

DO IT

GRADES

first, second, and third

MATERIALS

paper
pencil



W

arning: don't play this game if you're tired or lacking in physical energy. In my experience, DO IT is universally appealing to children. It is less than universally appealing to adults, however, especially on lazy days. In this game, you write a physical challenge for your child on a slip of paper. You might direct him to jump in the air five times, or tiptoe to the window, or do three sit-ups, or spin around six times. Your child reads the instruction and attempts the assignment.

Then, however, you are obliged to switch roles. Your child writes a physical challenge for you. He might order you to crawl to the desk, hop to the kitchen, or touch your toes sixteen times. And you will have to do as commanded.

You can set limits. I once outright refused even to attempt a hundred push-ups. But too many restrictions take the fun out of the game. The fun, for your child, is commanding you to embark on a series of daunting physical exertions. The more you moan and groan, the more your child will giggle with pleasure. If you fail altogether, well, nothing could be better—from your child's point of view. For you, the fun is watching your child enthusiastically write instruction after instruction. To my complete delight, I've known children to insist on writing more, more, and more, so long as it forces me to work out harder, harder, and harder. Adults know that learning to write is like learning to play catch or the piano: you must practice. Wise adults know that if the practice is fun or silly, children aren't likely to complain.

Spelling is not important in this game, nor is grammar. It doesn't matter if a child leaves out an occasional word. You will almost always be able to figure out what is expected of you, and if you cannot, just ask. Your child will happily explain.

Walk
with
a
book
on
your
head.

Do
7
jumping
jacks.

Hop
20
times
on
one
foot.