



# Outdoor Play and Recess Supervision

Use this guide during outdoor play to support student safety, engagement, and active supervision with minimal preparation. Outdoor play requires active supervision, not passive observation. Tutors are responsible for student safety, engagement, and visibility at all times.

## During outdoor play, tutors must:

- Stay visible and actively monitor students.
- Keep eyes on the entire group, not just one area.
- Move around the play space to prevent blind spots.
- Stay off cell phones or electronic devices.
- Intervene early to prevent unsafe behavior.

## Before Going Outside

- 1** Conduct a head count.
- 2** Review boundaries and expectations.
- 3** Scan the play area for hazards.

## Say to students:

- “Stay where I can see you, keep hands and feet to yourself, and listen for my voice.”
- “Keep your game safe and friendly so everyone can keep playing.”



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## During Outdoor Play

- 1** Conduct head counts every 5–10 minutes.
- 2** Position yourself near higher-risk areas (running, climbing, ball games).
- 3** Watch for rough play, exclusion, or fatigue.

### Stop immediately if you see:

- physical aggression or unsafe equipment use
- a student leaving the designated area
- any injury or medical concern

### When to Add Structure or Games

Use a structured game when:

- free play becomes unsafe
- students need redirection
- engagement is low
- waiting or transition time is needed

**Best practice:** Keep your back to a wall or boundary so all students stay in view. Ensure that you are not staying in one place when supervising the area being used. Move around, and ensure that you can see all students.

**Watch for** students left out, standing alone, or disengaged.



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All activities below require no materials and can be stopped immediately.

## Structured Games or Activities:

- **Statues:** Students move freely. When the tutor calls “Statue,” everyone freezes in place until released.
- **Copy Me:** The tutor models slow, safe movements. Students copy exactly.
- **Color Call:** Tutor calls a color. Students find something nearby with that color and stand next to it.
- **Number Dash:** Tutor calls a number (1–10). Students take that many steps, then freeze.
- **Shape Makers:** Tutor calls out a shape. Students use their bodies (arms/feet) to show the shape while standing in place.
- **Traffic Controller:** Tutor calls “walk,” “slow,” or “stop.” Students move accordingly. You can also add different movements to vary student movement (zig zag, hop, etc.).
- **Shadow Tag (no touch):** One student is “it” and tries to step on others’ shadows. No physical tagging.
- **One-Word Round:** Tutor gives a prompt (school, weekend, focus). Students share one word aloud or by hand signal.
- **Clap Pass:** Students stand in a circle. One clap passes to the next person in order.



# Outdoor Play and Recess Supervision

Sometimes, students need additional guidance in outdoor, less-structured spaces. Use calm, neutral language to redirect behavior and keep play safe without calling students out.

## Behavior Redirection: Start Here

- “Let’s slow that down.”
- “That’s getting unsafe—reset and try again.”
- “Show me safe choices.”

## If Undesired Behavior Continues...

(Restate the expectation and redirect the action.)

- “That’s getting unsafe—reset and try again.”
- “Show me safe choices.”
- “Choose a different game or activity.”

## When to Pause or Stop Play:

(Use clear, direct language.)

- “Pause. Freeze. Eyes on me.”
- “We’re stopping this game to reset.”

## Once paused:

- Separate students if needed.
- Assess for injuries or safety concerns.
- Decide whether to restart with structure or move to a calmer activity.



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## What to Do After Redirection:

(Keep it brief and neutral.)

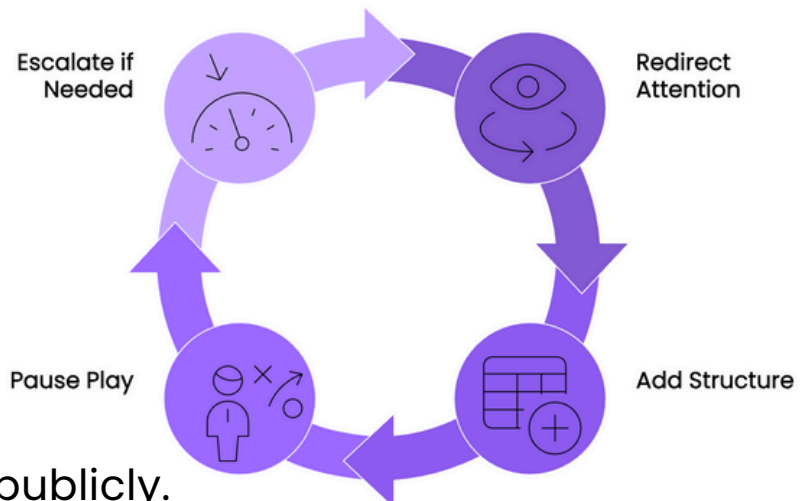
- Acknowledge safe behavior:
  - “That’s better—thank you for fixing it.”
- Restart play or introduce a structured game.
- Continue active supervision.



## When to Escalate:

Follow site or program procedures if:

- Behavior escalates beyond redirection.
- A student leaves the designated area.
- There is physical aggression or injury.



## Tutor Reminders:

- Use calm, even tones.
- Avoid singling students out publicly.
- Redirect early—do not wait for escalation.
- Structure prevents problems before they start.

Outdoor redirection works best when **expectations are clear, consistent, and immediate.**



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## Skip Games if:

- Weather or ground conditions are unsafe.
- Students are escalating beyond redirection.
- Site leadership gives other instructions.

## Transitioning Back Inside

### 1 Signal clearly that play has ended.



**Tutor Tip:** Use an **attention signal** as a fun way to capture student attendance. [Click here](#) for sample attention signals!

### 2 Gather students together and conduct head count.

### 3 Line up and return together to group or dedicated area.

## In the event of inclement weather:

- **Remain indoors** and **follow site or program direction** for location and supervision.
- Choose **calm or low-impact activities** that fit the space.
- **Maintain active supervision indoors**, keeping students visible and movements controlled.

**Do not return outside** unless cleared by site leadership.