

Olympic Games for Kids

In first grade, students are developing their graphing skills. They're learning how to record, organize, and show data. Of course, all of that can get a little dry. To spice it up, form your own Olympics committee and host The Games, right in your own backyard! Appoint your child statistician, and collecting data and showing the results on a graph will be serious fun! Let the games begin!

What You Need:

- Ball suitable for kicking
- Yard or play area
- Measuring tool (yardstick, tape measure)
- String or rope for a starting line
- Paper
- Ruler
- Markers or crayons (at least 5 different colors)
- Pencil



What You Do:

1. **Set up a “Kick Ball” venue.** Decide where to position the “kicking lane” and use a length of string to mark the starting line. Give each child five opportunities to kick the ball. After each kick, measure the distance and record it.
2. **Set up a bar graph.** This will help your child show and compare her results. On the x-axis (the horizontal line) label the number of each kick, using ordinal numbers (1st, 2nd, etc.) On the y-axis (the vertical line) show the number of feet. Begin with 0 feet and then continue the numbers until you reach the number that is a few feet farther than your child’s farthest kick. You can show the numbers in increments of 2, 5, or 10. To create a grid, draw a horizontal line to the right of each number showing feet. Draw intersecting vertical lines to the right of each labeled kick (1st, 2nd, etc.).
3. **Record results.** Show your child how to make bars on the graph showing the distance for each kick. Let your child color the boxes of each bar.
4. **Talk about the meaning of the graph.** Compare the results with your child. Ask questions like, “Which kick shows the greatest distance? How do we know it from the graph?” (It shows the longest row). Ask which row shows the shortest kick, and how we can see that on a graph as well. Finally, show your child your preliminary recording of his kicking distances and ask him to compare this with the bar graph you’ve made. Ask him which method of showing data is easier for him to understand. After your discussion is finished, be sure to congratulate your child on his success in Backyard Olympics!
5. Once your child gets the hang of graphs, you’re ready to add more events to your Olympic games! Long jumps work well; so does swinging on monkey bars (How many bars can you reach in thirty seconds? One minute?); or jumping rope. Whatever you choose, keep a record and talk it over. You’re helping your child build crucial intellectual skills while using the power of his entire body.