

kai



Background

In this game from the Torres Strait a number of players stood in a circle and sang the kai wed (ball song) as they hit a ball up in the air with the palm of their hands. The game was played using the thick, oval, deep red fruit of the kai tree which is quite light when dry.

Playing area

- Can be played inside or outside

Equipment

- A small beach ball or soft sponge ball

Game play and basic rules

This is a hitting game which can be played as a cooperative game. Players stand or kneel in a circle about a metre apart. One player hits/throws a small soft ball or beach ball into the air and the players take turns hitting the ball upwards with the palm of either hand (usually with an underhand action).

Players attempt to make as many consecutive hits as they can and work through the letters of the alphabet – one letter for each hit. Each time the ball is hit the players call out a letter of the alphabet. Parents can help with the alphabet if necessary.

Suggestions

- Allow younger players to make one or two contacts (one to control the ball and one to hit it).
- Individual contest or practice kai. Players compete to see who can hit the ball into the air (above head height) with their hand the most number of times without the ball touching the ground. This can be played using either hand, only the right hand or left hand, using left and right alternating, or combined with other stunts/skills. Have a set number of turns (such as five).
- In groups of 4–8 use underhand and overhand one- and two-hand hitting/striking to keep the ball in the air. Groups count the number of hits they make before the ball touches the ground.

Variations

The game can be played with a number of modifications/progressions. For example:

- Players randomly hit the ball to other players who call out their name – attempt to work through the group.
- Players work as a team to hit the ball in the air and go through the letters of the alphabet.
- Players hit the ball around in a circle (either direction).

parndo



Background

This ball game was played by South Australian Aborigines in the vicinity of Adelaide (Kurna language). The *parndo* (ball) was made with a piece of opossum skin, flattish in shape and about the size of a tennis ball.

Players

- Teams of 12 players on a soccer or rugby field and 15 players on an Australian football field

Playing area

- A rugby, soccer or Australian football field

Equipment

- A small beach ball or light ball

Game play and basic rules

This is a skill game. The aim is to kick the parndo as high as possible in the air and catch it.

The players stand together in a circle or in a line. One player stands in the middle then drops the parndo and kicks it high and straight up into the air. The players attempt to catch the parndo. Players

should avoid contacting each other in attempting to catch the ball. When the parndo is caught by a player they are allowed to kick it without being obstructed.

If the parndo falls to the ground, the first player to touch it gains possession and is allowed to kick it. Physical contact is limited.

If the parndo goes out of bounds it is turned over to the other team. At this level there is no scoring; it is a participation game.

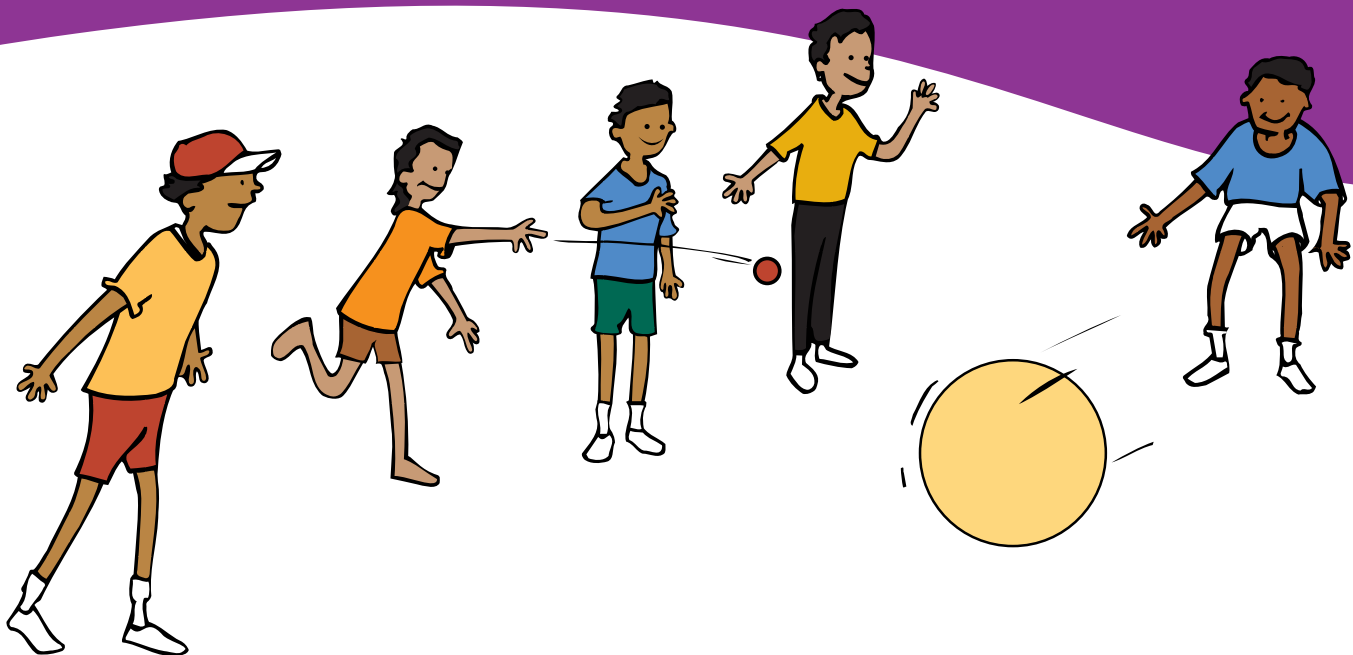
Lead-up activity for young players

A parent or older person kicks or throws a number of light balls in the air one after the other in a continuous manner while the other players chase after them and kick or carry them back so they can be kicked or thrown again.

Language

In the Kurna language spoken in the southern parts of South Australia a parndo is a 'ball to play with'.

gorri



Background

Bowl-ball or disc games were played by Aboriginal boys and men in all parts of Australia. For example, in the disc-rolling game common throughout Western Australia a piece of rounded bark (disc) was rolled by one of the players for the other boys to aim at. The boy who set the disc rolling was about 15 metres away from the throwers and would call out *gool-gool* (going-going) as they started the disc rolling. The boy or young man who succeeded in piercing the disc took the place of the roller. Accuracy of eye and speed in casting the spear were easily learned from the disc game.

Players

- A group of 10–20 players

Playing area

- An area about 15 to 20 metres long
- A marker is placed at each end of a playing area and throws can only be made by players when the target is between these markers

Equipment

- About 10 marker cones to designate the playing area
- A large ball or a soccer ball
- Allow each player 1 or 2 tennis balls

Game play and basic rules

A roller stands 5–10 metres to one side of the playing area and about 5–10 metres in front of the other players — the distance can be varied to suit the age and skill of the players. Another player stands in a similar position at the other end of the playing area ready to field the ball.

The other players (throwers) stand behind a line along one side of the playing area and parallel to the direction that the ball is to be thrown. These players call out for the ball to be rolled when they are all ready.

The roller calls out *gool-gool* and starts the ball rolling toward the other end of the area.

As the target ball rolls between the markers in the playing area the players either throw or roll their tennis balls at the target in an attempt to hit it. Players do not go out to retrieve the balls until all the balls have been thrown. A signal is given to allow them to retrieve their balls and re-form the line. The ball is then rolled from the other end to continue the game. Change around the throwers after a number of turns.

When a player makes a hit they are greeted with applause and cheering. Successful players are expected to be modest about their achievement.

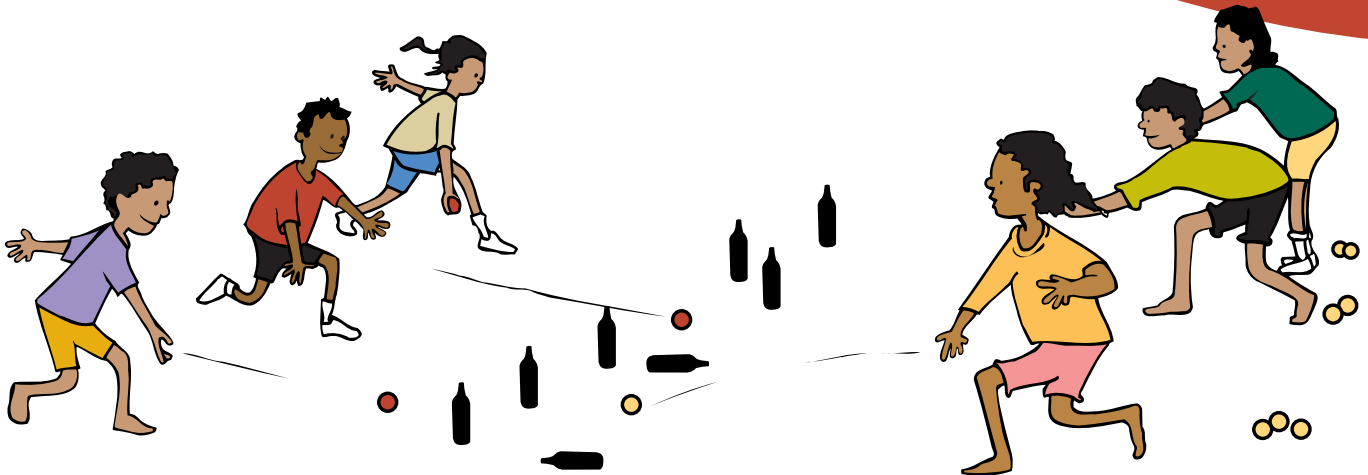
Safety

- The playing area is marked and players must only throw out in front of them and not toward the throwers/fielders in front of the group

Variations

- Use balls of different sizes
- Vary the speed of the ball
- Bounce the target ball along the ground in front of the throwers
- Vary the distance of the throws
- Roll several balls at a time to be hit

koolchee



Background

This ball throwing and hitting game was played by Aboriginal people in the Lake Eyre district of South Australia. The balls used were as round as possible and were usually about 8–10 centimetres in diameter. Gypsum, sandstone, mud, or almost any material that was easy to work was used to make the balls. To play the game, players were in two teams and lined up on each side of a dry claypan. Each team then rolled the balls along the ground to the other side with the aim being to break up an opponent's ball by hitting it while it was moving. When balls cannoned out of play to the sides they were left until the stock of balls was nearly used up. These were often retrieved by the small boys and put into play again. The game was played for hours and usually until the balls left were too few to cause any excitement. The balls were called koolchees.

Players

- Two opposing sides of equal numbers

Playing area

- An area about 30–40 metres long and 15–20 metres wide (badminton, basketball or tennis courts are also ideal)

Equipment

- Use tennis balls, Kanga cricket balls or larger balls as the koolchee (ball) – one per player
- Wooden skittles or plastic one litre soft drink bottles (weighted with a little sand) – one per player

Game play and basic rules

Players line up next to each other and with the teams about 20–30 metres apart facing each other. The aim of the game is for players of one team to hit a koolchee (ball) rolled by the opposing team.

Players of each team roll their koolchees underarm (below the knees) toward the opposing team. The game is a continuous activity. Each player has a number of koolchees and each team has a large central supply in a bin/basket. Players may only use one koolchee at a time.

When there are no koolchees left the game is temporarily halted for players to collect koolchees so that the game can continue. No set scoring is used.

Variations

- Practice koolchee. Mark lines 5 metres apart. Place a skittle/bowling pin on one line and stand 5 metres away and try to knock it over. The skittle can be placed in the middle of two players 10 metres apart. Younger players may have an individual competition or team relay. After practice, the distance may be increased. In a competition, players have five tries at knocking the skittle over and score 1 point each time they knock it over. The player with the highest score is the winner.
- Cooperative koolchee. Each player has a koolchee. A number of bowling pins or skittles (around 10) are placed in a line halfway between two groups of players. The two teams work together to knock the skittles over. The time taken to knock all the skittles over could be recorded. Repeat a number of times with players attempting to set a koolchee record – the best time could be used to decide on a champion team in a competition. For younger players the distance between teams could be reduced and the pins/skittles placed closer together. Players may not retrieve balls from the playing area while the game is in progress – players need a supply of balls at each end. If a number of games are played at the same time then a competition may be held to see which team is the first to knock all the skittles down.

luka-pul pul



Background

'Finding the object' games were played in many parts of Australia as well as the Torres Strait. The objects to be found were usually the eyeball of a fish or other animal. In a game from Central Australia a luka-pul pul (little grub) was used.

Players

- Two players or a number of players who take turns

Playing area

- A sandpit area or large tray of sand which is smoothed out

Equipment

- A marble to represent the luka-pul pul

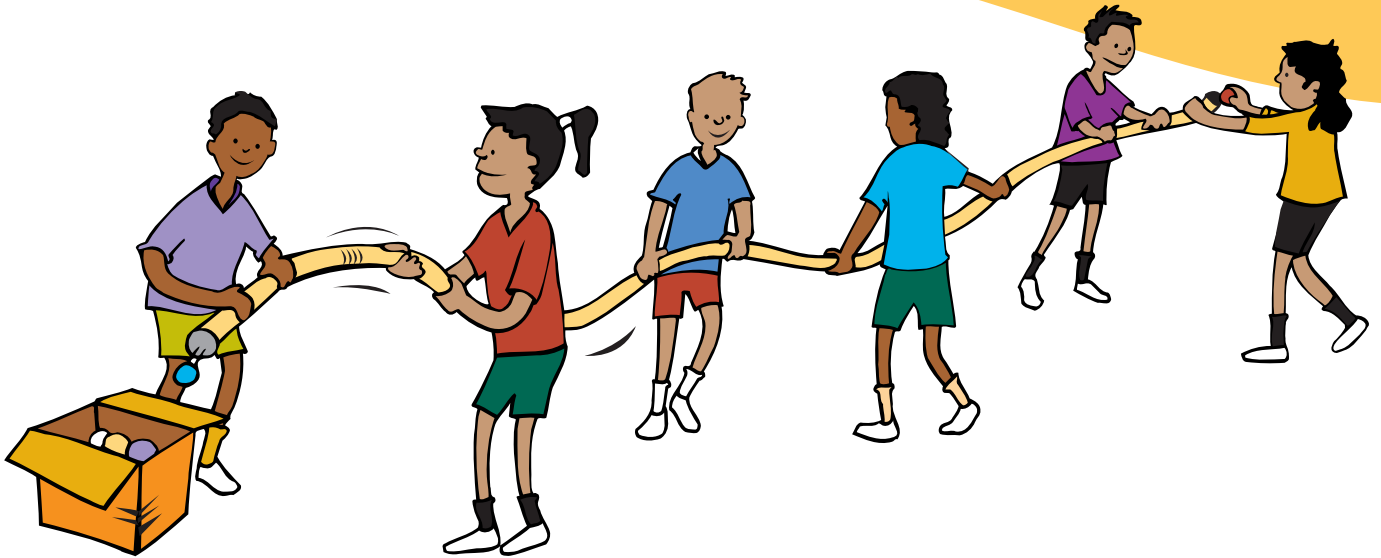
Game play and basic rules

The luka-pul pul (marble) is buried in the sandpit and the surface is smoothed out. The players are all given a stick to push in the sand where they think the luka-pul pul might be. The winner is the player whose stick is nearest to it. The winner is told to carefully dig the luka-pul pul up and hide it for the next game.

Variation

- Players stand on the spot in the sandpit where they think the luka-pul pul is buried
- A small prize may be given for the winner

juluhya



Background

A favourite pastime of the Aboriginal children in the Numinbah Valley area of South Queensland was rolling small round pebbles down long sheets of bark. The sheets of bark were folded into a tube shape. Competitions were held to see whose pebble appeared first.

Players

- Groups of between 4 and 8 players

Playing area

- A playground or similar area

Equipment

- Allow 4 to 10 tennis balls per group
- A long piece (6–8 metres) of flexible tubing for each group
- A storage bin for each group to collect the tennis balls
- a watch with a second hand to record the time

Game play and basic rules

On a signal to start, the players place a set number of the tennis balls in one end of the tubing and roll them through to the other end and into the storage bin as fast as possible. One player holds the end of the tube so that the marbles fall into the bin.

Scoring

Record the time and have the players try to improve on their best time over a number of turns. Players should be encouraged to work out appropriate strategies together.

Suggestion

- This activity is particularly suitable for pre-school children.

Variations

- Competitions could be held between two different groups. Score 1 point for the team with the first ball to emerge from the tubing into the storage bin. Each player in the team is given the chance to place the ball in the end of the tubing.
- Join two pieces of tubing together and make a longer tunnel.

Language

The game has been called juluhya (which means 'to go down') in the Bundjalung language of northern New South Wales and parts of Southern Queensland.

tambil tambil



Background

A spear dodging game called tambil tambil (refers to the blunt spears used) was played by the Jagara (sometimes spelt Jagera) Aborigines of the Brisbane area as part of sham fights and mock war.

Players

- Groups of 4 to 10 players

Equipment

- Use a number of fleece balls or sponge balls — one per player

Game play and basic rules

One player (the dodger) stands in the centre of a circle of 4–10 players. Throwers use a fleece or sponge ball to throw/bounce or roll a large soft ball to try to hit the dodger. Balls can only be thrown one at a time. The dodger can move around to avoid being hit by a ball, but when they are hit, another player becomes the dodger. Players take turns at being the dodger and staying in the middle as long as they can. The game can be made harder by having the dodger stay inside a restricted area, or by throwing a number of balls at the same time.

Safety

- The dodger can only be hit below the knees

Variations

- Arrange a team competition with two teams 5–8 metres apart who throw fleece or sponge balls to hit each other. Score 1 point for every hit. The balls in the area between the two teams cannot be retrieved until a halt is called to the game.

birray



Background

Young children in the Bloomfield area of North Queensland played the tag game of puuny (march-fly).

Players

- A group of 4–8 players

Playing area

- A designated area free of obstructions

Equipment

- Something to use as a blindfold

Game play and basic rules

One player takes the part of the puuny (march-fly). The puuny is blindfolded (or shuts their eyes) and runs about trying to catch (tag/touch) another player in the group.

The player caught becomes the new puuny and the game continues.

Suggestion

- This game is recommended for younger children.

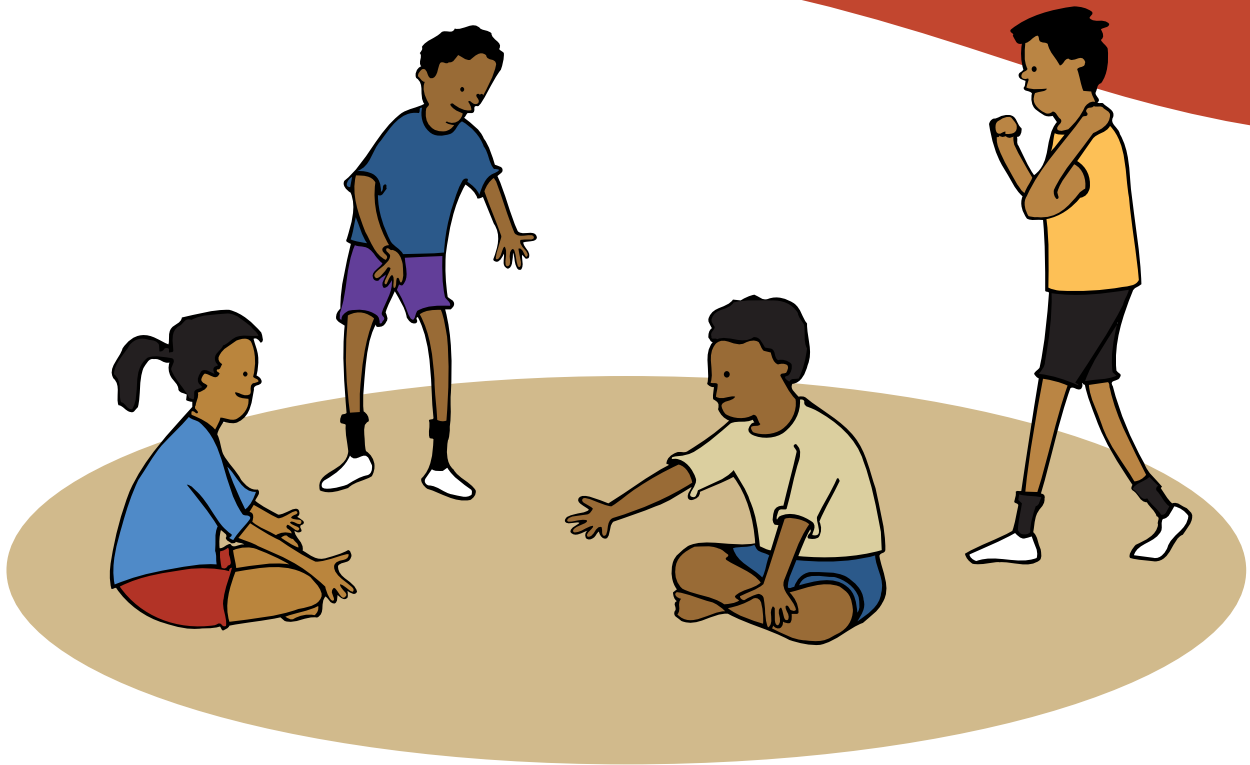
Variations

- The puuny attempts to tag as many of the other players as possible in a set time. Players are not eliminated from the game if touched.
- As soon as a player is touched the puuny makes an unpleasant noise (imitating the insect's buzz) near the ear of the player caught and also gives them a 'pretend' pinch (indicative of the sting).

Language

The name of the game is taken from the Wik-Mungkan language of North Queensland.

beejan eejar



By imitation, children learn activities which they will need in their adult life. These activities were a common part of the education process in all parts of Australia and the Torres Strait Islands.

For girls, playing at house, grown-ups, marriage and so on were very popular activities. The boys often imitated the role of the men in hunting. In different areas the adults also indulged in imitation activities and games.

The people in the southern part of Western Australia had a mock or imitation feast game called beejan eeja, beejar abbin, kala joogurning, or kala jalaburn (fire game).

Players

- A group of 4–8 players

Playing area

- A suitable indoor or outdoor area

Equipment

- Small logs or seats to sit on
- An object to represent the meat

Game play and basic rules

This is an imitation game where the players pretend to make a fire and cook some kangaroo.

To start the game the hunters return to camp carrying a kangaroo. They are greeted by the others and start to cook the meat.

They arrange some logs to sit on and take the meat and put it on a jalgar (bough plate). Each player sits with their kardoo (wife). They brush the ashes off the meat with another bough and divide the pretend meat among the group.

The players then go through the motions of eating the meat.

Each kardoo is asked if her stomach is full. 'Yes,' she replies, as she swells out her stomach.

The players then pretend to hang up the remainder of the meat to eat boorda (by and by) when they are hungry.

Suggestion

This activity is especially suitable for younger children. The children could either act out the story as it is read to them or could learn it in a group and perform it for the group.

Variation

- Imitation camp. In many areas the children built small brushwood shelters for themselves to sit and talk in like the grown-ups. They usually played mother and father — often with a number of children. When there were no other children, objects such as stones, bits of wood, leaves and flowers were used instead. A number of camp and family events are acted out. This includes caring for a baby.

koabangan



Background

A finding object game called koabangan was observed being played by the Kokominni boys of North Queensland in the early 1900s. In their game a goanna claw was hidden in a small tree.

Players

- A group of 4 or more players

Playing area

- A suitable outdoor area

Equipment

- A table tennis ball

Game play and basic rules

The players sit in a circle with their heads low and hands over their faces. One player hides the table tennis ball somewhere in the designated area.

When the hider gives a signal, the players jump up and carefully start looking for the hidden object.

The player finding the object has the next turn.