

Keep the Balloon up

This is the simplest ice breaker for all ages.

Everyone stands in a circle, a balloon is thrown into the middle.

Round 1: Keep the balloon off the floor, the children in the circle have to run in and hit the balloon up while saying their name (the same person can't hit the balloon twice).

Round 2: The same, but when you hit the balloon up in the air, instead of saying your own name, you say the name of someone else and they have to come in next to hit the balloon.



Organisers, take note in case any children's names don't get called, and make sure that you take a turn and call them in.

Teeth

A hilarious way to learn each others' names.

Sit everyone in a circle. Each player says their name. Player A says their own name twice, then the name of the player that they want to pass it on to. For example, Player A says "Michael, Michael, Evie, Evie." player B says "Evie, Evie, Grace, Grace." and so on.

What makes this game interesting and funny is that you can't show your teeth at any point (which you do by pulling your lips over your teeth). If someone happens to show their teeth and get spotted, alert the group by screaming "teeth teeth" and flapping your arms at the player like wings (making sure you don't show your teeth in the process!). Depending on how you want to play, you can do elimination or points lost when teeth are shown.

If this gets too easy, get them to grab their tongue or something else to make it harder.

By substituting names with other themes, such as fruit and veg, animals etc, this could be played throughout the year.

Scavenger Hunt

The idea of this activity is for new children to the club to discover and explore each of the different areas of your club, while looking for the items on their list.

Put the children into pairs or small groups with at least one child who has been to the club before in each pair/group. Mix the ages, because they will need to read instructions.

Give each pair/group a scavenger hunt sheet. They have to find, or do each item on the list. You can award a prize for the quickest team, or not as you wish.

We have created a template for a simple scavenger hunt, to which you can add, amend or remove items to make it suitable for the layout or features of your specific club.

<http://www.outofschoolalliance.co.uk/downloads/ScavengerHunt.docx>

The Big Wind Blows

This can be used as an ice breaker - as it will reveal things that the children have in common with each other.

All the children stand in a circle with one person in the middle. Something marks the spot of each person in the circle (a shoe works well!)

The person in the middle says "The Big Wind Blows for anyone _____ " they fill in the blank with something like "wearing socks", "who has a birthday in September"... etc.

Everyone who fits that description has to go into the middle of the circle and then find a new place to stand. The one rule is that they cannot stay in their own spot and they cannot go to the spot immediately beside them.

The person in the middle tries to get a space on the edge of the circle and this leaves someone in the middle who makes the big wind blow again!

Hidden Names

This is an ice breaker which can be carried over into two sessions.

Give each child a small piece of card and some coloured pens, tell them to write their name, and make it look as interesting as possible.

Using the "scratch paint" recipe they then paint over their name, and leave the cards to dry.

At the next session, distribute the cards to the children. Ask them to take it in turns to scratch off the covering, and then find the person whose name is on the card.

See our **Scratch Paint** activity factsheet for more details.

<http://www.outofschoolalliance.co.uk/downloads/ScratchPaint.pdf>

Shoe Talk

This is a fun icebreaker that can be as simple or involved as the children want it to be.

Split the group into two teams. Line them up against opposite sides of the room. Get each person in Team A to take off one shoe and make a pile of their shoes.

Now each person from Team B selects a random shoe from the other team's pile and has to find the person that shoe belongs to.

Once they have found the owner, the children ask each others' names and ages.

Then get Team A to do the same process with Team B's pile of shoes.

You can rearrange the teams and play again.

Or you can extend the activity by asking them to have a question ready for when they find the owner of the shoe, so they then ask each other a get to know you question.

Make sure you don't allow too much time for this, but don't make it too short either; give both people a chance to answer.

Find your Twin

This is a fun way to find out names without anyone getting left out.

Decide ahead of time on some categories such as animals, occupations, emotions, sports, etc. Make two cards for each category. If you have very young children playing, make sure you use pictures rather than writing. Also create one set of three cards in case you have an odd number of players.

To start the activity, distribute the cards to players and tell them not to share what is written/drawn on the card with anyone else.

Ask the group to spread out in the playing area.

Each person must make a noise associated with the example on their card and/or perform a movement. For example, if there is a chicken drawn on their card they must cluck like a chicken and flap their arms.

Tell the group that each person must now find their twin by acting out their card. Once the "twins" have found each other, they ask each others' names, ages and any other getting to know you questions (depending on their age and level of shyness).

Blind Drawing

This could be used as an ice breaker, or as a getting to know you better activity. It focuses on communication and interpretation, but can have some quite amusing drawings at the end! It works better with older children.

In advance find (or create) some simple line drawings, that will be reasonably easy to describe. If you have artistic children you could get them to draw a picture first, which they then describe to their partner.

Divide everyone into pairs. Seat the pairs back-to-back.

Give one person a pen and paper and the other person a picture. The person with the picture describes the picture to their teammate without actually saying what it is. For example, if the image is a worm in an apple, do not say, "Draw an apple with a worm in it." Say "draw a circle. Put a little line on the top in the middle," and so on. The person with the pen and paper draws what they think the picture is, based on the verbal description.

Set a time limit for 10 - 15 minutes.

If you have time, and they want to, get the children to swap roles so that the drawer becomes the describer.

The Perfect Square

This isn't exactly an ice breaker, more of a communication activity and works better with older children. You will need to mix the ages and personality types within each group, to be sure that someone understands the concept of making a square!

Put the children into groups of at least eight. Each person is blindfolded and each group has a rope. Each child in the group must hold onto the rope and not let go. Then by talking they should arrange themselves (and the rope) into a perfect square.

Points can be given for speed and/or accuracy.