



QUICK FROZEN CRITTERS

4-H Natural Science Lesson



AN ACTIVE VERSION OF FREEZE TAG BASED ON PREDATOR / PREY RELATIONSHIPS

Project Skills:

Understanding the importance of adaptation in predator/prey relationships

Life Skills:

Problem solving
WI Academic Standards: Environmental Education B.4. Knowledge of Environmental Processes and Systems

Time:

30-35 minutes

Supplies:

- 3 food token pieces per youth
- 2 gym vests
- 10 red bandannas
- 5 15-ft. pieces of rope
- Whistle
- Space large enough for children to freely move around

WHAT TO DO

Play Quick Frozen Critters

1. Establish a ground rule for behavior. No one is to harm anyone else; no hitting, tackling or rough play.
2. Use a whistle to start and stop each round. Each round should last no longer than five minutes.
3. To begin, all "prey" should start from their "shelter." Predators may begin anywhere they want except in the safe areas.
4. Remind the prey that they may collect only one food token at a time and they need a total of three food tokens before the end of the round to survive.
5. Remind the predators that they must capture at least two prey and collect their red bandanna before the end of the round to stay alive.
6. Play at least four rounds to allow youth to play both roles and to formulate strategies to survive.

SETTING UP THE GAME

1. Identify youth as either "predators" or "prey," with one predator for every four or five prey. Ask the prey to select which animal they want to be from the list. The predator will become the corresponding animal. Prey should each be given one red bandanna. Predators should each wear one of the gym vests.
2. Use a playing area large enough so youth have lots of room to run, such as a basketball court or gym. Identify one end of the play area as the "food source." Spread the food tokens out here. Designate the opposite end of the play area as the "shelter." Place five rope circles in between. These areas will be "cover" (safe areas) for the prey.
3. The task of the "prey" is to collect a food token by moving from the shelter area to the food source area and then back to the shelter area to eat it without getting captured by a predator. Prey must eat a total of three food tokens each round to survive. Prey have two ways to prevent being caught by predators. They may "freeze" any time a predator is within five feet of them or they may run to cover (at least one foot must be within the rope circle). Frozen prey may blink but should not move or speak, otherwise predators may capture them.
4. Predators capture prey by tagging them when they are not frozen, in a cover circle or in shelter. Once a predator captures a prey, he or she leads the prey off the play area and takes the red bandanna from their victim. A captured prey may not re-enter the game during this round. Predators must capture at least two red bandannas each round to survive.

ENHANCE

- As soon as prey is captured, he or she becomes a predator. This will increase the ratio of predators to prey. Conduct this variation for at least three or four rounds. You will need additional gym vests. Make sure to discuss how this variation affected the game.
- Have the youth change the way they can move. Play a round where youth can only hop, another where they can only walk, etc.
- Play this game in the shallow end of a large swimming pool. Switch predator/prey species names. Use hula hoops as cover circles because they will float.

TALK IT OVER

Try to get each youth to express his or her feelings and experiences.

Reflect:

- How did prey escape capture? Which methods were most effective?
- What did predators do in response to a prey who "froze"?
- After playing the game for awhile, how did you change your strategies to better survive?

Apply:

- How is this game similar to real predator/prey survival?
- How does changing the number of predators in the real world change the survival situation for prey? How does it change the survival situation for predators?
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