

Millipede/Centipede Race

Centipedes are speedy, carnivorous (potentially biting) creatures, with one pair of legs on each body segment. Millipedes are slow detritivores (speed is not important if your meal doesn't move!), with two pairs of legs of every segment.

The speed difference doesn't come down just to the number of legs per segment, but this race is a fun and memorable way for kids to remember which is the slow one and which one is fast (as predators need to be).

MILLIPEDES VS CENTIPEDES



You'll need enough kids—at least ten—for this to work well. Split the group into two lines.



One line—the millipede—will stand close to one another, with hands on the shoulders of the person in front. Arms will be bent so that bodies—and legs-- can be close together.

The “centipede” line will also have hands on the shoulders in front, but arms will be stretched out, so people (and their legs) will be farther apart than in the other line.

The two lines then race to a predetermined point, keeping the same distance apart as they started. (Remind the head of the millipede line not to step out ahead of his/her line, so the second person in line doesn't have to straighten their arms.)



You'll see that the centipede line can move rapidly because the kids have room to stretch their legs out. The millipede line will be hampered by their closeness, so the kids will have to shuffle—and therefore lose the race.

The teams might want to switch out who they represent so that each group has a turn winning.