

Activity Ideas for Small Parachute Play



Here are some activity ideas for using the small parachutes and engaging children in physical activity.

Getting Started



What you will need:

Parachute (Rainbow Ripple Parachute/Two-Person Parachute/Small Parachute)

Selection of lightweight balls/beanbags/scarves/stars/cards/etc depending on which games playing.

'Golden' pot/bag, hoops, tubs, etc for collecting or using as a target.

Music could also be used.

Clear space either indoors or outside for the play.

What to do:

Gently take hold of the handles and work together to make movements like lifting, shaking, creating waves. Collaborate to create different effects and then play a variety of games.

The parachute is great for:

- Fun physical activities for all ages
- Encouraging teamwork and co-operation
- Developing motor skills and co-ordination

Ideas for Rainbow Ripple Parachute

Children will love bouncing the stars over the rainbow and collecting them in their special pretend 'golden pot'. The parachute is perfect for warm up and cool down exercises. It is also useful for enabling pupils to work together.

Why not try some of the suggested games below or use the rainbow as a visual aid in wall displays/ assemblies/PSHE activities.

Pot of Gold- Encourage the children to work together to bounce the stars and other special objects on the rainbow, catch them and collect them in the golden bag to represent the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. How much gold can they collect?

Catch a Falling Star- Hold the parachute and bounce the stars at different heights. The additional pupils can catch a star. If they catch one, they can become a rainbow holder and change places. This game could be played individually or in a team, to see who catches the most. This is a good opportunity to learn control skills as well as vocabulary such as high, low, fast, slow etc.

Parachute Slide- Hold the parachute taut. Hold one end of the parachute higher than the other. Try to slide the stars down the shoot so they can be collected at the end. This can also be played with light weight objects e.g. beanbags, air flow balls etc.

Somewhere Over the Rainbow- Hold the rainbow high in the air and ask the pupils to run around in a circle and underneath whilst the stars are being bounced over the rainbow. Can the runners catch a star from over the rainbow and place it in the golden bag? The next team have to throw each star back onto the rainbow one by one as they run around.

Weird Weather- You may wish to incorporate a story into your activities or even musical instruments for sound effects. A story might take this kind of direction... 'One day the weather was acting very strangely. There was a gentle breeze (ripples). The sun was shining high in the sky when it bumped into a rainbow (bounce a large yellow lightweight ball). Suddenly it started to rain (use airflow balls to represent raindrops). Then the wind began to blow and blow. The gusts became stronger and stronger (bigger and stronger movements with the rainbow). The wind blew the objects about (use ribbons, leaves, beanbags etc.), lightning flashed across the sky etc.

Rainbow Ripple Parachute Continued



Rainbow Stars- Bounce the stars on the rainbow and ask the other children to catch them. The 'leader' might call a specific colour that can be retrieved. This game could be played with star catchers and rainbow holders. When a catcher catches the chosen star, they swap places with one of the holders.

Rainbow Bridges- Make a bridge by having 2 children at each end of the parachute holding the material up and challenge the other pupils to go under the bridge without touching it. If played indoors, place a mat underneath so the children can crawl, roll, kneel etc. under the bridge. The bridge could start off high and then get lower (holders going from standing with arms up to sitting with the parachute flat to the floor) When the bridge is too low to get under encourage the children to find ways to get over the bridge without touching it by jumping, leaping, etc.

Alternatively use the bridge idea to re-enact stories like the Three Billy Goat Gruff. The children can pretend to be Billy Goats and gently tap with their fingers on the parachute, another child can sit underneath and pretend to be the troll.

Roll a Colour- Lay the rainbow on the floor. Use as a track for rolling e.g. an air ball along the red, or green line etc. Call out the colours and see if you can roll your ball to the end of the colour selected.

Seesaw Rainbow- Children hold each end of the parachute and alternate so that it goes up and down like a seesaw. This game can also incorporate the stars which can slide up and down. As the parachute goes up and down children can count or recite rhymes.

Balance and Walk- Pull the rainbow taut. Place a ball on the material. How far can the pupils walk before the ball rolls off the parachute? Obstacle routes can be set up to move around to add more challenge.

Traditional Parachute Games



Adapt traditional parachute games using a combination of visual cues, verbal cues and physical actions. Here are some games to get you started.

Wave Maker- Children sit or stand holding the edge of the parachute. Tell them that they are going to create the story of a storm. Ask them to make gentle ripples on the surface by making small movements with their arms. Build up to huge crashing waves with large movements. Create a story about a storm out at sea, the children performing the correct movements at the appropriate time. Place coloured scarves/balls on top of the parachute to create different effects.

Relaxation- Play relaxing music and move arms in time with the music to move the parachute and create ripples and waves. Practise breathing techniques. Enjoy and relax.

Popcorn- Place a few lightweight balls or beanbags into the middle of the parachute and use different movements to make them jump up and down. The goal could be to keep them moving without letting them fall off, or to bounce them as high as possible.

Tables Chant- Chant multiplication tables together or practise mental maths as the parachute is moved in different ways. Add balls and scarves on the top for added effect.

Flip Games- Place items on top of the parachute. The aim is to make the objects rise-up into the air and flip off. Experiment and work as a team to try different techniques to make this happen. Set a timer to see how long it takes to get all the items to flip off.

Numeracy and Literacy Ideas



Ideal for fun collaborative maths and literacy games. Adapt ideas to suit your groups needs and abilities.

Number Rhymes- Say number rhymes such as '5 in a bed'. Use soft light toys on the parachute and bounce them off as the rhyme is chanted. Other counting songs could include 5 little ducks, 5 little monkeys, 5 current buns.

Bounce Count- Bounce items on the parachute and count. Count backwards 10-0 and when you get to zero all shout out 'blast off!' and lift the parachute into the air. Watch the parachute lift.

Skip Count- Count in 2s, 5s, 10s etc and each time the parachute is lifted up say the next number in the sequence. Add a challenge by bouncing a small ball or beanbag into the air and keeping it moving to the rhythm of the counting.

Story Refrains- Read a story and when the repeated sentences are used in the story together make waves with the parachute.

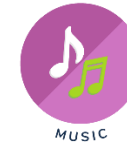
Rhythm and Rhyme- Recite rhymes and poems together or practise rhyming strings as ripples and movements are created with the parachute.

Rhyme Time Roll- Place a small soft ball onto the parachute. One person says a word e.g. 'cat' and rolls the ball to the other person. They must say a word that rhymes and roll the ball back. Keep the parachute moving gently and see how many rhyming strings can be made.

Story Maker- Place cards with pictures on such as an animal, place or object. Gently bounce the pictures to mix them up. Shake until one falls off and when you have three use them to make up your own short stories together with a beginning, middle and end.

Alphabet or Number Call- Place foam or laminated alphabet or numbers (this could also be tricky word, shapes, etc). Gently move parachute to mix them up and take turns to call out one and try together to bounce that one off.

More Ideas for Across the Curriculum



Encourage teamwork and co-operation and use the parachute across the curriculum.

Physical- Making waves and ripples, bouncing the balls and other items on the parachute. How long can you do it for before the items fall off?

Music- Use songs while using the parachute. Try 'If your happy and you know it'- Giving instructions for using the parachute in different ways such as, 'If your happy and you know it shake it slowly, go down low, raise your hands up high'. Other good songs to use are, 'The Grand Old Duke of York' or 'The Waves on the Sea' (a version of The Wheels on the Bus) Create your own versions of well-known songs and enjoy using the parachute together.

Feel the Tempo- Scatter balls, stars, scarves on top of the parachute and play music. Move the parachute to the different rhythms and watch the items move. Great for getting children to feel the pulse of the music, the dynamics and the tempo changes.

Colour- Name colours and use the colours on the parachute to play a variety of games and to express moods and feelings.

Sing Songs- Sing songs, rhymes and poems and move the parachute as they are recited. Songs can be made up to share key topic vocabulary, saying words and definitions.

Follow the Leader- One person starts by making small waves and gradually increases to bigger ones. The other person(s) mirrors the movement exactly, keeping in sync. You could add a 'speed round' where you switch the movements quickly.

Target Toss- Place a bucket or hoop a short distance away. Put a soft ball on the parachute and work together to launch it towards the target. Adjust the distance or target size for difficulty.

Direction Dash- Call out directions- left, right, forwards, backwards, up, down, North, South, East, West. Children move the parachute in the direction called. You could add to this co-ordination challenge by using music to add rhythm.

Parachute Dance- Use the parachutes to create different movements and dance routines. The colours will add to the effect.