**Russian Folk Games for Children**

“*Rucheyok*” [Stream]

Everyone can play. The players make pairs and line up. Then each pair of players holds each other hands and raises them to form a tunnel. A player without pair stays in front of the tunnel. He closes his eyes, goes through the tunnel and chooses a pair for him. This pair goes to the end of the tunnel. The player left without a pair starts the game all over again.

“*Kolechko*” [Ring]

3 or more children can play in this game. For this game you will need: a ring or a button or something small, that can be held in your palms. All players sit in a row, the leader stays in front of them with a ring in his/her hands. Players sit with palms together. The leader starts with the first player in a row by pretending to put a ring into the player’s hand and continues down the line doing the same. The leader secretly puts the ring into one person’s hands. When the leader reaches the end of the row he/she says: "Ring, ring go out to the porch!" [“kolechko, kolechko, vyidi na krylechko’”] The player, who has the ring, should run out from the players’ row. The other players must try to catch and hold him/her. If the player with a ring runs away, he/she becomes a leader. The previous leader joins the players’ row.

“*Koshki i Myshki*” [The Cat and the Mice]

Number of participants is 10 or more. One person becomes a cat, another – a mouse. Rest of the players holds each others hands making a circle. Cat stays outside the circle while the mouse is inside. Cat tries to get inside by breaking the circle or jumping over or going under the arms of circle players. If cat gets inside the circle players should raise their arms to let mouse out and then close the circle to keep the cat inside. Once cat catches the mouse they both join the circle and new cat and mouse are chosen.

Fipe

Almost identical to the American game of Tag, children playing Fipe run away and hide from the "Leader." The "Leader" counts to 50 and starts to look for the others. As he finds them, he must touch them before they can get back to the counting place. If he touches them, they become the new "Leader."
Traffic Light

A line is drawn, and all children must start behind this place. Other lines should be drawn about 15 feet apart. The "Leader" calls out a color, and any child wearing this color can advance. Others without this color on can attempt to make it to the next line by running. However, if the "Leader" catches them, they trade places. The player advancing the farthest, or getting to the last line first, is the winner.

Cossacks & Robbers

Children divide themselves into two teams. One group is Cossacks, and the other group is Robbers. The Cossacks have a "camp," and one Cossack stays behind to keep watch. Robbers run away and hide somewhere, only to be sought after by the other Cossacks. Each robber who is caught is kept prisoner back at "camp." The game ends when all robbers are caught. It is said that this game is best played in the woods where there are more places to hide.

Boaire

Played by children nine to 14 years old (or so), Boaire is a game that is similar to Red Rover. Children are divided into two teams, facing each other. With their hands linked, they yell across to the other team, telling one of the other team members to join them. Usually, a poem or song is the way the other member is requested.

The requested team member comes running across to the other team, attempting to break through their grip. If they succeed, they get to choose a player to bring back to their team with them. If they fail to break through, they must remain with that team.

It is said this game depicts marriage, with one team approaching the other in demand of a bride. It shows the strength and significance of the group working together for an end goal.

A slight variation on this game is called Caraway. In this game, all the children link hands in a circle. One player remains in the middle and tries to break through while the others sing a song and move in the circle. If the child breaks through, he gets to join the circle and another child must go to the middle.

P'yanitsa

This is much like the American card game of War. Typically, when children play this game, it's a two-player game. All of the cards are dealt to players, face down. Taking turns, each player turns the top card over, face up. Whoever has the highest-ranking card each time collects both cards, returning them to the bottom of their stack. The player who runs out of cards first is the loser.
Learn to Speak Russian to Your Child:

Let’s Play – давай играть – [davay igrat]
Run! – беги! – [begi]
Let’s run – Побежали! – [pobezhali]
Your turn – твоя очередь – [tvoya ochered]
Close your eyes – закрой глаза – [zakroy glaza]
Catch! – лови! – [lavi]
Ball – мячик – [myachik]