



FAIRNESS



7-11



Groups of 10



**AN UNFAIR GAME IS
NOT A GAME**



40 minutes

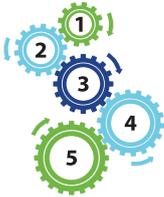


The purpose of the activity is to develop an understanding of injustice and to show how it can be cruel, especially when the injustice is in the form of discrimination based on identity and personal characteristics.



For the activity you need to prepare a set of dices according to the number of groups to be involved in the game.

- Set of normal dices that have numbers from 1 to 6
- Set of dices with covered/deleted numbers: 4, 5 and 6



The exercise is structured around a simple game idea, where ‘contestants’ use dices that they roll, and according to the result, take as many steps forward until they reach a finish line located 20 meters ahead (a shorter distance can be also used when indoors). The facilitator prepares sets of normal dices and dices which have the numbers 4, 5, and 6 covered/deleted.

Before the game, the facilitator divides the children in different groups. Each group involves children according to criteria such as different birthday month, or color of hair, height, or even gender. It is advised to make more groups, in order to apply ‘different’ discrimination’ and ‘unfair’ criteria. This is to be done ‘on paper’ and not disclosed to the children.

Each group receives different kind of dice. For example: girls will get normal dice and boys will get distorted (covered) dice, or those born in odd (normal dice) and even months (distorted dice) and so on. The children don’t know about this categorization and are prompted to just play the game with the kind of dice they have been given. The facilitator should be consistent to have the children play the game, telling them to play along in order to have a very interesting discussion when the game ends.

Contestants start throwing the dice in turn from left to right and make so many steps as the dice indicate. Statistically, the children with normal dice (having available the numbers 4, 5, and 6) will reach the finish line first, while the others will lag behind. When all groups finish the game, the facilitator makes two groups with the ‘winners’ on one side, and the ‘losers’ on the other.

The concept of fairness should not be discussed at the beginning of the game, no matter how much the children disagree with the whole setting. The concept should be explored at the end of the game, when all children reach the finish line.

When the game is over, the discussion of the whole experience should start:

Ask the children if they enjoyed the game. Get as many answers as possible regarding the children’s’ opinion about who won the game and why this happened this way. The children will most probably raise the issue of the normal and distorted dice as handed over to them.

They might ask why or on what basis some of them did receive normal or distorted dice. Ask the children at this point how they felt being advantaged or disadvantaged, as well as if they thought of helping others in some way during the game. Ask them if they felt like wanting to resign from the game or openly state their disapproval or openly resist to the idea of the game as it went on. Explain the problems of unfair game, looking into the aspects of legal and illegal actions. For example, you can use the distorted dice as an allegory to show that the covered numbers could represent less opportunities for some people, or limited/unequal access to resources in order for one person to succeed. At a similar level you can highlight the responsibility of people in a society to protest again ‘distorted dice’ or work towards securing that everyone gets normal ‘dice’.

After listening carefully to all their comments, tell them that children to receive normal and distorted dice have been chosen on the basis of aspects of their identity and characteristics such as birthday month, height, color of hair etc. according to the criteria you used to discriminate.

Lastly, prompt the children to come up with prospect definitions of fairness and unfairness and ask them to think about real-life examples which are similar to the game they played. Draw conclusions by emphasizing that many ‘games’ at society level might seem fair to a person or social group, while at the same time unfair by another person or social group.