Work & Play Well With Others
Helping teams play together
So they can create together

It is very easy to get caught in a cycle of work. We get used to the same old - same old and can occasionally forget how to shake things up. Try these games and exercises with your team to get in sync, think out of the box, and maybe even generate some ideas. These games are also great to play with children!

This is a very, very small list of games. There are hundreds of great games to play - use these as a jumping off point.

Wake up your body

Shake It Out / Shake Down In 8
Shake it out: Put on some great music and just shake your body! Start with a single body part and move around until ever limb has been moved. End with just letting loose.
Shake Down In 8: In order, shake your right hand - then left hand - right foot - and left foot. For each body part shake it 8 times. After all four have been shaken, start over but at 7, then 6, 5, 4… each time increasing the speed and silliness. Continue until you get to one.

Not Your Yogi’s Yoga
Ask each team member to come up with an object or animal. Together, create a unique yoga pose that would represent that thing. Link them together to create a silly, refreshing, energizing sun salutation. (You can even include sounds if you want!)

Walk The Floor
Have everyone being to walk around the room. Just walk. Every so often, give a direction/suggestion for them to follow. (Examples: Smile at every person you pass, walk like you are in peanut butter, move like a dinosaur, move like you are going to get in trouble, etc). The members will accept the direction and interpret it in their own way.

Wake up your brain

Categories / Alphabet Categories
A great game for getting the brain to think! Stand in a circle and have one person call out a category (animals, colors, cities, etc) and, moving in a circle, each person must name something in the category chosen without repeating a previous response. For added difficulty, make everyone go in alphabetical order!

Snow Globe
Have everyone sit in a circle. The inside of the circle will be the “snow globe.” It is our job to create a scene in the snow globe. Ask one person to tell you where they want the snow globe to be from (examples: farm, Paris, library, birthday party, etc.) That person will then get in the center and pantomime (act out with no words/sounds) an activity that would happen there. When someone has a guess as to where it might be, they whisper it to the leader. If they are right, they join the snow globe and add to the scene. If they guess wrong, have them look again. Continue until everyone is inside the snow globe.

**Rhyme Circle (Ya'll Gonna Make Me Lose My Mind)**

This is a more advanced game, but a lot of fun! The goal is to rhyme the last word of each sentence - if it makes sense, great! If not - it will be hilarious!

The lyrics are to the tune of Ya'll GOnna Make Me Lose My Mind.

The group begins: “Ba ba ba ba ba ba - woo!

Person 1: Ya'll gonna make me (blank, blank, blank)
Group: Up in Here, Up in Here
Person 2: Ya'll gonna make me (blank, blank, blank)
Group: Up In here, up in here
Person 3: Ya'll gonna make me (blank, blank, blank)

As long as the bolded word rhymes with the ones before, you are golden. Feel free to change the other lyrics as your team gets more and more comfortable playing with one another.

**Jump In Jump Out**

Stand in a circle, holding hands. Give the instructions: There are only four things you will be asked to do. Jump to your left, jump to your right, jump in, or jump out. That's it. Also, you have to hold hands. Have everyone hold hands.

Start the game by saying: Before I start giving instructions here is the last thing you need to do: you must say what I say, and DO what I say.

Lead the group in jumping by saying a command and having then say it, then do it. Let's do it.

Next get a little tricky. Tell them this time they need to Say the OPPOSITE of what you say and DO what you say. Do it.

Finally Say what I say and do the OPPOSITE of what I say. Do It.

**Games to play to build a team that works and plays together**

**Zip Zap Zop**

Stand in a circle and have everyone repeat the words Zip. Zap. Zop. Introduce the activity: “Imagine that I have a bolt of energy in my hands. To start the game, I will send the bolt of energy out of my body with a strong forward motion to the person next to me. Using my hands, body, eye contact, and voice to get it to that person. While I do that I will say “ZIP.” The person who receives that energy will need to pass it immediately to the next person while saying “ZAP.” Then that person will need to pass it saying “ZOP.” The game continues in that order - Zip - Zap - Zop. Until it goes all around the circle. “

Level this game up: Once everyone is comfortable going around the circle, reverse it.
Level it up again: Allow players to pass it to whomever they want in the circle, in any order. Still adhering to the zip - zap - zop word order.

Final Level Up: Once players are really in sync with each other, have them move about the room while playing.

**Red Ball**

This game will continue to have team members make eye contact. This can also help teams think about being thankful and supportive of each other on rough days. A great reflect on everything a day entail.

Start by passing an invisible red ball around the circle. Once it makes it back to you, tell everyone that now we will pass the ball to anyone in the circle - but to do it, you must make eye contact with the person and say “Red Ball?” The person receiving will “catch” the ball and reply “Thank you, Red Ball.” Continue this until everyone has the commands down.

Now, up the ante, stop the game and let everyone know you are going to add a couple more things to the mix. While still moving Red Ball around, there will be other things to deal with, they will also need to be juggled around and thanked. Nothing should be dropped, everything should keep moving. Start Red Ball again and after it gets moving, add another element - these elements can/should apply to your work. (Examples: Crying Baby, Parent on Cell phone, successful storytime, long meeting, etc)

Let the game play until it gets crazy. End the game and have the team reflect on how it is similar to work.

**The Alphabet / Counting Off**

Decide if the team wants to count or say the alphabet. Once that is decided, stand in a circle and have everyone look at the floor. Listening closely to one another, one player will either start with 1 or A. Another person will chime in with the next in the sequence (A, B, C, D, E… or 1, 2, 3, 4, 5…). If two or more players speak at the same time, the game starts over. Try to make it to 10 as you first start to play. As the team gets more comfortable with one another, go for the whole alphabet or see how how you can count together.

**Yes, Let’s**

This game helps the team say “YES!” without judgement and let’s everyone explore in their own way. Pick a group activity, like throwing a party or organizing a picnic. One player starts, saying "Hey everybody, Let’s BLANK" filling in what they want to do. Everyone in the group then says “Yes! Let’s!” After everyone has agreed, everyone should pantomime that activity. After this goes on, another person can shout out, “Hey, everybody, Let’s BLANK!” Changing the activity. Everyone responds, “Yes! Let’s!” And changes their activity to match. Do this until everyone has had an opportunity to solicit an idea. (Examples: Let’s walk a dog, Let’s bake a cake, Let’s be mountain climbers)

**Idea Generating Games**
Make it …

This can be played as a pantomime game or a writing/brainstorm activity.

PANTOMIMIE: Start by thinking of something very basic. (example. Walking a dog). Have one or more people act this out. Now start to change it with various verbs by saying, “Make it... (bigger, smellier, sillier, more sad, brighter, stronger, etc). With each change, the player will have to change how they are doing the activity.

BRAINSTORM: Start with a basic idea or concept (Painting, reading, climbing, etc). Start to call out various verbs in the same manner as above. Give folks time to think/write/draw what those ideas look like as they grow and morph. Share out after a few rounds.

FrankenIdeas/Mash Ups

Have the team brainstorm around three areas that you are looking to work on (ex. Galleries, Visitor Engagement, Childhood Development Milestones). Make a list of basic concepts under each area in a space everyone can see.

Next break the group up into small teams and tell them they have (#) minutes to create some Frankenideas. A Frankenidea mashes together 2 or more elements from the first brainstorm. Each concept needs to have a name along with it (for added fun!)

After time has elapsed, have the teams share out their concepts and discuss. If you find a winner, or you want to add more time, have teams pick their favorite idea and begin to build upon it.

Alter Egos/Heros

This is a fun exercise where small groups imagine how they would go about solving a given problem if their team were led by a famous character, fictional or real. You can either chose someone you think embodies the right qualities for the job to help develop your vision, or someone at the opposite end of that scale, to explore less conventional ideas.

Have the team decide what needs to be solved/fixed/figured out. Then choose a superhero or villain to figure it out. How would that character solve the problem? What tools would they use?

Resources:

Improv Encyclopedia - Started in the early 2000s and officially released 2007, this website has lots of downloads and descriptions on how to play 100s of improv games. They can also be sorted by the type of skill you are trying to develop (communication, acceptance, etc)
http://improvenyclopedia.org/

**Playmeo** - This online database of team building and fun group games and activities has free and paid levels and is a jumping off point (you can often find some of their paid tier “games” on other websites for free.
www.playmeo.com

**Venture Team Building** - This website, based out of the United Kingdom, is growing and has lots of ideas and explanations for team building activities. Time for these activities ranges from 5 minutes to 90 minutes.
http://www.ventureteambuilding.co.uk/team-building-activities/

The Following websites have interesting, modifiable games to play to help generate ideas and get brains flowing and creating.

www.sessionlab.com/library/idea_generation
  (An incredibly large database)

www.thedesigngym.com/five-games-creativity/
  (Check out: 100 Uses for…)

https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/creative-exercises-better-than-brainstorming
  (Check out: The Six Thinking Hats)