**Balloon Play**

**Grade level:** K-6

**Skill:** Striking, hand-eye coordination.

**Objectives:** Standard 4.MEH.4: Identify ways to support self and others struggling with mental and emotional health and recognize when to seek help.

**Equipment:** One balloon for each student.

**Organization:** Scatter formation with personal space.

**Activity:**

1. Show me how you can keep the balloon aloft by tapping it gently with either hand. Now with just your right hand, and finally just your left. Can you keep the balloon in the air without letting it touch anything or anyone else?

2. Who can tap the balloon from one hand to the other hand? Can you keep the balloon in the air while kneeling, while sitting? Now tap the balloon up, let it fall, then hit it just before it touches the floor. Who can tap the balloon up, turn around once, tap it up again, turn around once in the other direction and tap it up again? Catch it with two hands when you hear my signal (whistle, music, clap, etc.)

3. Now show me how you can keep the balloon in the air a long time without touching it with your hands. Use your feet, head, elbows, shoulders, seat, knees, chest, back, etc. Great time to introduce age appropriate anatomy, such as, Achilles, quadriceps, biceps, etc.

4. Can you use just your knees to keep the balloon in the air like a soccer player? Show me how you can use just your elbows to keep the balloon up, try your feet only, how about your head?

5. Let me see you keep the balloon up by striking with both hands. Keep your thumbs near each other and your palms up. Try to get it from above your forehead, this is a volleyball set. (Think Mickey Mouse ears...)

6. Now interlock your fingers and keep your arms long in front of you. Thumbs are neighbors. Show me how you can strike the balloon upwards in this position. This helps teach the volleyball skills associated with the forward pass or a bump.

7. Can you strike the balloon as if your hand were a tennis racquet? (Think: arm straight like a racket)

8. Foot volley, using feet only pass your balloon to your partner and back. Can you catch it and pass using only your feet?

9. Explain pronate and supinate and have the children show and practice these. Can you keep the balloon afloat using a combination of the two? Partner pass using pronated and supinated ankles. (Supinate is like holding a bowl of soup and your palms will be up, pronate is thumbs and palms turned down.)

10. Strike the balloon downward like a basketball. Can you bounce it downwards and under control with 4-3-2 or 1 finger?

11. Keep the balloon afloat alternating thumb, thumb then index, index, then middle, middle, then ring, ring, and finally pinky, pinky.

12. Strike the balloon upwards and say your ABC=s until the balloon is struck again. Count by 2's or for more difficulty count by 9's or 12's until the balloon is struck again.

13. To teach accuracy, strike the balloon high, slap the floor 1, 2 or 3 times and turn one circle then catch the balloon.

14. Sit upon the floor and lift the balloon with both feet, now pivot upon your pockets until you’re facing the opposite direction.

15. While holding the balloon with both feet can you lie down with arms outstretched and perform a curl-up or even more advanced, a V-crunch? Now see if you can transfer the balloon to your hands and repeat.

16. Have the students strike the balloons at various body levels. (e.g. low with their feet, medium using their hips and high using their head.)

17. Work on directionality and have the students move the balloon around their body in a clock-wise or a counter-clockwise direction.

18. Can you strike the balloon to the same beat of my drum? (Give them the beat before they begin so they can more easily match it.)

**Closure:** How could you integrate academia into this activity?

**Health:** What are some ways to support yourself and others when you notice that they are sad?

What can you do if a friend or classmate has told you that they were feeling sad?

What are your triggers when you are feeling sad or depressed? What can you do to reduce personal stress since stress will always be around us?

**Piloted at:** West Clinton