



Predator-Prey Tag

Introduction

In the book *The Mouse and the Meadow*, a little mouse explores the meadow while dodging the dangers from meadow predators. In this activity, students become "mice" or "predators" as they experience the food web in an outside game of tag.

Materials Needed

- ◆ A copy of the book
- ◆ Bandanas, enough for most of the class
- ◆ Large playing area

Key Concepts

- ◆ Predators are animals that eat prey (other animals).
- ◆ A healthy habitat has a balance of predators and prey.
- ◆ Mice are a prey animal, and an important part of a meadow's food web.

Procedure

1. After reading *The Mouse and the Meadow*, define the words "predator" and "prey." Discuss the predators in the story— the snake, weasel, and owl. Explain to your students they will experience the predator-prey relationship by playing a tag game.
2. Go outside and indicate the boundaries of the playing area, with two safe zones at opposite ends.
3. Choose most of your students to be "mice" and a few to be predators.
4. Have the predators spread out over the playing area, called the "meadow."
5. Give the "mice" a bandana to put in their back pocket or the waistband of their pants so that most of the bandana hangs out like a tail. Have the mice stand in a safe zone at one end of the playing, called a "burrow."
6. At your signal, have the mice leave their "burrow" to run across the "meadow" to safety on the other side of the meadow. Predators will try to "catch" the mice (their prey) by grabbing the bandana. If a mouse is caught, it then becomes a predator. If a predator doesn't catch any prey, it becomes a mouse.
7. Play several rounds until everyone has an opportunity to be both a mouse and a predator.

Nature Connections

- ◆ Identify the predators and prey in other habitats.
- ◆ Look around the school grounds for "safe zones" where small animals can find safety from their predators.

Additional Resources

- Read Nature's Patchwork Quilt to find out about food webs in a variety of habitats. <http://www.dawnpub.com/our-books/natures-patchwork-quilt/>
- Get interesting facts about predators and prey at the Dialogue for Kids website.
- <http://idahoptv.org/dialogue4kids/season4/prey/facts.cfm>
- Find out how predators use their senses and have various strategies for catching prey. <http://iqa.evergreenps.org/science/biology/predator-prey.htm>