

Squirrel Scramble

Activity

Resource:

Beyond the Walls: Activities for the Outdoors

Grade(s): 4 5 6

Division(s): Junior

Setting: Curricular

Season: Fall

Activity Goal

Participants practice various movement skills and apply tactical solutions to increase their chance of success while engaging in physical activity in a fall environment.

For participant safety, please review the contents of the [Beyond the Walls: Safety Considerations](#) page for information on Safety Standards, Fall Safety Considerations, and Outdoor Playing Areas and Surfaces.

Equipment

Cones/pylons to mark the designated playing area (optional)

Before Play

- Review the safety rules and activity instructions with participants prior to the activity.
- Establish the boundaries for the designated playing area and share them with participants.

- Explain to participants that we all need food for energy. Most creatures have to catch their food in order to not go hungry. A predator is an animal that hunts, catches, and eats other animals. In this case the predator is the fox. The animals that the predator hunts are called prey. In this case, the prey is the squirrel. Although it might seem savage for animals to eat each other, it is essential for the delicate balance of nature. Discuss the food web or eating relationship between foxes and squirrels.
- Designate several participants to be trees (two participants become a tree by standing face to face with arms raised over their heads and reaching in toward each other), others to be squirrels (there should be a few more squirrels than trees), and a few to be foxes.

During Play

- Send trees out into the playing area. Once trees are in position, send the squirrels out to find a home (squirrels stand underneath the raised arms of the tree).
- If a squirrel has no home, they must go to another squirrel's home and tap that squirrel on the shoulder. That squirrel must leave the home out the other side of the tree to find a new home.
- Once the squirrels have established a cycle of tree swapping, send in the foxes who attempt to tag any loose squirrels. Remind participants that a tag is a touch on the back, shoulders, or arms and not a push, punch, or grab.
- The squirrels who are tagged perform a designated activity (jumping jacks, push ups, laps around the exterior of the playing area) they return to the game and take the place of one of the 'trees' who becomes a squirrel.
- Have participants switch roles to become foxes throughout the game.

After Play

Use the following prompts for participants to reflect on ways to be active in Fall and engage others in activity to build a habit of engaging in outdoor activity throughout the year.

Question prompts:

- How does physical activity outside make you feel?

- Describe the similarities and differences when participating in physical activities outdoors versus indoors. Think about your exertion level and its effect on your heart rate and breathing.
- When you were a squirrel, how did you avoid being captured by your predator? When you were a fox, what strategies did you use to capture your prey?
- Could we replace the roles in this activity with other outdoor creatures or nature? How would that change the activity instructions?

Adaptations

Consider these tips to maximize the challenge and the fun for participants.

- After a few squirrels are tagged, begin to remove (cut down) trees, thus making the game more challenging for the squirrels.
- Change the locomotor skills used to move around the playing area (e.g., galloping, skipping, hopping, shuffling, etc.)

Modifications

Consider these tips to maximize inclusion and fun for all participants.

- For participants with physical disabilities, having challenges in mobility, stability, and locomotion skills, change the tagging role into a static position and provide them with an implement to use when tagging others.
- Invite participants to consider ways to move around the playing area at reduced speeds to ensure inclusion and success for all.