

Keeper of the Keys



Keeper of the keys is a thrilling game of listening and sneaking. Players approach the blindfolded Keeper as quietly as can be, aiming to retrieve a set of keys from in front of them without being heard. The game requires players to plan the quietest pathway to the Keeper, to move slowly and quietly, and finally to practice patience and restraint as they return the keys to their starting point at the edge of the circle. Oftentimes, the hardest part of Keeper of the keys is resisting the urge to run upon first touching the keys!

Number of Players: 2 or more

Materials Needed:

- Blindfold (bandana, scarf, etc)
- Set of keys, measuring spoons, or other small object that makes noise when jostled.

Game Play:

- The Keeper of the keys is blindfolded and sits in the middle of the play area.
- A set of keys is placed in front of the Keeper; they are not allowed to touch or otherwise guard the keys.
- Once the Keeper has been blindfolded, all other players spread out in a circle around the Keeper. In a two player game, the sneaking player chooses any starting point a distance away.
- Players take turns trying to sneak towards the Keeper to take the keys without being noticed.
- If the Keeper hears any sound or movement, they point in its direction. If they are pointing at one of the players, that player must retreat back to their starting point, first replacing the keys beside the Keeper if they are holding them.
- The Keeper must point precisely when they hear a sound, and cannot make “swimming” motions with their arms to point at a broad space.
- The game continues until a player successfully gets the keys back to the outside of the play area and hides them behind their back. The “Keeper” is instructed to remove their blindfold and guess who stole their keys.

Challenge:

Try playing the game outside where the ground has dry leaves or sticks, making sneaking up on the Keeper much more challenging!

Discussion:

- What strategies did you try while sneaking in to get the keys? Which worked best?
- What did you listen for while being the Keeper? Did certain types of noises give people away?
- When you were the Keeper, what helped you listen more closely?
- Can you think of any animals that sneak like this? Why do they need to stay quiet and unseen?
- The Keeper had to rely on their sense of hearing to win this game. Can you name your other 4 senses?
- Which animals rely on their hearing for survival? *Hint: They usually have big ears that stick up to catch the sound.*

Explore your sense of hearing:

Stand facing a partner a few feet apart and say “Can you hear me?” Now, cup your hands behind your ears and have your partner repeat the phrase. Do you notice a difference?

