a person of the same number. The group's job is to keep the chute up until everyone has made it safely to the other side.

#### 10) BALL ROLL AROUND THE EDGE

Participants hold the chute at waist level. A ball is placed on top. The objective is to roll the ball around the edge, first in one direction then the other. This activity involves the entire class. Participants can also try to roll a ball through the hole in the center of the chute.

#### 11) THE MERRY-GO-ROUND

a) The students can hold the chute in one hand and travel:

- forward, backward, clockwise, counter-clockwise, walk, run, hop, leap, jump, gallop, skip etc..

- slowly, quickly or at a medium pace

b) They can also:

- hold the chute with 2 hands, move to the right and the left, using a slide or cross-over steps

#### 12) OCEAN WAVES

Students hold the chute about waist high and shake it up and down. The students shake it vigorously until they begin to tire, then have them observe the effect on the waves as the tempo is decreased.

#### 13) BODY PART IDENTIFICATION

-Holding the chute at chin level, then chest level, waist, waist, knees, ankles, and then - raise hands overhead as quickly as possible. The chute will billow up and rise high over the heads of the participants. The same movement can be repeated using the forehead, nose, neck, thigh and shins.

#### 14) FLOATING

Inflate parachute and let it float to the floor.



#### 15) THE MOUNTAIN

Inflate the parachute. Then lower the inflated parachute to the floor. Kneel on the edge or just hold it down, but the edges must be sealed to retain the air inside the chute. \*Have the participants observe that air has substance.

#### 16) BEAN BAG PICK-UP

Number the students off into 4 separate teams. Place 3 bean bags under the chute, in the middle. Begin to inflate the chute, and as the team number is called 4 students try to retrieve one of the bean bags under the chute.

#### 17) CAT AND MOUSE

1 student is chosen to be a mouse and goes underneath the chute. Another student is chosen to be a cat. The cat goes on hands and knees attempting to locate the mouse as the others try to hide the mouse by flapping the chute vigorously. Can be played with more than 1 mouse or cat at a time.

#### 18) GHOST TOWN

Have the students start in the forward bend position and inflate the parachute on command. The students then take 3 steps forward and release the parachute as it settles down on them.

#### 19) BALL SHAKE

Two light balls are placed on the parachute (beach ball or nerf ball). The students hold the chute waist high and attempt to shake the other team's ball off the parachute. Scoring: 1 point each time the opponent's ball hits the ground. No points are scored if a team shakes their own ball off the chute.

#### 20) MOUSETRAP

Six to Eight students are selected as the mice. The students inflate the parachute while the mice run in and out between the participants. When the teacher calls out "run across" the mice must run across the circle while they try to trap the mice in the chute. The mice that are caught must join the circle. The last mouse caught is the winner.

#### 21) BEAN BAG PICK-UP

The students are assigned different colored bean bags. All the bean bags are put in the centre of the parachute on the ground. The parachute is raised (inflated) and a color is called. All students assigned that color attempt to get at least 1 bean bag before being touched by the chute as it lowers.



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