

How to Play Run Sheep Run

- Set up a “sheep pen” and a “fox den.” These are simply two areas on opposite sides of the playing area.
- Mark boundaries clearly, letting kids know how far they can go for both the hiding (for the sheep) and the searching (for the foxes).
- Divide everyone into two groups: one group of sheep and one group of foxes. Explain that they will trade roles later.
- Tell the sheep to choose someone who will be the “Old Ram.” This player makes decisions for all the sheep and tells them where they will run and hide. They must all stay together for the entire game.
- Meanwhile, the foxes choose the “Fox King.” He (or she) will make the decisions for all the foxes. The foxes cannot begin looking for the sheep until the Old Ram comes to get them.
- After the sheep are hidden, the Old Ram reports to the foxes and tells them, “My sheep are hiding; you will never find them.”
- The foxes take off, led by the Fox King, looking for the sheep. They must stay together for the entire game.
- The Old Ram runs with the foxes, and when he (or she) thinks the sheep would have a good chance to make it back to the sheep pen without being caught by the foxes, he yells out, “Run, Sheep, Run.”
- Both the foxes and the sheep then race to the sheep pen. If the sheep get there first, they get to be the foxes next. Otherwise they must continue to be the sheep.
- The game is won when one group has been the foxes for three consecutive times.

KICK THE CAN: Kids don't need expensive toys or games to have a lot of fun; give them just a can and some outdoor space and they can spend hours playing Kick the Can. This game combines a familiar childhood game, Hide and Seek, with a touch of exercise to keep them active. While they can make up their own rules, the game typically revolves around the can, or "home base," with one child taking on the role of "it" and trying to find other players and put them in "jail." Other players try to avoid capture and free their friends.

Setting up the Game

- Set the boundaries of your game area and tell players that they cannot go outside of them. Players should have enough space to have a chance to outwit or outrun "it" but not so much space that "it" can't compete -- a large backyard or park area with trees is perfect. Players hide during the game, so you need somewhere with enough hiding places. You don't need any equipment apart from the can; however, if you don't have a can, a plastic bottle, empty carton, or anything that can take being kicked around will do. Avoid glass or solid containers unless you set rules that players touch the container rather than kick it. Put the can on the ground somewhere in the middle of the play area and choose an area to be the "jail" for captured players.

Starting the Game

- After choosing one player to be "it," there are two ways to start a game of Kick the Can. You can have 'it' cover his eyes and count to 50, or to 100 if you have a large game area, while the other players hide. Alternatively, one of the players kicks the can as hard as possible to give players a chance to scatter and hide while 'it' retrieves the can and puts it back in its place. When the count is done or the can is back, "it" then tries to catch players by finding their hiding places.

Kick the Can Rules

- The player who is 'it' scouts round looking for other players. When she spots them, she shouts out their names and locations. Any player who is found then races 'it' back to the can. If 'it' kicks the can first, the player goes to "jail;" if the player gets there first, any players who are in jail go free and the game starts over. "It" wins if she puts all players in "jail" and a new "it" is chosen for the next game.

Kick the Can Variations

- You can set a rule that "it" has to tag players rather than locate them. This can make a game fairer as "it" and the player have to run the same distance to the can. Players can also try to sneak to the can to kick it even if "it" hasn't found them. If they kick the can without being seen, they release jailed players. Although you can keep the same person as "it" when a player releases everyone from jail, this can get a bit boring if the player who is "it" constantly loses. If this is an issue, choose a new player for every game. If you're playing with a lot of kids in a large area, choose two "its" to even things up. If you don't have a can, choose a home base that players have to touch instead of kick, such as a tree or wall.

GHOST IN THE GRAVE YARD

Ghost in the Graveyard combines several of the best parts of kids' games. Not only does it have a hide and seek element, but there's also frantic running and chasing. To play the game, you'll need at least three players -- preferably more -- and a large playing area, preferably outdoors. If you're playing at night for maximum atmosphere, you'll need flashlights, glowsticks or similar light sources for the players.

- Select your playing area. Make sure that it has a number of places for players to take cover. Point out the boundaries of the playing area to all players. Designate one location within the playing area as the base.
- Select one player to be the ghost. While the other players cover their eyes and count, the ghost finds a hiding place. The number the players must count to will vary depending on the size of the playing area.
- Spread out and search for the ghost. The player who finds the ghost must shout out "Ghost in the graveyard!"
- Run for base. The ghost will pursue the fleeing seekers, trying to tag one of them. Tagging a player makes them the next ghost. If the ghost fails to tag a player, they remain the ghost for the next round.
- Vary the rules to keep things interesting. In some versions of the game, the player who finds the ghost is immune to being tagged. Only the other players may be tagged. Alternatively, allow the ghost to tag other players even before being found, as long as she can do so without being spotted.

SARDINES

If you are playing with young kids, it is best for this game to make sure all the players have a buddy, especially when playing in an unfamiliar area.

- Send one pair of kids out to hide, while the rest count to 50.
- Then the pairs must hunt around to find the ones who are hiding.
- When a pair comes across the hidden kids, they hide right along with them.
- Once again, there is the possibility of ending up with ten to twenty people all hiding in the same place!
- When everyone has found the group start over again. The pair that found the hiding pair first gets to hide next time.

FLASHLIGHT TAG

Played at night, this game mixes the [popular games](#), hide and seek with tag.

- The person who is "it" waits at the "jail" counting to a high number while everyone else hides.
- Then, armed with a flashlight, this person searches for the others who may be switching hiding spots.
- The flashlight must remain on at all times and may not be covered.
- When "it" spots someone, s/he must use the flashlight to get a close enough look at the person to identify him/her and call out his/her name.

VARIATIONS What happens when a person gets caught, gives rise to variations of this [exciting game](#).

- One variation is to pass the flashlight to the caught person, so s/he becomes "it."
- Another version is to send each caught person to "jail" to wait until everyone is caught. The first person caught then becomes "it."
- Another variation is to have more than one person (or a team) be "it." With this configuration, people who are not "it" can tag other people (or team members) free from "jail." One of the "its" may stay near to guard the "jail."

Players will find new and interesting ways to improve their play. One such strategy is to watch where "it(s)" have already searched, and then switch to that hiding spot. One might also find success by following "it(s)." For added challenge, players may camouflage themselves with dark clothing and face paint. This game is excellent for developing great strategies of guerilla warfare in young minds. This game will also encourage paranoia in parents and entire neighborhoods.