Dinosaur Train: Play Dino Ball YOUR Way

Learning Goal: Help students creatively solve problems and get exercise by inventing the rules for an imaginary game featured in Dinosaur Train, then playing it.

Related Episode: 109 "Armored Like an Ankylosaurus" and others


Grades: PreK-1

Materials

- 4 Sports cones (or something similar to serve as goal posts)
- Inflatable beach ball, foam ball, or balloons (anything soft, for safety)
- Large area to play this game (such as a field, or a gym)
- Dinosaur Train Field Guide
- Books about different kinds of dinosaurs (optional)

Procedures

1. Show students the video clip of from “Armored Like an Ankylosaurus” in which Hank and others play the game "Dino Ball." Ask: Do you think dinosaurs played this game in real life? Why or why not? Help students understand that while there were no people around during the time when the big dinosaurs lived, it is very unlikely that dinosaurs played ball games like people today do.

2. Explain that today they are going to all pretend they are dinosaurs, and invent their own version of Dino Ball. For safety, they will use a balloon as the “Dino Ball” rather than a heavy “gourd” like they do in the episode. Point out that every ball game has rules. To get the conversation started, you might ask students to talk about some of the rules of other popular ball games they know (soccer, kickball, dodge ball, and so on.)
3. Have each student use resources such as library books, the Internet or the Dinosaur Train Field Guide to select a type of dinosaur or pterosaur he or she'd like to be to play Dino Ball. A student might be a T. Rex like Buddy, with tiny arms, huge legs and a tail, or the student might be a Pteranodon like Tiny, Shiny and Don and have wings to "fly" around the Dino Ball field.

4. Have the students talk about how the animals they picked might hit the Dino Ball (beach ball etc.) If they pretended to be a dinosaur with a tail, for example, how could they use their arms to pretend they have a tail? By holding one hand near their bottom, they might pretend that it is a tail.

5. Set up two goals, using the sports cones. Explain that they will divide into two teams. The overall goal is for each team to work together to get the ball to the other side. The first team to earn 5 points wins. Help students figure out some additional rules to make the game interesting. Some suggestions:

   o What if the goalies on each team can only use their “tail” (arm behind them) to block the ball?

   o What if players have to clap their hands quickly three times before hitting the ball?

   o What if some of the players on each team can only hit the ball with their heads?

   o What if players can only talk with each other by “roaring”? How can they communicate – “pass the ball to me”?

   o What if you played the game with TWO balls (different colors), so that each team was trying to get its ball to the other side?

   o What if there’s time limit? For example, what if each team has only a minute to get their ball to the other side – then it switches to the other team.
Extensions

1. Use this activity to help students discuss the importance of good “sportsmanship.” Why is it important to treat all the players fairly? What can students do to make sure that everyone has fun, and that no one’s feelings are hurt? You might have each Dino Ball game end with players on each side shaking hands (or bumping tails!) and saying, “Good game!” with a smile.