Kai

This activity is based on a game from the Torres Strait where a number of players stood in a circle and sang the kai wed (ball song) as they hit a ball up in the air with the palm of their hands. The game was played using a thick, oval, deep red fruit from the kai tree, which was quite light when dry. Play with teams of 4 or more.

Playing the Game

What you need

• A suitable indoor or outdoor area.
• A small beach ball, soft sponge ball or balloons for each team.

What to do

• Players either stand or sit in a circle together on the floor.
• Using a volleyball-like hitting action, players must keep the ball or balloon off the ground.
• The ball is to be hit above head height for younger players and higher for more experienced players.

Team play

• Divide into teams of 4-8.
• Each team attempts to make as many hits as they can without dropping the ball, calling out a consecutive letter of the alphabet or number on each hit.
• The team starts from the letter ‘A’ again if players:
  – miss the ball and it hits the ground
  – hit the ball twice in succession
  – hit the ball back to the player who previously hit it to them
  – do not keep their hands open and flat when contacting the ball.
Use the TREE model to modify this game.

Try the modifications suggested below or devise your own.

### Teaching style
- Keep everyone involved by making sure that groups are not too large.
- Encourage players to cooperate with each other to keep the balloon or ball in play.

### Rules
- Allow younger players to pass and catch, with players attempting to return the ball as quickly as possible (‘hot potato’ action).
- With beginners, allow players to start again at the last letter they reached rather than returning to ‘A’.
- Allow 2 hits per player to keep the game flowing.
- One player stands in the middle of a circle and hits the ball to another player who in turn hits it back to the middle. If the ball hits the ground, the player in the middle is changed – aim to keep the player in the middle as long as possible.
- Introduce volleyball-type rules.

### Equipment
- Gradually move towards using faster-moving balls, eg: balloon, beach ball, sponge ball, lightweight volleyball.
- Introduce a barrier or net.

### Environment
- Begin to introduce a specific area in which to play. Mark this with cones or lines on the ground.
- Divide groups into equal teams who face each other.
- Introduce a barrier of some kind (just a line on the ground to begin with), then a net.
- Begin to introduce volleyball rules and play for points!

### Safety
- Choose an area away from walls and other obstructions.
- Ensure players are aware of other players and teams and signal their intent to enter another playing area.

### Questions
- What methods can players use to make sure that the balloon / ball stays in the air?
- How can players with different abilities be challenged?

### Other games to play
Kai can lead into playing
- Sitting volleyball
- Volley-all
- Crab games

### Integrity
Whatever modification is used, ensure that the integrity of the game is maintained. Games and activities should never be modified to the extent that they no longer resemble the original.