

Child Survival

Grades 4 to 8

Survive To Five

Students will

- understand factors that affect child health
- compare Canadian society with the societies of developing countries
- apply critical thinking skills

Related International dates

- UN International Day for the Eradication of Poverty (October 17); National Child Day (November 20)



Cards for
this activity
are on the
DVD

Preparation

- Large open playing area for 25 players.
- Copy of Leader's Activity Script (p. 3).
- Print and cut out set of role play cards (on DVD).
- Masking tape or string.
- Paper and markers to make heading signs.

Instructions

1. Mark a starting line across middle of playing area with tape or string. It must be long enough for all players to stand in a single row. Take 10 steps forward from the start line and mask out a second line called "healthy at five". Take nine steps back from the start line and create a third line called "sick at five".
2. Ask students to close their eyes and listen while the leader reads out the following introduction:

Introduction: You are about to play a game of survival. You are a child under the age of five in a country somewhere in the world. You may be lucky. In your country there might be good health care for children, you go to school, and your parents are employed. But you might not be so lucky. In your country there may be many diseases that threaten your health, or you might be an orphan who works instead of going to school. Your goal in this game is to survive to your fifth birthday. Each of you will get a country identity card. Read it carefully and keep it secret. Based on what is written on your card, in this game you will take steps towards good health and survival, or steps that lead you backwards to illness and possibly death. Let's begin.

3. Ask students to open their eyes. Hand out role play cards and instruct them to read silently. If there are more than 25 players, duplicate some cards. Line up students along the start line facing towards the "healthy at five" line.
4. Using the Leader's Activity Script (p.3) read out the information for the first category (Birth Weight) and the corresponding instruction. Create and hold up a visible heading sign so students will know which "fact" on their role cards corresponds with birth weight. Based on what is written on their cards, students will respond with a step forward or a step back. Repeat for all other categories, following them in the order listed.
5. At the end of the game, explain that those who reached the "healthy at five" line survived to five years old and those who did not are closer to illness and death. Those in the middle survived their first five years, but may have health problems as they grow older. Those at the "sick at five" line are most at risk of dying. Ask students to read out their countries and their role playing names.

Discussion

- What surprised you most during this activity?
- What was the biggest challenge to your health?
- How do you feel about children who were healthier than you, or those who died before age five? How would you help children who were less healthy than you? What would you say to them? What do they need?



Take action

Help ensure the survival of children in developing countries. Your class can make a difference by giving a gift that will protect their health and well-being.

Mosquito nets	\$60	Gift catalogue page 12
Nutritional school lunches	\$75	Gift catalogue page 14
Life-saving immunizations	\$100	Gift catalogue page 29

Survive To Five

Leader's Activity Script

Birth Weight

In many poor countries, pregnant women don't get the extra food or health care they need to deliver healthy weight babies. A child born underweight will struggle to develop strong bones and muscles and will have trouble reaching a proper weight. The child's immune system will be too weak to fight off disease and the child may have learning difficulties later in life.

*Take one step forward if you were born at a healthy weight;
Take one step back if that wasn't your fate.*

Health Care

In Canada, health care is free for everyone, no matter your age or how much money you have. When you are young you get free immunization shots, or vaccinations, to protect you against preventable diseases like measles or polio. However, in many countries health care is not free and people are too poor to see a doctor. If a family lives in a remote area, a mother may not be able to get her child to a medical clinic. Children who don't get their shots can get sick and die from preventable diseases.

*Take one step forward if you've had your shots;
Take one step back if you have not.*

Food

Food and proper nutrition is one of the most important factors in staying healthy. Good quality food helps children grow strong. In Canada we have an abundance of high quality food. In many other countries though, children only eat one or two meals a day. Sometimes they go days without eating because food is hard to get and expensive to buy.

*Take one step forward if you get three meals a day;
Take one step back if you eat less and are too hungry to play.*

Water and Sanitation

Canada is blessed with fresh, renewable water sources and good public sewer systems. However, large numbers of people around the world cannot access safe, clean water. Because they don't have proper toilets, sewers or water treatment systems, the water they drink contains dangerous parasites and bacteria that cause disease and diarrhea in young children. Untreated chronic diarrhea causes dehydration and is a leading cause of death in children under five.

*Take one step forward if you drink clean water from a tap;
Take one step back if this is what you lack.*

*Take one step forward if there's a toilet in your home;
Take one step back if you are forced to roam.*

Education

In Canada school is free for all children, no matter who they are or how much money their family has. But for many children around the world, school is not an option. If their parents don't have money to pay school costs, children may have to work or stay home to do chores. Girls are often kept home to look after their siblings while their mothers go to work. Children who attend school are more likely to be healthy and able to get better jobs in the future so that one day they can take care of their own families. Children in school are also safer from abuse than those who work or live on the streets.

*Take one step forward if your days are spent in school;
Take one step back if this is not the rule.*

Malaria

Malaria is a serious and sometimes fatal disease carried by certain types of mosquitoes. It is a leading cause of death worldwide. Although we have many mosquitoes in Canada, none of them carry the malaria parasite. Mosquito bed nets treated with special chemicals are cheap to make and very effective in preventing mosquito bites. Yet in many countries where malaria is a problem, only 21% of children under the age of five sleep under a treated bed net.

*Take one step forward if your area has malaria and you have a net;;
Take one step back if this is something you didn't get.*

HIV and AIDS

The Human Immunodeficiency Virus, or HIV, causes AIDS, a fatal disease of the immune system affecting more than 33 million people worldwide. The rate of AIDS in Canada is very low, but in some countries can be as high as 1 in every 4 adults. There is no cure for AIDS, but life-saving drugs exist that can control it. In Canada, people with AIDS get these drugs for free, but for people in poor countries the drugs are either too expensive or not even available. Many children have been orphaned because one or both of their parents died from AIDS, and many children have also been infected with the HIV virus.

*Take one step forward if your parents are alive;
Take one step back if one or both have died.*

Employment

Parents who work can pay the costs of raising healthy children. They can buy nutritious food, pay medical fees, and pay for dental care and school costs. Children of unemployed parents may get poor quality nutrition and may not get the health care they need. These children are also more likely to work instead of going to school, and may be exposed to unsafe and unhealthy working conditions, such as scavenging in garbage dumps.

*Take one step forward if one or both parents work for your daily bread;
Take one step back if they don't, and you or your siblings work instead.*