

## Balloon Loft

**Equipment:** 3-5 good quality large (12") latex balloons for every group of 8 to 10 people.

**Procedure:** Get participants into groups of about 8 to 10 people per group. People can count off by how many years they've been in camping or some other fun way, like handing out card with stickers of animals or other kid friendly symbols.

**Directions:** Each group forms their own circle holding hands. *It is important that during the exercise people always hold hands—never let go of the other person's hand!*

A balloon is lofted into the center of each circle. Each balloon represents a child in your program. The object is to keep that "balloon" happy by keeping it moving; but also keeping it safe by never letting it touch the ground. *If it touches the ground it needs to go to the Health Center or nurse!* You may keep the balloon aloft by using any part of your body—your elbow, foot, head, hand, etc. *You must never let go of your partners' hands!*

Add one balloon at a time into each group until you have 3 to 5 balloons in each group. Allow the laughter in the room to reach a peak, then halt the action and debrief.

**Debrief:** How many people "lost" a child in that one drifted away from the group?  
How many people had a child drift into their group from another group?  
How many groups "lost" a child because it hit the ground?  
How many groups simply brought their arms together and nestled the "kids" in the center? (How much "fun" would this be for the children?)

**Points:** 1) When we talk about "safety," we are talking about physical and emotional safety.  
2) We are the adults. We keep the safety in the program, not the children.  
3) We are always balancing fun with safety.  
4) Beware of the tendency for kids to get *over-stimulated*. It can lead to loss of safety.  
5) We are a community. Everything one person does affects everyone else (the "holding hands" part of the exercise. If you go in a certain direction, you take others with you!)

### Group Questions:

- 1) What are some things that others or I might do that would decrease trust and safety for children in our program?
- 2) What are some things that by *not* doing them would decrease trust and safety in our program?

### The "Talk"

This is a sacred place. We have been entrusted with the care of other people's children. What has this program done for you that makes you want to preserve it for future generations? What has some adult done for you that has helped you grow, feel more confident, taught you something that might inspire you to be that same person for a younger person?

*"...have you been Ditterized?"*

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