

Let the Children Play

Deloris Suddarth

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To encourage children to be more active, former physical education teacher Deloris Suddarth has drawn upon a decade of experience to compile fun, entertaining games and activities geared toward youngsters in kindergarten through third grade.

Let the Children Play is a collection designed to teach what Suddarth calls the four Cs: cooperation, consideration of others, competition, and control of self. Many of the activities also have an educational component that reinforces concepts taught in the classroom, such as identifying colors and using the alphabet and numbers.

Each of the seven chapters opens with a brief description of the goals of the chapter and a list of games and activities. The chapter titled "Happy Heart" presents aerobic activities and those that develop locomotor skills, while "You're It! I'm out of Here" offers up different variations of tag. In "Small Children, Small Places," Suddarth shrinks the playing field and moves it indoors to make it easier for young children to learn games such as baseball and soccer.

The final chapter, "The Circuit," divides exercises into different stations and makes use of equipment that most school gyms have on hand, including balance beams, teeter boards, scooters, and climbing ropes. More difficult and strenuous than the activities in the earlier chapters, these exercises require self-control and consideration of others, as students must wait their turn at each station, follow specific instructions to ensure safety, and, in some cases, provide assistance and encouragement to one another.

All of the activities list the appropriate grade levels, equipment needed (if any), a diagram of the formation, and a short description of the rules. Those familiar with the X and O diagrams used in sports will recognize the illustrations. Unfortunately, confining each activity to a single page with a single image is often not enough explanation for some of the more complex games. The very brief narrative of this book is limited to the back cover and two or three short paragraphs at the start of each chapter. An expanded version of the back-cover material would have worked well as an introduction to the volume.

At the back of the book, readers will find a list of references and an alphabetical list all of the games and activities—but no page numbers. One assumes that many of the games and activities were drawn from the books referenced, but there is no indication of this throughout Suddarth's work.

This instructional guide is geared toward early-elementary physical education teachers but would also appeal to coaches, parents, camp counselors, and daycare staff members who are seeking ways to inspire children to be less sedentary. Suddarth's goals clearly align with many of the recent national efforts to promote healthier, more active lifestyles for children.

MARIA SIANO (November 21, 2012)

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