NOODLE BALLOON HOCKEY

Materials you need:

- 4 pool noodles (more if doing this game with quite a few children!)
- 2 washing baskets, cardboard boxes or tubs to act as goal nets
- 5 balloons already blown up (use more or less balloons depending on the group you have but you do need an uneven number)

Setup for play:

- Set up a washing basket or box at each end of a grassy space or open indoor area to act as your goal nets.
- Hand out a noodle 'hockey stick' to your players. Assign teams if more than 2 people playing.
- Place the balloons in the middle between the goal baskets and line teams up at each end.
- When you say go the children run into the middle and try to push the balloons into their goal basket – they cannot use their feet or hands, only the noodle sticks. They must work together as a team to get the balloons to their end of the playing field and score.
- The first team to have the most balloons in their goal when all balloons are gone from the field are the winners!

What are they learning with this activity?

As the children play the game they are learning to:

- Use hand/eye coordination skills, balance and coordinate large muscle movements
- Use vocabulary and language skills to communicate actions to team members
- Negotiate roles, responsibilities and relationships
- Strengthen fine motor muscles, visual motor integration and control
- Use language and sound to communicate their thinking
- Express emotions and use gestures.
- Manipulate objects to explore motion, cause and effect
- Work together in a group with others
- Listen to and follow directions, take turns.
- Problem solve and make decisions
- Recognise the contributions they make to shared projects and experiences

Extending the play:

- Use the balloons in different ways to encourage more gross motor play. Try juggling the balloons, balancing on the tip of a finger, play balloon tennis or pass the balloon (no hands allowed!)