

Kendama Kids

“If you can Believe it & Perceive it, you can Achieve it!”

What is Kendama?

Kendama is a Japanese game where one tries to catch the ball (Tama) on the cup or spike of the handle (Ken).



At Orchard Prairie this year, the 3rd and 4th graders have gotten a special opportunity to learn Kendama. Mrs. Schierman saw a friend post about her son placing 5th in the 2020 Kendama World Cup, and hatched a plan to bring it to the “Movement” class she was doing 3 hours a week. It has great stretching, hand-eye coordination, and growth mindset goals, in addition to being naturally socially distanced. She asked friends to help fund it online, and in 20 minutes had the backing needed. Each student got one Kendama for home, and one for school. Sweets Kendamas helped out by charging half-price for them. Jacob agreed to come introduce the sport to the kids, which has since turned into a weekly visit because he loves it so much. We were all in the newspaper, even! Joshua Grove, the director of the National Kendama Institute was hired to zoom with us for 45 minutes a week, but then stayed on after our funding ran out because he is so committed to our kids and helping them learn. He even gave us a grant to continue working with him. We all feel so lucky to have Jacob and Joshua guiding us on this journey!

“Kendama is fun, and you can take it anywhere with you, inside or outside. You won’t be bored!”
-Perseffany

1

GROWTH MINDSET

“I can’t do it YET.”
Practice, envision
success, work hard

2

MOVEMENT

Stretching, breathing,
hand/eye coordination,
body control

3

CHARACTER

Accountability, honesty,
encouragement
towards self and others

TEACHERS



Jacob Schultz
2020 Kendama
World Cup
American Champ



Joshua Grove
National Kendama
Institute founder
and Sweets
Kendamas Pro



Mrs. Schierman
Orchard Prairie
Teacher, Learned
Kendama in Japan
at age 17

Believe it, Perceive it, Achieve it

The ken, or sword, has 3 cups: big, small, and base. The spike is at the top. The tama, or ball, hangs by a string from the ken and has a hole in the bottom. There are 2 main grips we use to hold the ken, sara and ken. For Sara Grip, you hold the ken across your body with your fingers under it like holding a pencil. For ken grip, you hold the ken like a sword pointing away from you with your thumb on top.

Warm ups are important to get your muscles and mind ready to do Kendama. We do stretches, balancing, and squats and lunges. We loosen up our neck and shoulders, too. It's important to breathe as you do Kendama, and to use your knees to squat to land tricks.

Another important part of Kendama is journaling and setting goals. We use this to help our mindfulness and also to help us see how far we've come and set goals for where we want to go next.



We also work hard on good character, and focus on how we behave even when nobody is watching. Character is how you are on the inside, and you show your character in how you handle yourself. We work hard to encourage each other, and say, "Nice try, try again!" when we see a friend miss. We encourage ourselves, too. We respect the teacher when they say, "Resting!" and we respond quickly. A big part of Kendama is never giving up, and practicing hard to reach the next goal.

"I like to journal in Kendama because I can reflect on myself. It helps me relax." -Payton

KENDAMA TRICKS AND PROFICIENCY TESTING

There are thousands of kids and adults around the world who participate in and compete at Kendama. There is even a Kendama World Cup every year! There are a lot of tricks to learn. Some of our favorites are: Dry Spike, Spinning Spike, Airplane, Moshi Kame, Bungee Spike, Clack Back, Around the World, Around Japan, Candlestick, and Rising Dragon. There are games, too. In Unicorn, you balance the ken on your forehead with the spike pointing out like a horn, and try to complete balancing challenges. If your Kendama slips off, you are out. There are also games where you do a trick and challenge others to copy you. Lastly, we do Proficiency Challenges together, where we complete a list of skills on the first try. If you miss, you sit down and quietly cheer on your friends who are still in. Joshua is getting a new Kendama for the first 5 kids who complete it, which is even MORE motivating!

We think more teachers and kids should consider trying Kendama. It's easy to follow online tutorials, it's not expensive to start, and it's a great pastime instead of looking at a screen. It's easy to do ANYWHERE and be socially distanced.

A HUGE THANK YOU to Sweets Kendamas, Joshua Grove of the National Kendama Institute, and Jacob Shultz for supporting us and mentoring us on our journey to learn Kendama!