

Drop Stick



This simple game will test your reaction time and help you improve it! Reaction time is how quickly we respond when something happens. Examples include: ducking down to dodge a snowball, jumping up to intercept a football pass, or reaching out to catch the glass of juice a friend knocks over at lunch. Improving our awareness of what's happening around us along with our reaction times helps us with things like playing sports and staying safe.

Materials:

Find a stick that is:

- relatively smooth and straight
- about 1 - 1 ½ feet long
- about 1-2 inch in diameter (You should be able to close your thumb and index finger around the stick.)

Game Play:

- Player 1 holds the drop stick out in front of them, parallel to the floor, by gently gripping each end with their fingertips.
- Player 2 holds one of their hands a few inches above the stick with palm down. Their thumb must also stay above the stick beside their index finger.
- Without warning, player 1 lets the stick drop, and player 2 tries to grab it before it touches the ground. This is much harder than it sounds and takes practice!
- Repeat this a few times, then switch who is holding the stick and who is catching.

Practice Tips:

- Have your partner give a countdown before they drop the stick.
- Bend your knees deeply while trying to catch the stick, lowering your whole body this way.
- Scoop the stick up as quickly as possible once it falls, almost as if pretending you actually caught it.

Discussion:

- Which animals have fast reaction times, and why? What do they need to do that makes it necessary for them to be quick?
- Which animals don't react as quickly? What strategies do they use instead of quickness?
- Can you think of a time you had a quick reaction? For example, perhaps you caught something out of mid-air that was falling, or saw that someone needed help and ran to offer it. How did you feel before and after you reacted quickly?

