Brain break cards: Quick games

Cut along the dashed lines. Page 1 of 2. Laminate them, or keep them on a ring.

QUICK GAMES 2 min

Teacher Says

Beside desks | Some talk | Chair OK

Give actions that start with "Teacher says", such as "Teacher says touch your nose". If an action comes without "Teacher says", nobody should do it. Anyone caught does a silly pose and stays in.

Adapt: Show each action as you say it, and use actions that work seated.

QUICK GAMES 4 min

Silent Ball

Beside desks | Quiet | Chair OK

Pass a soft ball around the room in total silence. Every throw must be catchable. A sound or a wild throw means sitting down for one round, then you are back in.

Adapt: Roll the ball along desks, or pass it hand to hand, for students who find catching hard.

QUICK GAMES 5 min

Heads Down Thumbs Up

At your desk | Quiet | Chair OK

Four children stand at the front. Everyone else puts their head down with one thumb up. Each of the four quietly presses one thumb and returns. Heads up: those tapped stand and guess who tapped them.

Adapt: Students who do not like being touched keep their thumb down and help the teacher watch.

QUICK GAMES 3 min

Four Corners

Open space | Some talk

Number the corners 1 to 4. While you count down from 10 with eyes covered, children walk to any corner. Call a number or roll a die: that corner does 5 star jumps, then everyone moves again.

Adapt: Make every corner reachable by wheelchair, or let a student call the numbers.

QUICK GAMES 2 min

Clap Pass

Beside desks | Some talk | Chair OK

Sit or stand in a circle. Pass one clap to the left as fast as you can, all the way round. Time a full lap, then try to beat it, then send it the other way.

Adapt: A tap on the desk or a wave can pass instead of a clap.

QUICK GAMES 3 min

Find the Leader

Beside desks | Some talk | Chair OK

One child covers their eyes. Point to a secret leader, who starts a move that everyone copies and changes it every few seconds. The detective opens their eyes and has 3 guesses to find the leader.

Adapt: Use hand and face moves so everyone can play seated.

Brain break cards: Quick games

Cut along the dashed lines. Page 2 of 2. Laminate them, or keep them on a ring.

QUICK GAMES 3 min

Rock Paper Scissors Train

Open space · Lively · Chair OK

Play anyone. The person who loses joins behind the winner as their cheer squad. Winners find new opponents, so the trains grow until the last two face off.

Adapt: The game works seated: winners turn round to the next desk instead of walking.

QUICK GAMES 2 min

Fizz Buzz Count

At your desk · Some talk · Chair OK

Count round the class. Say "fizz" for multiples of 3, "buzz" for multiples of 5 and "fizz buzz" for both. A slip just restarts the count at 1.

Adapt: Younger classes use one rule only, such as clap on every 5.

QUICK GAMES 3 min

Silent Line-Up

Open space · Quiet

Without talking, line up in order of birthday (month and day), first letter of first name, or number of letters in your name. Use hand signals only, then check by saying them aloud down the line.

Adapt: Choose an order nobody might feel awkward about: birthdays and names, not height or age.

QUICK GAMES 2 min

Pass the Face

At your desk · Some talk · Chair OK

In a circle, the first person makes a funny face at their neighbour. The neighbour copies it, then turns and makes a new face for the next person. Keep it going all the way round.

Adapt: Hand shapes can replace faces for anyone who would rather not.