



Have fun in your pool with these pool game ideas

BUTTERFINGER BALL (AGE: 3-5)

This one is played in the shallow end of a pool. Butter each child's hand with suntan lotion and then wet a large beach ball, says Penny Warner, author of *Splish Splash: Water Fun for Kids* (Chicago Review Press). The kids throw a ball back and forth to each other and have a fun giggly time trying to hold on to it.

WATER LIMBO (AGE: 4-5)

Hold a hose horizontally with the water on full force; place your thumb partway into the stream so it jets into a straight line. Each child takes a turn walking under the water. Keep lowering the height of the water limbo line. The winner is the one who makes it under the water at the lowest level without touching it. The losers will be all wet, of course!

WHAT TIME IS IT, MR. SHARKEY?

(AGE: 5+ , KIDS WHO CAN SWIM IN THE DEEP END)

One person is Mr. Sharkey and stands at the end of the pool while the rest of the kids stand at the other end. The kids call out "What time is it Mr. Sharkey?" and Mr. Sharkey says a time, such as 4 o'clock. Then all the kids take four swim strokes toward him. This continues until Mr. Sharkey answers: "It's lunch time!" and the kids all turn and swim back to the starting end of the pool. If Mr. Sharkey tags one of the kids, he or she is now Mr. Sharkey.

MARCO POLO (AGE: 6+)

To play this classic pool game, choose one person to be Marco Polo. That player closes her eyes and counts to 10 while the rest of the players scatter in the pool. After the count, Marco swims around with her eyes closed trying to tag another player. To help discover where the other players are, Marco Polo calls out "Marco!" to which the other players must respond "Polo!" Once she tags another player, that player is Marco. Or, try this variation: get all of the players, instead of just Marco, to close their eyes so they never know who is calling Marco Polo.

DUCK PUSH

If you have a swimming pool and lots of people together, throw in a couple of rubber ducks, and you can play Duck Push. Here's how it works: Put 3-4 players at one end of the pool and give them one rubber duck apiece. When you say

go, they must use their nose to push the duck to the other end of the pool. They can also "blow" the duck forward; they just can't bite the duck and swim to the other end with it in their mouths. Nor can they touch their duck with their hands or feet. Further, the players can "distract" the other players by splashing water in their faces or splashing water toward their ducks to knock them backward. They just can't actually TOUCH the other players or the other players' ducks. The first one to get his duck to touch the other end of the pool (obeying the rules) is the winner.

FOLLOW THE SWIMMER

This game works best with younger kids. Start by picking one player to be the leader and another player to be the watcher. All the players hop into the pool and line up with the leader in front. The leader then swims in whatever fashion she likes; anything from swimming under water to doing a back-stroke. All the other players have to mimic exactly what she does. The watcher, who stands looking from outside the pool, eliminates any players she sees who are not mimicking. Keep playing until only one player remains. He becomes the new leader.

WATERMELON PUSH RELAY

Funny relay race for individuals or teams. Players must push a watermelon from one end of the pool to the other without touching the bottom of the pool with their feet.

TREASURE HUNT (AGE: 7-10)

Toss coins into a pool and instruct the kids to dive in and collect as many as they can. The winner is the child who brings up the most "treasure" in one go. This game also works in a kiddie pool (without the diving, of course!), says Warner. Use any object that sinks, such as rocks spray-painted gold. Toss them into the kiddie pool and let the kids fish them out.

WATER BASKETBALL (AGE: 8-12)

Throw any round thing into the pool, such as an inner tube or Styrofoam ring, which will be the basket, says Warner. Then try to sink a plastic ball or beach ball in the hoop. The fact that the "basket" keeps moving around makes this game hoops of fun.