

Recreation activities to improve social behavior. Study in children and adolescents aged 9-14

Actividades recreativas para mejorar la conducta social. Estudio en niños y adolescentes entre 9-14 años

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Social conduct is a behaviour aimed at the society and among members of the same species, having influence in the surrounding environment, where ludic actions may play a role .

Objective: The paper studies the effect of 15 recreational activities on the social behavior of children and adolescents in the Guamani neighborhood, south of the city of Quito, Republic of Ecuador.

Method: Using a sample of 25 subjects with various problems of social behavior, aged 9-14 years, the research strategy starts with the diagnosis of 12 indicators or aspects of social life and manifestations of conduct.

Results: The Friedman test determined the existence of significant differences between two (initial, $p = 0.004$, & final, $p = 0.03$) tests, with data obtained from the observation guides respectively, being the average ranks of the final tests, the best ones, demonstrating a significant difference between the initial and final test ($p = 0.003$) in the variable "Always" and the variable "Never" ($p = 0.002$) as determined by the Wilcoxon signed-rank test.

Conclusion: The research shows that recreational activities are a viable and efficient alternative to improve social behavior in the sample studied.

Keywords: recreational activities; social behavior; adolescents; Ecuador.

RESUMEN

Introducción: La conducta social es un comportamiento dirigido hacia la sociedad entre miembros de una misma especie, influenciado por el entorno que rodea el sujeto, dónde puede influir la asociación lúdica.

Objetivo: La investigación estudia el efecto de 15 actividades o juegos recreativos alternativos en la conducta social de niños y adolescentes del barrio Guamani al sur de la ciudad de Quito, República del Ecuador.

Métodos: Utilizando una muestra de 25 sujetos con diversos problemas de conducta social, entre los 9-14 años de edad, la estrategia investigativa inicia al diagnosticarse 12 indicadores o aspectos de convivencia social y manifestaciones de la conducta.

Resultados: La prueba de Friedman determinó la existencia de diferencias significativas entre ambas pruebas (inicial, $p=0,004$, y final, $p=0,03$), con los datos obtenidos con la guías de observación respectivamente, siendo los rangos promedios de esta pruebas mejores en las pruebas finales, demostrando una diferencia significativa entre la prueba inicial y final ($p=0,003$) en la variable "Siempre" y la variable "Nunca" ($p=0,002$), según se determinó con la Prueba de los Rangos con Signo de Wilcoxon.

Conclusiones: La investigación demuestra que las actividades recreativas fueron una alternativa viable y eficiente para mejorar el comportamiento social en la muestra estudiada.

Palabras clave: actividades recreativas; conducta social; adolescentes; Ecuador.

INTRODUCTION

Preventive actions are conceived as a group of actions that include several disciplines interrelated in order to solve one or various problems. Nowadays, prevention has an extraordinary social significance^{1,2,3}, for which it constitutes a main guide in any direction process, not only in the work of ministries, but also in the community work in which different public and private institutions should be involved, in order to efficiently manage the prevention of the behaviour problems in early ages and carry out a comprehensive work when facing these situations.

Physical activity and sport are considered a preventive science of numerous illnesses^{4,5,6,7}. On this matter there are many studies such as the one carried out by Pancorbo & Pancorbo⁸ on the prevention and treatment of cardiometabolic conditions through physical activities with cardiovascular benefits; on the body dissatisfaction in teenagers and its relationship with the physical activity and the body mass index^{9,10}; on the health promotion¹¹; the role of physical education in schools dealing with obesity and overweight¹² and the incidence of the physical-sport practice against anxiety and depression^{13,14,15}, among others.

Social behavior is defined as the behavior or conduct aimed at the society and among members of the same species, influencing the social development. The standards of behaviour, feelings, attitudes and concepts showed by children towards the rest of the society have defined patterns¹⁶, which change as they grow up¹⁷.

At the moment to deal with a social condition caused by bad behaviour, the first thing to do is analyzing the subject from comprehensive points of view^{18,19,20}, and through

an evaluation ex-ante the beginning of the process ^{21,22}, determining the essential problem that derives from a specific treatment.

These ways of treatment to control or treat certain conducts derive from diverse sciences such as psychology ^{23,24} and also physical activity and sports ^{25,26}.

Therefore, the science of physical activity and sport in general, and the implementation of a group of physical and recreational activities in particular, can improve several situations of social behaviour, being a novel and pertinent strategy to implement in the specific environment of the Ecuadorian mountain range, which will be undergone to study as a teaching-educative alternative and also as an enhancement of the social and body health.

This paper aims to determine the effect of 15 recreational activities as an alternative to improve the social behaviour of Ecuadorian children and teenagers.

METHODS

The sample is made up of 25 children and teenagers aged 9-14 from Guamani neighborhood, southern Quito, Republic of Ecuador.

It will be used SPSS statistic v21 for the Friedman test and the Wilcoxon signed-rank test, with a significance level of 0,05 and Microsoft Excel 2013 to obtain descriptive statistics, setting necessary correlations in several variables related to social coexistence and some behaviour aspects, as it is described below:

VARIABLE: SOCIAL INDISCIPLINE	
DIMENSIONS	I NDICATORS
1. Social coexistence	a) Use of the environment. b) Level of communication with neighbors and partners. c) Personal relationships.
2. Behavior manifestations	a) Level of behavior during the activities. b) Care of the school furniture. c) Participation in activities.

Methodology

The recreational activities designed and implemented for 10 months are the following (annexe):

Along with the program of recreational activities are included different actions derived from other areas, which include psychologists, sociologists, social workers and volunteers.

RESULTS

The observation guides determines the behaviour characteristics of the sample based on three levels (Always, Sometimes and Never). To set an example, in the case of question number 1 (They place in safe places for them and the rest of the people) only six teenagers (24 percent) always play in safe places; 32% (eight subjects) do it Sometimes and 44% Never. That shows substantial dangers for the recreational performance of the sample, since the lack of security favors more dangers for the social integrity of the subject (table 1).

Table 1. Results of the initial observation guide. Variables evaluating social behaviour

ASPECTS EVALUATED	A	ST	N	Total
1. They play in safe places for them and the rest of the people.	6	8	11	25
	24,00	32,00	44,00	100%
2. When communicating the voice is at a moderate tone.	5	5	15	25
	20,00	20,00	60,00	100%
3. They use a proper vocabulary and correct expressions.	2	6	17	25
	8,00	24,00	68,00	100%
4. During the activities, their relationship is good and share things.	2	4	19	25
	8,00	16,00	76,00	100%
5. Do not harm each other either physically or verbally.	7	9	9	25
	28,00	36,00	36,00	100%
6. Do not bother their neighbors.	9	10	6	25
	36,00	40,00	24,00	100%
7. They respect adult people.	5	12	8	25
	20,00	48,00	32,00	100%
8. Do not write, paint or mark the buildings walls.	6	11	8	25
	24,00	44,00	32,00	100%
9. They take care of the gardens, the plants and the community beautification.	4	6	15	25
	16,00	24,00	60,00	100%
10.They throw garbage in the places set for it.	2	5	18	25
	8,00	20,00	72,00	100%
11.Show a leading role during the activities.	7	13	5	25
	28,00	52,00	20,00	100%
12.Willingness to participate in activities.	7	11	7	25
	28,00	44,00	28,00	100%

Legend: **A:** Always; **ST:** Sometimes; **N:** Never

Evaluation two (when communicating the voice is at a moderate tone) 20 % (five subjects) presents assessments of Always and Sometimes, respectively, and 15 subjects (60%) of Never. Despite that the people in Ecuador generally communicates in a low voice, specially in the mountain range, it has been established that the changes in the voice tone and the face gestures, under certain interactions with other people, is determinant enough to consider problems in the tones of the voice.

Evaluation three (They use a proper vocabulary and correct expressions) determined that two subjects do it Always (8%), six Sometimes (24%) and 17 subjects Never (68%). The level in the vocabulary and the accompanying expressions are recurrent symptoms of the educative level, it is vital to reinforce this aspect through recreational activities designed along with complementary actions that contribute to a short and medium term improvement of the indicator.

In evaluation four (During the activities their relationship is good and share things) was registered that two subjects Always have good relations (8%), four Sometimes (16%) and the rest Never (19 subjects: 76%), given the fact that one of the most relevant advantages of participating in recreational group activities is the increase of the social bonds among citizens, allowing interaction and mutual aid.

In evaluation five 5 (Do not harm each other either physically or verbally) are included physical and verbal aggressions both direct and indirectly. It was determined that seven subjects do it Always (28%), and indicator authors consider very high; 9 students do it Sometimes (36%) and the rest Never (9 subjects: 36%).

In the evaluations of indicator 6 (Do not bother their neighbors) was registered that nine subjects Always do it (36%) direct or indirectly, and for them is seen as a way of entertainment, an aspect to become aware of taking into account the problems that from the personal point of view lead the student to behave like that in his life. On the other hand, 10 subjects Sometimes disturb their fellow citizens and neighbors (40%), and 24% (6 students) Never do it.

The evaluations of indicator seven 7 (they respect adults) showed that 5 of them Always do it (20%), 12 Sometimes (48%) and 8 subjects (32%) Never. This relates to diverse family problems that exist in the community, for which is necessary to develop a series of complementary actions directly with the family.

In the case of indicator 8 (Do not write, paint or mark the buildings walls) six subjects Always fulfil the indicator (24%), 11 sometimes (44%) and 8 (32%) never.

The evaluations in indicator 9 (They take care of the gardens, the plants and the community beautification) registered that four subjects Always do it (16%), six Sometimes (24%) and 15 Never (60%).

The evaluations of indicator 10 (They throw garbage in the places set for it) showed that two subjects always do it (8%) 5 Sometimes (20%) and 18 subjects (72%) Never.

In the case of indicator 11 (Show a leading role during the activities) determined that 7 subjects do it always (28%), 13 sometimes (52%) and 5 Never (20%).

The evaluations of indicator 12 (Willingness to participate in activities) established that seven subjects always do it (28%), 11 sometimes (44%) and 7 never (28%).

The Friedman test determined the existence of significant differences (0,004), (table 2).

Table 2. Initial levels of social behavior. Friedman test

Ranks

	Average rank
Always	1,25
Sometimes	2,42
Never	2,33

Contrast statistics (a)

N	12
Chi-square	10,844
gl	2
Asymp. Sig.	,004

a Friedman test

The Results of the final observation guide can see in table 3.

In table 4 is described the Friedman test under a significance level expected of 0,05. This non-parametric statistics are used to set the existence of significant difference in the data collected through observation guides designed as alternatives in the treatment of inadequate social conducts in Ecuadorian children and teenagers along with other actions of psychological and sociological intervention.

The Friedman test registered the existence of significant differences by comparing the observational levels described (0,003). On the other hand, the highest Average Rank is represented in the Always level with a numerical value of 2,67AR, followed by Sometimes and Never 2,04AR y 1,29AR), respectively.

On the other hand, by comparing values or levels through the average ranks obtained from the Friedman test, it was registered that the Always level in the post-test was higher than that in the pre-test (2,67AR y 1,25AR respectively), indicating improvement in 11 aspects of the social behaviour evaluated, existing significant differences according to the Wilcoxon signed-rank test ($p=0,003$), while the Never evaluation in terms of average ranks, decreased in the post-test in contrast to the initial test using the Friedman test 1,29AR y 2,33AR respectively, showing a lower negative evaluation (12 negative ranks) after the implementation of the proposal, which established an asymptotic significance of $p=0,002$, according to the Wilcoxon signed-rank test.

Table 3. Results of the final observation guide. Variables evaluating social behaviour

ASPECTS EVALUATED	A	ST	N	Total
13.They play in safe places for them and the rest of the people.	24	1	0	25
	96,00	4,00	0,00	100%
14.When communicating the voice is at a moderate tone.	10	14	1	25
	40,00	56,00	4,00	100%
15.They use a proper vocabulary and correct expressions.	2	11	12	25
	8,00	44,00	48,00	100%
16.During the activities, their relationship is good and share things.	12	8	5	25
	48,00	32,00	20,00	100%
17.Do not harm each other either physically or verbally.	15	5	5	25
	60,00	20,00	20,00	100%
18.Do not bother their neighbors.	15	6	4	25
	60,00	24,00	16,00	100%
19.They respect adult people.	18	7	0	25
	72,00	28,00	0,00	100%
20.Do not write, paint or mark the buildings walls.	16	4	5	25
	64,00	16,00	20,00	100%
21.They take care of the gardens, the plants and the community beautification.	17	6	2	25
	68,00	24,00	8,00	100%
22.They throw garbage in the places set for it.	13	10	2	25
	52,00	40,00	8,00	100%
23.Show a leading role during the activities.	11	14	0	25
	44,00	56,00	0,00	100%
24.Willingness to participate in activities.	13	12	0	25
	52,00	48,00	0,00	100%

Legend: A: Always; ST: Sometimes; N: Never

Table 4. Final levels of social behavior. Friedman test.

Ranks

	Average ranks
Always	2,67
Someti mes	2,04
Never	1,29

Contrast statistics(a)

N	12
Chi-square	11,617
gl	2
Asymp. Sig.	,003

a Friedman test

DISCUSSION

The Friedman test determined the existence of significant differences (0,004) among three initial levels assessed observationally in initial levels of social behavior. The Average Ranks (AR) of the aforementioned test established that the lowest value was "Always" (1,25 AR), while the Never and Sometimes levels were the highest, respectively (2,33AR; 2,42AR). In that regard, the studies on children's behaviour can be confirmed as & analysis of different variables, as they were performed by Garaigordobil and collaborators ^{18,19}, which demonstrate different problems in each of them and requiring a comprehensive intervention in the process ²⁰.

In that regard it has been demonstrated the positive influence of the physical activity, not only as a science that prevents illnesses ^{4,5,6,7,8}, but also as a comprehensive alternative that has direct and positive impact in the process of social conduct ²⁶, an aspect to take into consideration in the promotion and preventive health care in the ages undergone to study.

Conclusions

The theoretical study and the systematization developed allowed identifying the theoretical and methodological basics necessary to reduce some problems of social behaviour in children and teenagers in the use of their free time.

As conclusion, the recreational activities proposed are a resource to improve the social behaviour of Ecuadorian children and teenagers.

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* Annexe

Game 1: "Run and find the corresponding letter"	Goal: Run showing agility and exercising the memory, attention and concentration in the game.
Materials : Cards, cardboard boxes and chalks.	
Organization: In teams of five students place behind a start line, the cardboard boxes put at 10 meter distance.	
Development: Start running until reaching the first box which contains cards with words such as (excuse me, good morning, thank you, may I, lend me), then read it and put it back inside the box, five meters next there is another box with the initials, find the corresponding letter and say the word aloud.	
Rules:	
Every word said wrong is a point less from the total. The team with fewer mistakes said wins.	

Game 2: "It falls, it falls not"	Goal: Keep balance applying chess knowledge while establishing correct personal relations, as well a critical and self-critical spirit.
Materials: Empty shoe box, cardboard chess pieces, handkerchief.	
Organization: Two teams organized in circles.	
Development: Stand on one foot and extend the other forward, blindfolded pick a piece one member of the opponent team offers, say the name of the piece, hold it on your instep, jump in the same position the number of times the piece moves in the	

chess board.
Rules:
a) Each participant scores five points by recognizing the piece blindfolded, five more for expressing the moves of the piece on the chess board and 10 points for holding it on the instep. The team with more points wins.

Game 3: "If you get dizzy, you lose"	Goal: Run analyzing hyperactivity and showing honesty during the game
Materials: chalks, flags, cardboard boxes.	
Organization: Teams formed in rows behind a start line, at a six meter distance are placed the flags three meters from each other. At the end of the route are the boxes, cardboard skittles and paper cubes.	
Development: Run fast to the first obstacle, round it three times and then go to the next obstacles and do the same, five meters from the last obstacle are skittles, balls and cubes.	
Rules:	
a) The team that finishes first after going round all obstacles wins.	

Game 4: "Form the numbers"	Goal: Jump skilfully, showing concentration in the activity and exercising the memory.
Materials: Chalks, cards	
Organization: Scattered behind a start line.	
Development: The professor will have some cards with math equations, chooses a participant. If he answers correctly starts jumping with a partner as a frog until reaching the cardboard squares placed on the floor, one competitor holds the numbers and the other the answer.	
Rules:	
a) The participant with higher score wins.	
Game 5: "Bounce and choose the corresponding letter"	Goals: Dribble fast and skilfully, keep proper behaviour with schoolmates.
Materials: cards, chalks, basketball balls, boxes.	
Organization: Divided in teams formed in rows behind a start line. At five meters are medium and small boxes three meters from each other. At the end of the course (20 m) is placed a phrase or two with letters missing. Each participant will try to put the corresponding letter.	
Development: By command of the teacher start dribbling throughout the obstacles, at the end find the corresponding letter, put it on the word and return dribbling straight to the row.	
Rules:	
a) Participants who stop dribbling during the exercise make the team lose points	
Game 6: "That's my mathematics"	Goals: Run the ball skilfully, showing proper personal relations and collective

	work.
Materials: Soccer and basketball balls, chawks, boxes and cardboards.	
Organization: Several rows behind a start line, five meters from it will be a circle drawn on the floor and inside it a soccer ball, five meters next another circle with a basketball ball, then another circle at the same distance and in the end two cardboard boxes one with mathematics questions (a number's module, to reduce terms to its minimum expression, graphics, square roots) and the other with the answers.	
Development: At the sound of the whistle start running, when reaching the first circle lead the ball until the next, change the ball and dribble until the next circle, leave the ball and run until reaching the boxes, pick a question and search for the right answer. Go back doing the same exercises with the balls.	
Rules:	
a) Every right answer gives 5 points to the team. The team with highest score wins.	
Game 7: "I know the history of my country"	Goals: Walk trying to keep balance. Foster love for the nation.
Materials: Map of Ecuador drawn on cardboard, small boxes, chawks and skittles.	
Organization: Teams forming a row, six meters from the start line is a circle and inside a small box, three meters next another circle, then another one with skittles of different colors and nine meters further a map and the cards with different historic events (Foundation of Guayaquil and Quito, Birth of Simon Bolivar and Antonio José de Sucre, creation of the Republic of Ecuador, etc.)	
Development: Each participant is given a number, the professor calls one at random. Run until reaching the first circle, take the small box, put it on your head, walk three meters, put the box in the next circle with the skittles, organize them by color, continue to the map, place the card with the historic event in the right province of the map.	
Rules:	
a) Those who locate the events correctly score more points.	
b.) The team that finishes first wins.	
Game 8: "The catching tiger."	Goal: Throw a ball skilfully and show rapid reaction. Enhance collective work.
Materials: rubber ball, styrofoam, plastic bottles full of sand or something similar to set limits in the field.	
Organization: Playing ground divided in four equal parts and an area that will serve as a cage in the farthest part of the field. Two teams, each one scattered all along the four parts of the area, and one member goes to the "cage".	
Development: One of the teams starts throwing the ball against members of the other team (the ball can also be passed onto a team-mate). If a player is hit, he has to go to the cage (the first player hit send his cage mate to the field).	
Rules:	
a) The team with less players in the cage wins	
b) If a player invades the opponent's field goes to the cage	
c) The ball cannot be caught in the opponent's field.	
d) If the ball is caught before reaching its target, the thrower goes to the cage.	
Game 9: "I'm faster and more agile than you"	Goal: Run fast and show good personal relationships
Materials: Four different objects for each team (flags, skittles, balls stuffed with paper and bottles full of sand).	

Organization: A five meter square is set on the ground with a flag in each corner. A central point is drawn from each side, a meter from it and perpendicular a start line, behind which stand each team, then forming a row in the center of the square in a small circle are four cardboard objects, empty deodorant tubes, each represents a team

Development: Start running to the center of the square, take the corresponding object, go back to the start line, go round the square, then behind your team, continue and put the object inside the circle, run towards your team and the other team-mate starts doing the same activity, and so on.

Rules:

- a) The course is covered holding the object
- b) The team-mate starts from the line
- c) The team that finishes first following all the rules wins.

Game 10: "Every man from himself"

Goals: Catch fast, improve comradeship and solidarity.

Materials: Plastic bottles and flags.

Organization: A circle formed by plastic balls filled with sand, inside a participant sitting, five meters from it the rest of the participants sit scattered and a resting line at 15 meters.

Development: The catcher tells a short story saying the phrase "Every man from himself". Ex: There was a sunny day, we went to explore the woods and suddenly we heard the roar of a lion and in that moment one of the participants yells "Every man from himself", so everyone runs for the resting line, if the catcher touches anyone before reaching the line, then he goes to the circle to tell a story.

Rules:

- a) The game is won by those participants to reach the resting line more times and help their partners to reach it.

Game 11: "Changing places"

Goals: Run fast and focused. Show discipline during the game

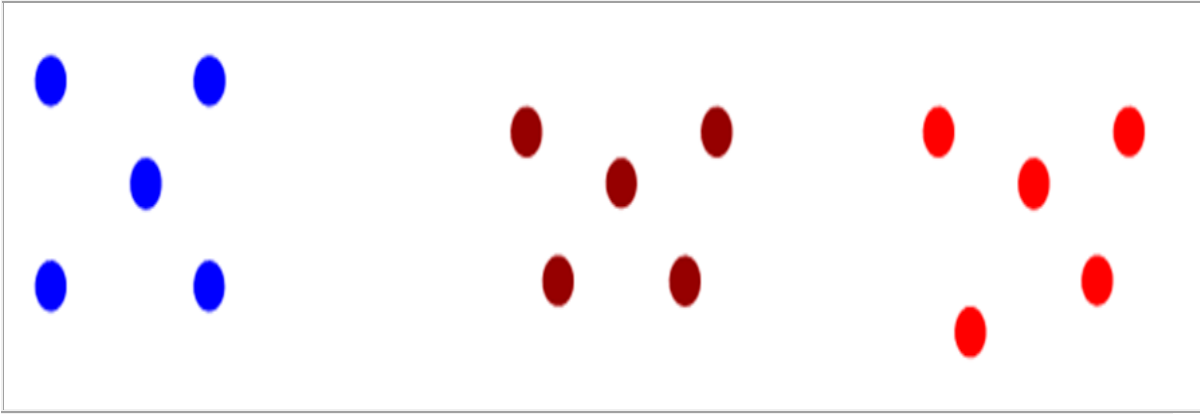
Materials: Empty deodorant tubes.

Organization: Players placed in circles, each circle will have empty deodorant tubes of different colors with meanings: blue-I'm polite, brown-I respect the elders and red-I feel good about my good actions.

Development: At the teacher command place yourself inside a circle and by hearing the phrase "what should I do", everyone changes circle to choose their favourite action according to the colors.

Rules:

- a) The participants who passed for all the circles showing satisfaction for what they learned about good manners win.



Game 12 "Relieve me and jump with joy"	Goals: Jump skilfully. Keep discipline and concentration.
Materials: Batons made of deodorant tubes and jump ropes made of deodorant tubes and rope, small boxes, flags and different cardboard figures.	
Organization: teams formed in rows. At 15 or 20 minutes boxes with jump ropes inside. During the course the flags, boxes and other objects placed at 3 meter distance from each other.	
Development: At the sound of the whistle start running with he baton going round obstacles, take the jump rope inside the box, jump 1 times, put the rope back in the box, reside it there is a box with cards with a good deed (I shall not paint or mark building walls, I shall not damage school furniture, trees, gardens, social property, I shall not throw bottles, cans on the street; I shall not disturb my neighbors with loud music, I shall not be rude...take the card hang it on your neck and go back to the team so the next participant doe the same.	
Rules:	
a) The team that finishes first wins. The child that gets confused in the jump rope will have to start over.	
Game 13 "Save your drop of water"	Goal: Run fast. Show spirit of fight, become aware of the importance of saving water.
Materials: cardboard boxes, plastic bottles filled with sand.	
Organization: Divided in teams form rows. Eight meters from the start line are placed plastic bottles inside a box, one reads open and the other reads close.	
Development: At the sound of the whistle go to the first box, take the bottle and take it to the next box that reads close and thus until all members of the team do the exercise.	
Rules:	
a) The team that finishes first and saves more water wins.	
Game 14: "Knock it down if you can"	Goal: Throw with precision. Contribute to work in teams and strengthen proper personal relations.
Materials: cardboard skittles, flags, boxes, balls stuffed with paper.	
Organization: Divided in teams. 15 meters from the throwing line are 3 o 5 targets and behind a member of the team to retrieve it and put them back on place.	
Development: At the order of the teacher throw the balls to hit the objects, and then take the place of the one retrieving the objects, so that he can participate too.	
Rules:	
a) The team with more targets hit wins (1 point per object)	

b) The teams should keep the row formation.

Game 15: "I'm easy to assemble"

Goals: Assemble fast and skilfully.
Enhance team work and correct personal relations.

Materials: cardboard cards

Organization: Teams formed in scattered groups. 15 meters from the start line are placed several cards to assemble a puzzle. The cards are phrases (take care of gardens, respect the elders, use correct expressions) five meters from them is a large box.

Development: All teams run simultaneously until reaching the cards and start assembling the puzzle.

Rules:

a) The teams who finishes first and assembles the puzzle correctly wins