

TUG OF WAR

(FOR AGES 6+)

INGREDIENTS:

- 8-12 feet of sturdy rope
- Masking tape
- At least 2 players
- 1 judge

RECIPE FOR FUN!

You may recall a game of Tug of War from summer camp or gym class, but you don't need a flock of campers or a full classroom to play this ancient childhood game of strength and strategy! It is just as fun with 2 kids, or with 22. It's also a fun game idea for family reunions and birthday parties. All you need to play is a length of sturdy rope at least 8 feet long, and masking tape.

How to set up Tug of War: Put a line of tape around the center of the rope. If you have more than two players, divide the teams into an even number of players. Stronger and heavier players are at an advantage in Tug of War. Try to divvy up the teams so that there is an equal amount of weight on each side. Agree on what signal the referee will give to signal that the game has started and ended. Don't play Tug of War on concrete or blacktop. Kids will often fall to their knees as they shift their weight to gain an advantage on their opponents. Playing on grass, or a similar soft surface will prevent injuries.

How to play Tug of War:

1. An equal number of players pick up each end of the rope.
2. The players begin tugging the rope when the referee gives the signal.
3. Each player pulls backwards as hard as they can.
4. The teams continue pulling until the center of the rope (tape mark) crosses where the referee is standing.
5. The game ends when the referee declares one team has successfully pulled the past the center.

Can you play Tug of War with two players? Yes, if the players are about the same age and strength.

Benefits of playing Tug of War: It may seem like a game where the strongest wins, but Tug of War is more than a test of strength. Even before the game begins, kids have to flex their cognitive skills. For instance, if there is an uneven number of players, should a player sit out? Should one stronger, older player be equal to two weaker, younger players?

Letting kids problem-solve and negotiate helps build their cognitive skills, and it's also a good lesson in compromise and learning to work as a team. And once play begins kids will use all their muscles to pull the opposing team over the centerline. If building gross motor skills are your goal, [check out more ways to build these skills](#) at your local playground.