



Balloon Tennis

Educational Development

- **Fine and Gross Motor Skills**

Children will practice balance and bodily coordination as move about and balance the balloon on their homemade racquet. Children will enhance dexterity and strengthen their small hand muscles by using their fingers and thumbs as they hold and manipulate their racquet. Fine motor skills help children perform tasks such as writing with a pencil, buttoning their clothes, tying their shoes, and much more!

- **Hand-Eye Coordination**

Children will strengthen their visual processing skills as they utilize coordinated control of their eyes and hand to balance and bounce the balloon up, down, and across the “net”. Hand-eye coordination is foundational for activities such as writing, tying shoes, feeding oneself, and more!

Materials:

- Paper plate
- Spoon
- Balloon
- Masking tape
- Markers
- Disinfecting wipe

Instructions:

1. Prompt your child to use markers to decorate your plate!
2. Use tape to secure a spoon to the backside of the plate.
3. Blow up a balloon and tie it securely.

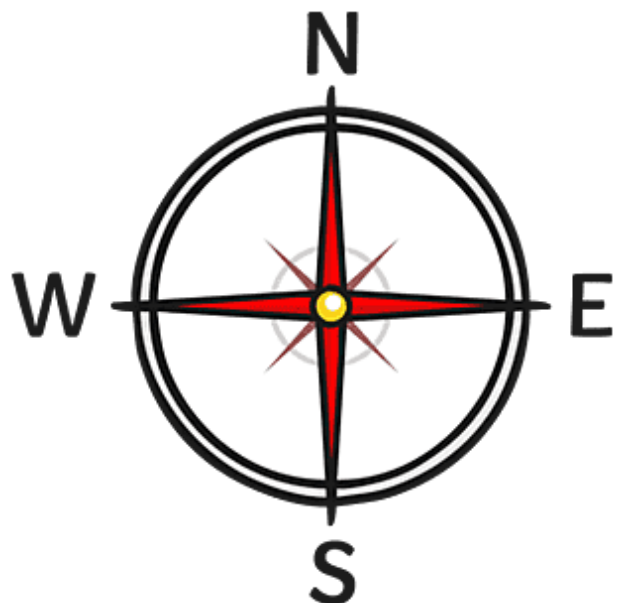




4. If a non-parent blows up the balloon, sanitize the mouthpiece with a disinfecting wipe and cover it with tape.
5. Tape a line down the middle of your play area and prompt your child to imagine there is a net there.
6. Show the child how they can use their paper racquet to bounce the balloon up and down. Ask them to do the same.
7. As they are bouncing, ask and discuss which **direction** the balloon is traveling.

“What do you think will happen to the balloon if you toss the paper plate upwards? Is it going up or down? Upwards, right! Oh, it’s floating down! Is it floating down to the left or the right?”

8. If weather permits, practice bouncing the balloon outdoors and use the sun to determine if the balloon is falling North, South, East, West, or a combination of two.
9. Give directions instructions such as left or right. Use the compass on your phone to tell the child if they are traveling North, South, East, or West.
10. Give a short lesson about how to determine their direction at any given time!
 - a. The sun, moon, and all planets rise in the East and set in the West. If you face the sun before noon (or lunch) you are facing East. If you face the sun after noon (lunch), you are facing West.
 - b. If I am facing East, where is North, to the left or right? South?





c. If I am facing West, where is North, to the left or right? South?

11. Next, ask the child to practice **counting** how many times they can bounce the balloon before it falls to the ground. Ask them to identify a similar number of objects in their environment.

Let's count how many times the balloon flies before falling. Ready, let's go! 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Wow, you bounced it 5 times! Can you find something around us that has a quantity of 5? Let's explore and count! 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 **chairs**! 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 **pillows**! 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 **oranges**!"

12. Prompt them to practice **patience** as they count how many times you can bounce the balloon.
13. Challenge the child to walk holding the balloon on their racquet without dropping it.
14. For an additional challenge, combine this activity with the **Tightrope Walking activity** and prompt the child to walk the tightrope without dropping the balloon!