

Kids games

Using fun games to teach children to sail is a great way to keep them interested and wanting to come back for more, they are learning to sail without even realising it.

Whistle game

To practice different sailing manoeuvres

- Decide which manoeuvres you want to include e.g. tacking, gybing, stopping
- Assign each one a number of whistle blows e.g. 1 whistle = tack, 2 = gybe
- Discuss the difference between each one, which way will they need to turn the boat etc.
- Set out to the sailing area in a follow my leader, ensure there are a couple of boat lengths between each boat
- Blow the whistle to signal which manoeuvre they should do
- Gradually decrease the time between each manoeuvre to make it more difficult
- You can make it more fun by adding in commands such as stand up and do a dance, dry capsizes etc.
- Debrief – discuss different techniques and manoeuvres and when you would use them

Follow my leader

To teach slowing & accelerating techniques and accurate steering

- Practice on land first with all children lined up behind each other, ensure they understand they should leave a gap, not overtake and turn where, not when, the person in front does. They must also do EVERYTHING the person in front does
- Discuss ways of slowing the boat down and speeding up
- Line up with the instructor in the lead boat and everyone else behind
- Pass messages down the line such as 'pull your sail in', this can also be made fun by shouting things like 'I'm a silly sausage'
- Whilst sailing in the line the instructor should also add in other fun things that the children must copy e.g. sailing standing up, sailing one handed etc.
- Anyone overtaking must go to the back of the line
- Debrief – discuss the best ways to slow a boat down

Tig

To practice sailing in close company, steering and the rules of sailing

- Set out a sailing area with marker buoys
- Discuss the basic rules of sailing, emphasise that there should be no contact!
- Throw a large soft ball into the water, whoever picks it up first is 'it'
- They must then tig another boat by hitting any part of it with the ball
- Sailors must use the rules of sailing to ensure there is not a collision

- The person that has been hit is now 'it', if the ball hit their boat and fell in the water they must retrieve it
- Debrief – discuss rules relating to any incidents that may have occurred

Netball

To practice sailing in close company, steering and the rules of sailing

- Set out two anchored buckets / baskets on a reaching course
- Discuss the rules of sailing and emphasise that there should be no contact!
- Split the group into two teams and allocate each one a basket as their goal
- Teams score points by throwing their ball into their basket
- Sailors can only travel with the ball for 5 seconds, after which time they must pass to their teammates
- If the ball is dropped into the water it may be retrieved by any team
- Sailors should use the rules of sailing to stop the other team getting to their goal
- Debrief – discuss rules relating to any incidents that may have occurred, what good techniques did the winning team have?

Jetty relay race

To teach coming into a jetty

- Split sailors into two teams with one boat per team
- Set out two marker bouys equal distances from the jetty
- Discuss the correct procedure for coming into the jetty
- Each team member must set off, sail around the marker buoy and then return to the jetty in the correct way and swap with the next team member
- If they do not stop at the jetty correctly they must go round again
- Debrief – discuss stopping techniques and why they should come into a jetty in this way

Backwards race

To teach leaving a jetty or mooring

- Line all the boats up head to wind along a jetty or set of mooring bouys
- Set out a marker bouy downwind of the startline
- Discuss how to sail backwards, emphasise the steering aspect
- Get all the kids lined up in their boats and ready to go
- Blow a whistle to start the race, sailors should race backwards to the bottom buoy, and then beat back upwind to the jetty
- Debrief – discuss why you would need to sail backwards from a jetty

Floats or Ducks

To practice sailing in close company and sailing upwind

- You will need enough floats/ ducks so that there is at least one for each boat/ windsurfer.
- Each float/ duck has a number on the underside, which can not be seen unless turned over.
- Place the ducks into the water, reasonably spread out up wind/tide of the group
- Each boat is assigned a number and they have to find the duck/float that has that number on it and return it to the powerboat.
- The boats/ windsurfers have to sail to the floats/ ducks (observing the rules of the road at all times).
- The ducks/ floats will drift down wind/ tide.
- Position the safety boat to which they are to return the ducks/ floats upwind a short distance so that they have to sail up wind to deposit the correctly numbered float/duck.
- Debrief covering what they did to enable them to get back to the boat, what they found difficult/ easy and why?

Follow on floats/ ducks

To practically teach rules of the road

- With a more advanced group you can then re run the game so that the boat that brought the correct duck back first is now the blocker.
- Not using any contact that boat has to use the rules of the road to hinder the other boat getting their floats.
- Gradually increase the number of blockers until all but one boat is a blocker.
- Debrief- rules of the road

Simon Says

To teach parts of the boat

- Out on the water on a calm day.
- Get all of the kids to come fairly close to the powerboat, let their sails flap and point the boats roughly into wind.
- When "Simon says.... they have to complete that task..
- So for example if "Simon says touch the rudder" then they all touch the rudder.
- If you don't say Simon says then they shouldn't do the action.
- Can also put in capsize, crawl round the mast. Include all the bits that they might not know like clew, tack etc. mix it up with more active bits like stand on one leg. Can also include things like touch the end of the rudder, so they have to bring the rudder up, or tasks where they have to lower the sail.
- Debrief, which parts did they know already, what have they learnt.

On The Water Bad Weather Alternatives

No wind

Paddling

- Any type of paddling race / game / journey
- Remove booms, masts can be left on or off
- Put 2 kids in each boat and have one paddling and one steering
- Keep it short, young kids get tired easily when paddling

Towing

- Ashore, practice the knots they will need to tie on to each other
- Tie boats in a row behind powerboat, put 2 kids in each boat to reduce number of boats being towed
- Leave rudder on the last boat in the line, they will need to steer
- Emphasise safety – arms and legs inside the boats, no standing up, rocking etc.
- Travel to a different part of the beach / lake to play a game or paddle back

End to end

- Tie all the boats / boards in a line end to end from a jetty or mooring buoy
- All the kids must walk / climb along the line
- Aim to end up with them all in the end boat / standing on the end board
- If they fall off they must go back to the beginning and start again!

Balance games

- Stand up on the boat / board
- Walk right to the front then right to the end
- Try and get all the kids on one bats / board

Strong winds

Boomless sailing

- Remove the booms
- Use a small sail with the mainsheet attached straight to the clew
- Tow the boats upwind and set out a course on a beam / broad reach
- Boats will drift downwind so will probably need a tow back up every so often

- Can also be done without a sail altogether
- Remove mast or leave sail rolled up with rudders and daggerboards in
- Tow the boats upwind and give them a point to aim for downwind
- They will just drift downwind but they will be able to steer a little
- If you are using boats with jibs e.g. Picos just use the jib without the mainsail
- For windsurfers use rigging sticks instead of sails

Make a raft

- raft two or three boats together side by side and get all the kids to 'sail' together
- Tie painters together at the front and mainsheets round the toestraps at the back
- Use jibs if you have them or just steer and paddle if not
- Tow the raft upwind and set them a challenge to get to a particular point downwind
- Give everyone a job to do – steering, lookout etc. Change round jobs every so often

Reduce number of boats

- The less boats you have on the water the easier it will be to control
- Pair up kids or even put three in a boat if they are small
- Just use a couple of boats and take it in turns to sail from the shore and back
- If you have large double handed dinghies use them for instructors to take out a small group of kids

Off The Water Bad Weather Alternatives

Port – Starboard game

- Mark out a large boat on the floor as seen from above
- Everyone starts in the middle of the boat
- Instructor calls out port / starboard / bow / stern
- Everyone has to run to that part of the boat
- Last one there is out

Human Knot

- Tie one end of a long rope to a post / chair / immovable object

- Attach the other end around a child's wrist or waist
- Give them a knot to tie, they have to move everywhere the rope needs to go
- Can also be done as a group, everyone holds onto the rope in a line and can't let go whilst they tie the knot

Sabotage boat

- Rig a range of boats with suitable rigging defects
- The group has to spot the defects in small teams
- It helps if you tell them how many points they have to find
- Alternatively you could get one group to rig the boat wrong and one group to find the problems

Rigging races

- In small teams kids have to rig the boat
- The team with the first fully rigged boat wins
- Mix it up – blind fold half of the team and then only allow the blind folded ones to touch the boat
- Only allow each team member to use one hand

Windy Charades

- The same as normal charades, miming one of the beaufort wind scales
- Can mime what they would be doing on their boat or how the trees etc. would be moving