

THE CALLY KIDS PLAY WORLD GAMES



by the team at islington play association 2010
with thanks to all the children and
families involved

FOOT MARBLES (CANADA)

Type of Game

Marbles

Number of Players

2 or more

Best location

Outdoors on hard grass or dirt

Resources

Marbles and a shallow hole

Setting up

Marbles are played all over the world – many children make their own out of clay. Children generally play marbles by drawing a circle and trying to strike other people's marbles from the circle, keeping the ones that fly out.

In Canada and some parts of the northern United States, however, they play a little differently.

You begin by making a hole using the heel of your foot, and take turns flicking one marble at a time into the hole – using their feet. Players stand with their feet making an L-shape, with the back foot pointing straight ahead and the other foot sideways, toes touching. The marble is then placed on the outside of the front foot. The back foot gently kicks the front foot, which strikes the marble into the hole. The person who is first to sink their last marble into the hole wins all the marbles that are in there so far.

Before the game, players agree whether this is for 'fair' (so that each player goes home with the marbles they came with) or for 'keepsies', in which the winner takes all.

VARIATIONS:

There are many different games with marbles, and another is Ring Taw. Instead of a hole, two circles are drawn onto the ground – the inner circle being about a metre and the outer circle (called the 'taw') is about 2m. Each player sets four to six marbles in the inner circle and roll their marbles from the outer circle in. They get to keep any inner-circle marble theirs touches, and have another go. If they miss then the next player has a turn, and the game is over when all of the marbles are won.

Did you know?

Marbles are mentioned in Ancient Roman literature, and painted on murals. Games played with marbles, or the marbles themselves, are called *Kunchey* in Northern India and Western India (particularly Gujarat). The World Marble Championships have been held in Tinsley Green, West Sussex every year since 1932! The phrase 'knuckle down' comes from the position traditionally take up at the start of a game of marbles.

"I was one of ten, and an animal lover. I'd gather up all the cats I could find during the air raids and take them all back to my room. That used to make everyone cross." (Joan
"We played all day in St. Lucia. We would run on the beach, boys would wrestle. Girls wrestled too, sometimes! We would play with a long rope, pull each other in different directions and also skip. We played all day, and only went home when we were hungry."
(May, 46)