

Across the Lava: A Cooperative Game

Objective: Get your whole team safely across the lava by building a path of stepping stones. Keep your balance and don't step in the lava!



Goals:

- 1) Get the kids working together to accomplish a shared goal
- 2) Learn how to communicate as a team and problem solve when faced with an obstacle
- 3) Develop balance and fine motor skills
- 4) Celebrate as a group
- 5) Reflect on the challenges and emotions that arose during this game

Materials Needed:

- 1) Open space with two bases and a designated "lava" area in between
- 2) Wood blocks, mats, or other material to be used as stepping stones.
- 3) Works best with teams of 4-8 people

Approach:

Class begins with children in circle. We check in with each other, and I explain the activity or the game for the day. After everyone understands the objective, rules, and relevant safety agreements, they play multiple rounds with everyone getting a turn in different roles. In across the lava, people often like taking a turn as the leader and as the caboose. Challenges can be added to make the game more interesting and keep the kids engaged. For example, start with many stepping stones and work your way down to just a few. You can also require that once a stepping stone is placed down, someone must be touching it at all times or it will sink into the lava.

After they've completed all the variations and celebrated as a team, we circle up and debrief the activity. Did you have fun? What emotions did this game bring up? What went well, and what would you try to improve next time? Would you enjoy playing this game again? Why or why not? It's important to give each kid a chance to comment and share what they felt. They often learn as much during this time of reflection as they did during the game itself.