

CARNIVAL !

The Carnival can be enjoyable for most residents as the activities can be varied in skill level, participation level, and simple observation of the fun. Make the area bright and welcoming, like a carnival. Use brightly colored tag board for the posters and make them full tag board size or even the size of two pieces of tag board.

Choose games that can be played by everyone. Below are those that have been tried and true for us but you may have some others that are equally as good.

RING TOSS

There are various ways of playing ring toss. There are toss games that can be purchased or you can use large cans or bottles of soda or juice. Scatter them in a pattern on the floor (easier for wheel chair participants) or you can scatter them on a table. Mark a line with masking tape from which the toss must be made. Give each participant three rings (easily made using sisal rope; cut a 18" piece of rope, bring the ends together to form a circle and secure the ends with duct tape). Two rings out of three earns the participant a prize.

CLAM DIG

This game required early preparation. A collection of rocks was gathered, washed, and then painted purple. Each purple clam was then given eyes and a number from one to five was painted on their bottoms. During the carnival, the clams are buried in a large container of wheat. Participants dig for clams until they have found four. The numbers on the bottoms are tallied and if they total a given amount, (10) the participant wins a prize.

FISH POND

The fish pond is a carnival staple. To make the “wall of water” we draped a large blue plastic table cover over a movable privacy curtain frame (also used a room divider and a mobile coat rack). We secured it in place and then decorated it with colorful undersea critters. The fish pole was a dowel and a string with a bulldog clip at the end. Participants would toss the line over the wall and, when a “fish” was attached, the behind-the-scenes facilitator would jerk the line. Fishermen kept their catch which might be a baggie of Goldfish Crackers or Swedish Fish candies.

CUPCAKE WALK

Cupcakes can be made at the facility the morning of the carnival. Before carnival time, use masking tape to mark off a five foot square track divided into six some-what even squares. Each square is given a number, 1 through 6. Participants are allowed to choose one number from a set of cards, first come, first served. Music plays and a staff member walks the square track until the music stops. Whoever holds the number of the square on which the walker is standing, wins the cupcake.

A second alternative is to have 6 walkers, one coupled with each of the six participants. This version is a bit more fun simply because of the interaction of people. All 6 walk the square as the music plays and all stop on a square when the music stops. The facilitator draws a card from a set of six. Whomever is on that numbered square wins the cupcake for their partner.

FOOD

We have a small popcorn machine that was brought in to the carnival party area and it was a perfect addition to the party adding its wonderful aroma and visual appeal. Popcorn can be made elsewhere in the facility, if you do not have a machine, and bagged for the carnival as well.

Doughnut holes were also served and have proved to be a good treat for this activity. Coffee and lemonade were available.

This party requires a fairly large number of helpers. Each game will need one facilitator and the cupcake walk will require a minimum of 2. The food table will also require one worker and you may want one at the door to give a brief explanation of the activity.

Let people begin play as soon as they enter, choosing their activity. As people often stagger in, this method keeps participants busy and enjoying the activities rather than waiting for everyone to arrive. There is also more participation with this method as, once people are seated at a table, they often prefer to stay there! The early arrivers will finish their games and seat themselves at a table with popcorn or doughnut holes to watch the others.