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FAMILY RECREATION DAY

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ABSTRACT

The general goal of the Family Recreation Day is to make the Israeli people more knowledgeable about the meaning of active recreation.

Our program visits different groups of the population in different walks of life. The Family Recreation Day has become an integral part of many organizations such as community centers, schools (children-parent events), kibbutzim, country clubs, and more.

Our success in activating children, parents, and grandparents together is based on a great variety of recreational games suitable for all. It is easy to become involved in these games since they are simple in nature.

The Family Recreation Day is characterized by a free atmosphere which helps bring fun, satisfaction, and enjoyment to the participants.

Staff plays a passive or active role as needed.

FAMILY RECREATION DAY

INTRODUCTION

With a van loaded with a great variety of games, equipment, and literature, we travel throughout Israel giving different populations the opportunity of experiencing the concept of active recreation. Children, parents, and grandparents participate in various activities which bring enjoyment, fun, satisfaction, and happiness. The van is unloaded and the various games are set up around the playing field. Each game is put in a specific area in order to assure proper use of the playing field. As soon as the equipment is displayed the area is ready for the start of the event.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework supporting the Family Recreation Day can be described as follows: In order for games to be defined as suitable for families, they have to be (in most cases) non-contact games. Participation in the game or activity must not be determined by speed, physical ability, age, or disability. Participants do not have to be on the same athletic level.

CHARACTERISTICS

The following are the main characteristics of games suitable for the whole family:

1. One can choose to play by himself, with a partner, or in small or large groups.
2. Participants of different ages and abilities can play together with no feelings of inferiority.
3. Equipment for the various games is simple and easy to use.
4. Participants can enter and leave the game without disturbing the continuity of the game.
5. Games are based on simple and flexible rules enabling participants to succeed.

The ability to succeed is a very important goal in our program. People young and old like to succeed. Success tends to develop a more positive attitude toward the game or activity. Therefore, games included in our program include elements which allow participants to play and succeed.

PLACE OF ACTIVITY

The Family Recreation Day takes place in various recreational settings. Open flat grassy areas are very good for this program. On different occasions indoor or outdoor courts can be used.

THE FREE SYSTEM

The Family Recreation Day is run on what we define as the "Free System". This Free System is based on the following principles:

1. Different games and equipment are scattered in different areas of the playing field.

2. Participants enjoy free access to all games.
3. Participants make their own decisions and choices regarding the desired game.
4. It is possible to move game equipment from one area to another.
5. We let participants play the games according to their own knowledge, ability, motivation, and judgement.
6. Staff in various parts of the field play a relatively passive role. They suggest certain activities to people, encourage them to become active participants, motivate the elderly and others to join the activity, and from time to time demonstrate one game or another as needed.
7. Staff always interfere in order to prevent injury or deal with problems which are safety oriented.
8. People are not forced to participate in any activity.
9. During mass activities, for example with cageballs and parachutes, staff must assume an active role and be in full control of the various activities.

VARIATIONS OF THE FREE SYSTEM

There are two variations of the Free System:

1. Staff play a more active role directing people to a specific activity, organizing small games with a relatively small number of people, or organizing an activity involving a large group.
2. Staff play an even more active role--organizing competitive games or tournaments in the different areas of the field.

Even in these variations we preserve the free atmosphere which is so vital to the Free System.

EQUIPMENT

The following equipment is the backbone of our program: scoops, frisbees, foamballs, rubber balls, wooden and plastic racquets, Toss-um, ring toss, croquet, Italian bowling (bocce), safety hockey, pillo-polo, cageballs, parachutes, Fling-it, Peloc, and a few other games.

The above mentioned equipment is geared toward families playing in outdoor facilities. For indoor facilities we use some of the above mentioned equipment, and a few other items such as: scooters, balloons, juggling scarves, juggling balls, bean bags, and more.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion I would like to stress the importance of the free atmosphere which is an integral part of our Family Recreation Day. This free atmosphere invites members of the family to play together. It strengthens the feeling of friendship, togetherness, and love.

It is our job as professionals in the recreation field to increase the number of opportunities for families to play together, as well as to be participants in other forms of recreational programs.

The Family Recreation Day has contributed a great deal. It has helped us to introduce the Israeli people to the important values of active recreation through a program which enables children, parents, and grandparents to play together.