

Tokkatsu Manual 2

How to Conduct Cross-Grade Group Activities

This manual explains how to conduct cross-grade group activities, commonly called tatewari activities. Please adapt it flexibly according to the situation of your school.

What Are Cross-Grade Group Activities?

1. Purpose

- (1) Cross-grade group activities are activities in which small groups are formed with children from Grades 1 to 6. Through these activities, children support one another and build warm human relationships. Cross-grade groups become an enjoyable place of belonging for children, alongside their own class. For sixth graders in particular, taking care of younger children provides an opportunity to develop leadership and recognize their own strengths. This is especially valuable for sixth graders who may find it difficult to show their strengths within their own class.
- (2) Cross-grade group activities develop children's problem-solving skills and their ability to cooperate with others. In particular, children learn how to adjust diverse opinions and build consensus that everyone can accept.

2. Flow of Cross-Grade Group Activities

- (1) Form cross-grade groups. (See Material A.)
 - Siblings should not be placed in the same group.
 - Do not change the members each school year. This means that even if problems arise between children, the group members are not changed. For example, a child who joins Cross-Grade Group B in Grade 1 will remain in Group B until Grade 6.
- (2) Decide which classroom will serve as the home base for each cross-grade group, and assign a supervising teacher to each group.
- (3) At a staff meeting, explain the purpose and method of cross-grade group activities to all staff members.
- (4) It is recommended that a student questionnaire be conducted before starting the activities. (See Material B.)
- (5) First, gather the sixth graders and hold a leaders' meeting.

Explain the following points to the sixth graders:

 - Cross-grade group activities are designed to make children and the school happier and more enjoyable.
 - The activities will be held during the morning activity time on _____, for 20 minutes.
 - Sixth graders will serve as the leaders of each cross-grade group. A leader and a vice-leader should be chosen.
 - At the beginning, the leaders will decide which games the group will play. (See Material C.)
 - At the first meeting of each cross-grade group, after everyone introduces themselves, the group should choose a fun and exciting name together.

*If there is time, it is a good idea to play one of the games in Material C so that the children can understand the rules.
- (6) Hold the first cross-grade group meeting.
 - Children introduce themselves.
 - The sixth-grade leader explains the cross-grade group activities.

Example:

“Cross-grade group activities are activities that help everyone become closer and make school more enjoyable.

We will play together during the morning activity time on _____.

This month’s game is _____. We will change the game every month.

Once you get used to the activities, everyone will discuss and decide what game to play the following month.”

- The leader explains the rules of this month’s game. If there is time, the group plays the game for a short while.

(7) Choose a day of the week and set aside time every week for “cross-grade group play time.”

- After each activity, provide time for reflection.

Children reflect on questions such as:

“Was everyone able to enjoy the activity?”

“What ideas could make it more enjoyable?” and

“Were we able to help one another?”

- At the end-of-month reflection time, the children discuss what game they will play the following month.

(8) After one year of activities, conduct a student questionnaire.

Analyze how the children’s attitudes and awareness have changed.

3. Recommended Group Games

Recommended indoor games: Anything Basket, Drop the Handkerchief, Find the Leader, Rock-Paper-Scissors Train, and others.

Recommended outdoor games: tag games such as Color Tag and Freeze Tag, Tail Tag, and others.

*There is a wonderful website that introduces Japanese group games for children.

English version:

<https://e.45mix.net/>

*At first, the sixth graders choose the games to play.

Once the children become accustomed to the activities, the cross-grade group should discuss and build consensus on the game they will play the following month.

At that time, it is a good idea to discuss ways to make the game enjoyable for children in all grades.

4. Evaluation Criteria

To what extent were the following achieved through cross-grade activities?

- Did Grade 6 children have opportunities to demonstrate leadership and discover their own strengths?
- Did upper-grade children develop consideration for others and a sense of responsibility?
- Did lower-grade children come to admire upper-grade children? This admiration becomes a driving force when they themselves become upper-grade children.
- Did the school become an enjoyable place where children feel they belong?

5. In Relation to Lesson Study

Lesson Study, one of Japan’s methods of teacher professional development, is currently attracting attention around the world. During a research lesson, teachers need to gather in one classroom, which creates the problem of classes without supervisors. If the activity place is set as the schoolyard, a small number of

supervisors can supervise all children. Cross-grade activities can therefore also help solve this problem of a lack of supervisors.

Reference A: Image of Creating Cross-Grade Groups

- Groups A1 and A2 are supervised by the same teacher. The home base of Group A is the supervising teacher's class.
- A1 and A2 are separate groups and usually conduct activities separately, but they may also do some activities together, such as exchange lunches.
- Adjust the groups so that each team has about 15 members.
- It is convenient if the total number of cross-grade groups is a multiple of four.

Group	A1	A2	B1	B2	C1	C2	D1	D2
Grade 1	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Grade 2	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Grade 3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Grade 4	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Grade 5	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Grade 6	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
Total	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18

Reference B: Student Questionnaire Example

1. Please circle the response that applies to you.

Item	Agree	Somewhat agree	Somewhat disagree	Disagree
I am glad to be a member of this school.				
I enjoy going to school.				
I have close friends.				
I have close friends in other grades at this school.				
I follow the school rules in my daily life.				
I work hard at my studies at school.				
I think it is important to decide things through discussion.				
I think it is important to cooperate with friends in other grades.				
We can improve our school through our own efforts.				
I want to become a person who is useful to society.				
I think I have good qualities.				
I think I am useful to my class.				
I think I am useful to this school.				
I can accomplish what I decide to do.				
Playing with friends in other grades is enjoyable.				
I respect upper-grade students as leaders.				
I am happy when younger students rely on me.				
I am a good leader.				
I prefer being alone.				

2. What grade are you in? Grade 1 / Grade 2 / Grade 3 / Grade 4 / Grade 5 / Grade 6

3. What is your gender? Boy / Girl / Other

Thank you for your cooperation!

Reference C: Recommended Group Games

[1] Popular Recommended Games

(1) Ito: Lining Up in Order

1. Make groups.

Form groups of four to five children.

Assign each child a number from 1 to 10 by randomly handing out playing cards numbered 1 to 10.

*If there are no playing cards: Give each child a number and have them put their heads down on their desks. Then have them raise their heads one by one, show each child one number from 1 to 10 on the board, and have them remember it.

2. Give a theme.

Example: "Things to take to a deserted island."

Children think of things to take, in order of importance. Each child thinks of an item that corresponds to their number.

Example:

A child with the number 10 → "food" (the most important)

A child with the number 1 → "an eraser" (not very important)

3. Arrange the cards face down through discussion. Time limit: three minutes.

Without knowing one another's numbers, children discuss and arrange the cards in order of importance.

Example:

"Which is more important, a flashlight or warm clothing?"

*If there are no playing cards, the children themselves stand in line instead of arranging cards.

4. Check the answer.

When time is up, everyone turns over the cards at the same time. If the cards are lined up in the correct order from 1 to 10, the mission is successful.

*If there are no playing cards, the children stand in line and announce their numbers in order.

Mission complete → Everyone gives a high five.

*This activity is not a game in which children compete to win or lose. It is a game in which they cooperate to succeed.

(2) Word Wolf

1. Make groups of four to five children. Give each child in the group a number from 1 to 5.
2. Have the children put their heads down on their desks. Write two similar but different words on the board.

Example: “school lunch” and “packed lunch”

The teacher calls out numbers one by one. Each child raises their head when their number is called and is shown only one of the two words on the board.

Example:

Only one child is shown “packed lunch,” and the other children are shown “school lunch.”

3. Everyone raises their head and begins the discussion. The teacher gives prompts such as, “Do you like this?” or “What is your favorite side dish?” After that, children freely ask one another questions within the group for about two minutes.

4. Find or hide the wolf.

- The child who is the wolf tries to blend into the conversation and avoid being found out.
- The other children ask questions creatively and try to identify who the wolf is.

5. Check the answer.

At the signal, “Who is the wolf?”, children point to the person they think is the wolf.

6. Winning and losing

- If everyone identifies the wolf, the wolf loses.
- If even one person fails to identify the wolf, the wolf wins.

(3) Wild Animal Hunt

1. The facilitator calls out, “Let’s go on a wild animal hunt! Ready, go!”

The children walk while singing or keeping rhythm together. The facilitator announces the name of an animal.

Example:

“Li-on” — four letters/syllables.

2. The children make groups with the same number of members as the number of letters or syllables.

Example:

“Lion” → four → groups of four

3. Once the groups are formed, it is good to add an action, such as sitting down, holding hands, saying one another’s names, or striking a pose. If some children cannot form a group, continue to the next animal together with them.

[2] Self-Introduction Games

(1) Name Relay Self-Introduction Game

1. Explain the rules.

The first child introduces themselves.

Example:

“I am _____, and I like _____.”

2. Continue in relay style.

The next child introduces themselves after repeating the previous child’s introduction.

Example:

“I am sitting next to _____, who likes _____. I am _____, and I like _____.”

3. Everyone continues in order.

Each child introduces themselves while connecting their introduction to what has been said before.

4. The game is complete when the last child finishes.

At the end, if the first child can repeat everyone’s introduction, the game is finished.

*For lower-grade children or larger groups, use names only or divide the class into smaller groups.

(2) One-Stroke Ball Toss

1. Make several teams. Each team should have about 10 to 15 children. First, everyone in the team says their name.

2. First round: Each child receives the ball only once and throws it to someone only once.

When throwing the ball, the child calls the name of the person they are throwing it to.

If the ball returns to the first person at the end, the team succeeds. Teams compete to see how quickly they can complete the round.

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3. Second round: Pass the ball in the reverse order of the first round.

4. Third round: Children may not throw the ball to the person they threw it to in the first round, or to the person who threw it to them.

They think of a new order and pass the ball around again.

(3) Finding Common Points

1. The leader gives a theme.

Example: "Siblings!"

2. Children look for others who match the theme.

Examples:

"People who have a younger brother," "people who have a younger sister," "only children," and so on.

When children find others in the same category, they make a circle and hold hands. They then interact briefly for about one minute.

3. The leader gives the next theme.

Examples:

"Town where you live," "favorite sport," "club activity you belong to," and so on.

[3] Rock-Paper-Scissors Games

(1) King Rock-Paper-Scissors

1. One child becomes the king. The king plays rock-paper-scissors with everyone, who are standing.

2. Children who lose to the king or tie with the king sit down.

3. The last person standing wins.

(2) Evolution Rock-Paper-Scissors

1. At first, everyone becomes a "baby" and moves around by crawling.

2. Each child finds another nearby baby and plays rock-paper-scissors. The winner evolves into a "child" and moves around on their knees.

The loser remains a baby and looks for another opponent.

3. Babies play rock-paper-scissors with babies, and children play with children.

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Children can only play with others at the same stage of evolution. If a child wins while in the “child” stage, they evolve into an “adult.”

If they lose, they remain at the same stage and look for another opponent.

4. Babies, children, and adults each continue to play rock-paper-scissors with others at the same stage.

5. A child who wins rock-paper-scissors as an adult reaches the goal. The first person to reach the goal, or the first ten people, are the winners.

(3) Rock-Paper-Scissors Bowling

1. Divide the class into two teams and decide which team goes first.

The second team lines up in four or five rows in an inverted triangle shape.

The first team stands in a single line at the starting line.

2. At the start signal, one child from the first team begins and plays rock-paper-scissors with one child in the first row of the second team.

If they win, they move on to the next row. If they lose, they return to the end of their team’s line and try again.

When the first child moves on to the next row, the second child from the first team may start.

3. If the child keeps winning and beats the person in the last row, the “final boss,” the team earns one point.

The child then returns to the starting point and repeats the process.

4. Teams compete to see how many points they can earn within the time limit. The team with more points wins.

(4) Rock-Paper-Scissors Train

1. Play music indoors, and children walk around freely until the music stops.

2. When the music stops, each child plays rock-paper-scissors with someone nearby.

3. The person who loses stands behind the winner, placing their hands on the winner’s shoulders to form a train.

4. Repeat steps 1 to 3.

5. The person who remains at the front of the train at the end wins.

(5) Snake-Snake Rock-Paper-Scissors

1. Arrange desks and chairs in the classroom to make a narrow, winding path like a snake.

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2. Place teams, such as the red team and the white team, at both ends of the path. Children enter the path one at a time.

3. When two children meet in the middle of the path, they play rock-paper-scissors on the spot.

The winner continues moving toward the other team's side. The loser returns to the end of their own team's line.

4. If a child continues moving and reaches the other team's side, they earn one point.

5. Repeat the game and decide the winner by the number of children who reach the goal, or by the number of wins.

[4] Daruma-san ga Koronda Games

(1) Daruma-san ga Koronda

1. Choose one child to be "it." The other children stand some distance away from "it" and move closer while saying, "First step!"

2. "It" faces away from the others and says loudly, "Daruma-san ga koronda," then turns around at the end.

3. Anyone who is moving when "it" turns around is caught and waits while holding hands with "it."

4. To rescue someone who has been caught, another child approaches without being noticed by "it" and says, "Cut!" to release their hands.

5. When "it" finishes saying "Daruma-san ga koronda," "it" says, "Stop." The children who were moving stop where they are.

6. "It" may move only three steps, or ten steps, from that spot and touch one person.

The number of steps should be decided according to the distance.

The person who is touched becomes the next "it."

(2) A Day in the Life of Daruma-san

1. Instead of saying "Daruma-san ga koronda," "it" says loudly, "Daruma-san ate a meal," "Daruma-san made a phone call," or another phrase: "Daruma-san did _____."

2. The other children must immediately act out what "it" said. If they do not, they are caught.

*An adaptation is for "it" to say something like "Daruma-san is a lion," and the others instantly imitate that action.

*All other rules are the same as Daruma-san ga Koronda.

[5] Musical Chairs Games

(1) Musical Chairs

1. Arrange chairs in a circle, with the backs facing inward. There should be at least one fewer chair than the number of participants.

2. The children stand around the chairs in a circle and walk clockwise to the music.

3. When the music stops, they quickly sit on a nearby chair. Children who cannot sit on a chair are out.

*If two children sit at the same time, decide by rock-paper-scissors.

4. Reduce the number of chairs so that there is at least one fewer chair than the number of remaining children, rearrange them, and restart.

Children who are out watch from the outside and cheer for the remaining children.

(2) Fruit Basket

1. Prepare one fewer chair than the number of children and arrange the chairs in a circle facing inward.

2. Divide the children into groups named after fruits.

3. Choose one child to be "it" and stand in the center of the circle.

*At first, the teacher may stand in the center.

4. "It" calls out the name of a fruit.

5. Children whose fruit name is called stand up, move, and find a chair different from the one they were sitting on.

At the same time, "it" also tries to sit on an empty chair.

6. The child who cannot sit on a chair becomes the next "it" and calls out a fruit name. The game continues.

7. When "it" says "Fruit Basket," everyone moves.

(3) Anything Basket

1. "It" gives a theme.

Examples: "People who ate bread this morning" or "people who are wearing a skirt."

2. Children who match the theme stand up and move to an empty chair.

They may not sit on the chair they were sitting on or on the chairs next to it. "It" also sits on an empty chair.

3. The person who cannot sit on a chair becomes the next "it."

(4) Pair Fruit Basket

1. Choose one person to be “it.” Everyone except “it” makes a pair and holds hands.
2. “It” asks a question, such as “People who have done _____” or “People who like _____.”

*Up to this point, the rules are the same as Anything Basket.

3. If either child in a pair matches the condition given by “it,” the pair separates and each child makes a new pair with someone else who has also separated. Once new pairs are formed, they make a circle again. “It” also joins in.
4. The person who cannot make a pair becomes the next “it.” The same person may be “it” more than once in a row.

(5) Woodcutters and Squirrels

1. Make groups of three. Two children become a “tree” by holding hands to make a circle. The remaining child becomes a “squirrel” and goes inside the circle.
2. “It” chooses one of the following three phrases and shouts it loudly: “The hunter is coming,” “The woodcutter is coming,” or “The storm is coming.”
 - If “The hunter is coming” is called, the squirrels leave their current trees and move to different trees.
 - If “The woodcutter is coming” is called, the trees separate and make new trees with different people around different squirrels.
 - If “The storm is coming” is called, everyone separates and forms new sets of trees and squirrels.
3. After shouting, “it” immediately joins one of the groups. When all the groups are formed, one person will always be left over. That person becomes the next “it.”

[6] Games Played While Sitting in a Circle

(1) Drop the Handkerchief

1. “It” walks around the outside of the circle and quietly drops a handkerchief behind someone.
2. If the child does not notice that the handkerchief has been dropped and “it” goes all the way around the circle and touches that child’s back, that child becomes the next “it.”
3. If the child notices the handkerchief, they pick it up and chase “it.” If they can touch “it” before “it” goes once around the circle, they win.

(2) Epicenter: Find the Leader

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1. The children sit in a circle, and “it” sits in the middle.
2. The child who is the “epicenter” changes poses without being noticed by “it,” and the other children imitate the poses.
“It” tries to guess who the epicenter is.
3. When the epicenter is guessed correctly, that child becomes the next “it.” “It” leaves the room and waits for a moment.
While “it” is waiting outside, the children decide the next epicenter by discussion or by asking for a volunteer.

(3) Bomb Game: Dangerous Ball

Children pass around a balloon or ball as if it were a bomb, like a relay. The person holding it when the music stops loses.

(4) Takenoko Nyokki

1. Several children stand in a circle. The game begins with the chant, “Takenoko, takenoko, nyokki-kki!”
2. Children say “One nyokki,” “Two nyokki,” and so on. The order and timing are free.
Children who successfully say their number are out of the game in a good way and sit down.
3. A child loses if they say a number at the same time as someone else, or if they are the last person left without saying a number.

(5) Yamanote Line Game: Word Category Game

1. Participants sit or stand in a circle.
2. Choose one theme, such as fruit names, country names, or animals.
3. In rhythm, participants take turns saying words that match the theme.

Example:

“Apple → orange → banana ...”

4. A person loses if they say the same word as someone else, cannot think of a word and stops, or breaks the rhythm.

*The key points are to keep a good tempo and not say the same answer as someone else.

*It can become a learning activity if the theme is related to study, such as prefecture names, historical figures, country names, or four-character idioms.

[7] Tag Games

(1) High Tag

Children cannot be tagged while they are on a high place. This protection lasts only ten seconds.

(2) Color Tag

1. Choose one child to be “it.” “It” announces one color to all the children.

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2. The children run away from “it.” They are safe if they touch something of the color announced by “it.”
3. When “it” announces, “The color has changed to _____,” the children run to find something in the new color.
4. Two or more children may not touch the same colored place.

(3) Freeze Tag

1. “It” counts to ten and then chases everyone.
2. A child who is tagged freezes on the spot and cannot move.
A frozen child can move again if another child touches them.
3. If “it” can freeze everyone, “it” wins.

(4) Alien Tag

1. Divide the children into three groups: Alpha Aliens, Beta Aliens, and Gamma Aliens.
2. Each alien group makes the following pose:
 - Alpha Aliens: Put one hand on the head.
 - Beta Aliens: Put one hand on the stomach.
 - Gamma Aliens: Put one hand on the bottom.
3. The goal of the game is to turn all the other aliens into members of your own group. By touching someone’s back, a child can make that person a member of their own planet.
A child who is touched changes their pose and becomes an alien from the new planet. Once they become a new alien, they forget their previous group and act to increase the number of aliens from their new planet.
4. The game ends when everyone has become the same kind of alien.

(5) Kick the Can

1. Draw a circle on the ground and place one empty can inside it.
2. Choose one child to be “it.” One of the other children kicks the can as hard as they can.
3. While “it” picks up the can and puts it back in its original place, the other children hide behind buildings, trees, or other places.
4. “It” looks for the hidden children. When “it” finds someone, “it” says, “I found _____!” and steps on the can.
The child who is found is caught and waits inside the circle.
5. If “it” finds everyone, the first child who was caught changes places with “it.”
6. While “it” is searching, the children can run into the circle and try to kick the can. If they succeed, the children who have been caught can run away, and the game starts again.

(6) Cops and Robbers

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1. Divide the children into robbers and police officers. There should be slightly more robbers than police officers.
2. While the police officers count to ten, the robbers run away.
3. If a robber is tagged by a police officer, the robber goes to jail and asks the other robbers for help. A robber in jail can come back into the game and run away again if another robber touches them.
4. If the police officers catch all the robbers, the police win. If the robbers escape until the end, the robbers win.
5. After the game is decided, the robbers and police officers change roles.

[8] Gesture Games

(1) Gesture Line-Up Game

1. Make two teams.
2. Give a theme such as “birthday,” “height,” or “alphabetical order of names.” Without using words, the children line up in that order.
The team that lines up quickly and accurately wins.

(2) Birthday Line

This is a game in which children line up in order of their birthdays using only gestures.

(3) Team Gesture Game

1. Divide the children into teams.
2. One person stands at the front to make gestures. Behind that person stands someone who guesses the answer. Behind that person stands someone who shows the theme.
The theme is written on a sketchbook and shown.
3. Teams compete to see how many correct answers they can get within the time limit.

(4) Gesture Relay Game

1. Divide the children into teams. Each team stands in a line. Everyone faces backward.
2. The first person goes to see the theme.
3. The first person taps the second person on the shoulder, has them turn around, and communicates the theme through gestures.
After finishing, the next person does the same, tapping the person behind them on the shoulder and passing the gesture along in order.
4. The last person in the line guesses the theme from the gesture that has been passed along.
5. The team that guesses correctly wins. Teams compete in both speed and accuracy.

(5) Spot the Difference in the Pose

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1. The person who gives the theme comes to the front and makes the first pose.
2. The people who will guess observe the pose carefully for ten seconds. Then they close their eyes and put their heads down.
3. The person at the front changes the pose slightly from the first pose. They may change several parts.
4. At the signal, "You may look," the others raise their heads and look at the new pose.
5. They guess what is different from the first pose. A person who guesses correctly wins.

[9] Games for Moving Together as One Group

(1) Clapping Together

1. All participants make a circle or stand where they are.
2. The leader, such as the teacher or facilitator, gives a rhythm.
Example: "Clap, clap, clap-clap-clap."
3. Participants listen carefully to the leader's rhythm and clap together at the same timing.
4. Once they get used to it, make the rhythm gradually more complex or change the tempo.
5. Repeat the activity with the goal of having everyone's claps match perfectly.

*The sense of unity can be increased by adding variations, such as matching the timing only through eye contact without speaking, or changing the leader during the activity.

(2) Dance

Children dance a simple dance. It becomes more exciting if done as a team competition.

[10] Other Games Requiring Special Equipment

(1) Mōlkky

*This can also be used as practice for addition. Because children throw wooden pins, it should be played in a spacious area.

(2) Boccia

*Children with disabilities can also enjoy this game.