Snakes and Ladders is a popular game for children in many countries of the world. It is easy to make from basic materials and can be adapted to suit many learning situations.

**Educational Concept/Skill to be developed**

Of great importance in any game are the Rules. Not only are these the How-to-Play instructions but they are the boundaries in which the game can be played. In educational terms the rules equate to 'devising and planning investigations' which is one of our process skill objectives. In addition, snakes and ladders can assist in developing basic arithmetic such as counting, addition and subtraction, communication, as well as the concept for which a game has been developed such as Nutrition, Health Education, etc, as shown in the examples given.

**Points for the teacher to consider**

The basic rules for snakes and ladders are as follows but these can be varied according to the educational use of the game as shown in the Nutrition Snakes and Ladders example.

**Rules**

Two, three or four people may play.
Each player throws the die or spins the spinner. The player who has the highest number starts the game by throwing the die and moving his/her counter, starting at space 1, according to the number shown on the die or spinner.
If a player scores a six, he/she throws the die or spins the spinner again.
If a counter stops on the head of a snake the player must slide the counter down the snake until it gets to the tail, then carries on from that point. If a counter lands at the foot of a ladder the player moves it to the top and carries on from there.
The first player to reach the square which has the highest number on it is the winner.
Nutrition Snakes and Ladders

How to play the game

1. The game can be played by two or more players up to a maximum of 6 - 8.
2. Each player should have their own marker (counter). Different shaped shells or stones, or coloured pieces of paper or plastic, or bottle tops, make good markers. Each player starts with their marker on square 1, marked START, which is at the bottom left hand corner of the board.
3. To decide who goes first, each player must shake the die or spin the spinner; the first player to get a six starts the game. He/she then throws again and moves their marker forward the number of squares indicated on the die or spinner (i.e. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 or 6 squares). Play then continues with the player on the left of the starter throwing the die or spinning the spinner and moving his marker, and so on. Players play in the same order until someone reaches square 100, which is the Finish or GOOD HEALTH square.
4. a) If a player lands on a square at the bottom of a Ladder, they must read out the message written on the square, move their marker up the ladder and finish reading the message at the top of the ladder. The players should discuss the meaning of the message.
   - is the message describing a good nutrition practice or a poor nutrition practice? (Ladders should describe good messages).
   - is the school/family/community practising these good nutrition messages?
When a player has gone up a ladder, they can continue playing from the square at the top of the ladder. The good nutrition message will have helped them move faster up the board to finish with GOOD HEALTH.
b) If a player lands on a square with a snakes head on it, they must read out the message written on the square, move their marker down the snake and finish reading the message at the bottom of the snake. The player should discuss the meaning of the message.
   - is the message describing a good nutrition practice or a poor nutrition practice? (Snakes describe bad messages).
   - how can these poor nutrition practices be prevented from occurring in the family/school/community?
When a player has gone down a snake, they must continue playing from the square at the bottom of the snake. The poor nutrition message will have slowed the player down so that he/she moves more slowly towards the finish and GOOD HEALTH.
c) There are some squares with good nutrition messages on but no snakes or ladders. When a player lands on these squares, they leave their marker in the same square and discuss the message written.
5. The first player to reach the finish square is the winner of GOOD HEALTH. All players must remember to practise the good nutrition messages so that they will stay healthy.
This Nutrition Education Game has been developed, and a pilot version used, in schools and in community education programmes in a number of countries in the South Pacific. Further information can be obtained from:
The Secretary General (Ref. PUB 2/32/3)
South Pacific Commission
P.B. D5,
Noumea Cedex
New Caledonia.
Below is an alternative version produced by the Child Health and Education Project, TMRU, University of West Indies, and published in collaboration with Unicef and CFNI. Artist: D. McDowell
Health Education Snakes and Ladders

This example of Snakes and Ladders in Health Education was designed by P. Kneebone and D. Guthrie for the Disabilities Study Unit in co-operation with the Child-to-Child programme. This version was published in the Journal of Education in Science for Trinidad and Tobago (JESTT, February 1984) and the following was stated

"The centre-page spread which follows is an idea which can be modified endlessly. Change some of the polio clues . . . devise a similar game for gastro . . . for nutrition . . . for safety in the lab . . .

"After you have designed your board, you will have to photocopy and/or Gestefax for the groups.

"A word of caution from our experience with classroom games: insist that children read, and can tell you why, they went up and down ladders and snakes. That makes the difference between a game and a learning experience." (editor's italics)

Further information regarding the Child-to-Child programme can be obtained from
University of London
Institute of Education
Attn: Ms. G. Page
20 Bedford Way
London WC1. U.K.

The address of the Disabilities Study Unit is
Disabilities Study Unit
Amberley,
West Sussex BN18 9NR
U.K.
General Purpose Snakes and Ladders

The following snakes and ladders game is an outline which can be used in many ways.

The game was submitted via ICASE and was adapted from that suggested in the School Science Review published by the Association for Science Education, U.K.

1. Snakes and Ladders.
2. Suitable for a large variety of ages of students from 7 - 18.
3. This is a modification of the board game, snakes and ladders.
   a) A suitable board is shown on the following page which can be conveniently made of two sheets of A4 paper fixed together, or by drawing or painting on card when colour can be introduced.
   b) Each player obtains a set of 20 questions and answers, but each set is different.
   c) The game is played by each player putting their counter on the GO square and by shaking and throwing a die, and moving that number of squares.
   d) On the board there are lines linking various squares. These are the snakes or ladders. If you are at the bottom of one of these lines, the line represents a ladder; if at the top the same line represents a snake.
   e) In the course of the game, any player landing on a snake/ladder, is asked a question by his opponent. If the correct answer is given then the ladder is ascended or descending the snake is avoided (the opposite occurs if the answer is incorrect, or no answer is given).
   f) If a player lands on one of the special crisis squares (squares with + and - numbers in them) the other player asks a question they have made up. If answered correctly then the counter is moved forward the number of squares indicated by the figure. If not answered the counter is moved back the number of squares. If the other player cannot think of a question or incorrectly disagrees with the answer, then that player moves his counter back the number of squares instead.

4. This game can be used for revision of virtually any topic, or sub-topic or for general knowledge purposes to find a class 'master mind'.
5. The time required is variable. If the game is not completed within 30 - 60 minutes, the winner is the furthest one up the board. The game is played with two players but with sufficient boards it can be used with the whole class.

Players of differing abilities could be given questions at different levels of difficulty thus making the game challenging to all.