

# Balloon Keep-Up (Levels A-B)

STAY  
ACTIVE

To promote early coordination, social connection, and persistence through a simple balloon game that encourages movement, teamwork, and fun.



## Learning Intentions



### Gross Motor Exploration:

Students will explore using hands, arms, or other safe body parts to tap or push a balloon.

### Shared Participation:

Students will engage alongside peers in a simple, joyful shared task.

### Persistence and Enjoyment:

Students will practise trying again when the balloon falls and enjoy being part of a group activity.



## Success Criteria

Students attempt to touch or tap the balloon at least once with support.



Students participate in keeping the balloon in the air with peers and adults.

Students show positive engagement, smiling, vocalising, reaching, or looking toward the balloon.



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**Duration:** 5 minutes

## Objective

To promote early coordination, social connection, and persistence through a simple balloon game that encourages movement, teamwork, and fun.

## What You Need

1 balloon (slightly under-inflated for slower movement)  
Optional: multiple balloons for extension or paired games  
Optional: coloured balloons to support visual interest  
AAC devices with core words such as “go,” “up,” “balloon,” “my turn,” “more,” “finished,” “hit”

## Setup

1. Students sit or stand in a circle or semicircle.
2. Teacher demonstrates tapping the balloon gently:
3. “Tap... up!”
4. Adjust the balloon height for accessibility, lower for seated students, higher for standing groups.
5. Ensure AAC devices are reachable and set to action vocabulary.

## Gameplay

### 1. Start the Game

The teacher says, “Ready... go!” and gently tosses the balloon into the air. Adults model slow, gentle tapping to keep the balloon floating.

### 2. Keep It Up

Students take turns tapping the balloon (with adult support if needed):

- hand tap
- fist tap
- arm push
- head tap
- wheelchair tap

Any contact is success.

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## 3. Supported Counting

Each time the balloon is tapped, the teacher counts aloud:  
"One... two... three!"

Students may join by:

- vocalising
- tapping AAC numbers
- clapping
- pointing to number visuals

Counting is optional; focus on shared enjoyment.

## 4. Try Again

If the balloon drops:

- Reset calmly
- Celebrate effort ("Great try!")
- Toss it back up

This reinforces persistence in a positive, safe way.

## 5. Continue for 3 - 5 Rounds

Allow every student at least one turn to tap the balloon.

Keep the pace slow and supportive.

## Debrief / Reflection

Use simple visuals and gestures:

- "Point to what you liked: tapping... watching... laughing!"
- "Show me how the game made you feel." (happy, excited, calm visuals)
- "Do you want to play again?" (yes/no visuals)

Any attempt, gesture, eye gaze, sound, movement, AAC, is celebrated.

## Sensory-Seeking Learners Variation

### 1. Add Movement Input

- Bigger taps
- Body spin after each tap of the balloon
- Jump and tap (for ambulant students)
- Large side-to-side arm swings
- Chair rocking + upper body tap (seated)

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## 2. Use Sensory Balloons

Try:

- metallic balloons for shine
- textured balloons (fabric taped on)
- balloons with slow drift (under-inflated)

## 3. Regulate Between Turns

Offer sensory breaks:

- wall push
- weighted lap toy
- deep pressure squeeze
- wiggle break
- tapping a drum before hitting the balloon

## 4. Multi-Balloon Adventure

For students who benefit from high-motion play, add a second balloon with adult supervision.

Goal: keep any balloon up.

### AAC-Specific Supports

#### 1. Prepare AAC Vocabulary

Include:

- go
- up
- more
- hit/tap
- balloon
- my turn / your turn
- happy
- finished
- number buttons (optional)

#### 2. Aided Language Input

Teacher models:

"Balloon up."

"My turn."

"Your turn."

"More."

"Good tap!"

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### 3. Turn-Taking Support

Students can use AAC to indicate:

- “my turn”
- “more”
- “up”
- “go”

The teacher responds immediately to reinforce communication.

### 4. Balloon Counting Support

Students may use AAC to press:

- “one”
- “two”
- “more”

Or simply press “happy!” after a good tap.

### 5. AAC Reflection

Teacher models:

“I feel happy.”

“I like balloons.”

“More play.”

Students respond with any symbol, gesture, or sound.