

PREDATOR VS PREY

The Basic Idea

This is an exciting and active game that can be played almost anywhere. Predator-Prey teaches children about the food chain by assigning the participants roles that affect how they can play the game. Primary predators have the goal of finding and catching prey, while participants lower on the food chain are faced with the challenge of avoiding predators while also meeting their own needs. Each participant quickly learns that it is not easy to survive, even if you are a predator. The object of the game is to “survive” by avoiding being eaten and getting enough food. The species with the most life tags at the end wins.

In more detail...

The class should be split into teams (animals and people). Play this game in a relatively large area with defined boundaries. Ideal locations have both open and sheltered areas (for hiding places).

How to play the game:

Children are to wear a different coloured bib/band to identify themselves as either krill/penguin/orca/people. Ensure that the ratios are approximately 4 : 3 : 2 : 1 (krill : penguin : orca : people)

Krills are given 12 life tags and they go off and hide as best as they can. Penguins are given 6 life tags. They go off after the krills 2 to 3 minutes later. Orcas are given 3 life tags. They go after the penguins after 2 to 3 mins. People go last.

The rules: Krills cannot eat penguins or orcas. Penguins can eat krills but not orcas. Orcas can eat krills and penguins. People run around collecting life tags from any animal. If people are caught by an animal that can eat them (orca), they must give that player a life tag. The species with most life tags at the end wins.

Set up several “plankton” stations that krills must collect (predators will get their “food” from the life tags of their prey). Plankton are in the form of life tags.

Predators will learn to ambush these stations, but they must leave the life tags and engage in chases.

Make sure you make enough “plankton” stations scattered about so that they all cannot be ambushed continually by predators.

At the end of the game, discuss the game. This could include predator/prey relationships throughout nature and how they can fluctuate.

How to take it even further or make it more challenging

- What did this game teach you about predator-prey relations?
- How did you feel being high on the food chain? Low on the food chain?
- What was most difficult for you about this game?
- Do you think this game reflects the challenge animals face in survival? Why or why not?

A monitor can also become a 'natural disaster' taking Life Tags away from any animal.

Change the ratios/number of life tags available. What happens further up the food chain?