

# Mother Earth Defenders – Three Ways to Play

## *Activity*

**Resource:** Play for All

**Division(s):** Primary Junior

**Location:** gymnasium, outdoor field, tarmac, large activity space

## What's It All About?

These versions of Mother Earth Defenders are quick to set up and require minimal equipment. They can be played in various locations and be customized for the number of participants and the available time. Participants learn about and practise applying offensive and defensive skills in a territory game. This activity reinforces the role of Protector traditionally found in First Nation, Métis, and Inuit cultures. Each version of the activity is designed for maximum participation and inclusion for everyone in a fun and welcoming environment. They are designed so that everyone feels valued and encouraged to participate to the best of their abilities.

## Considerations

- Select the version of the activity that best meets the interests and needs of participants who choose to take part in this intramural activity.
- Incorporate some or all of the variations listed in the “Variations” section while planning the activity. This will help to best meet the needs and interests of participants during play and maximize the fun, inclusion, and participation of everyone.
- To elevate participant voice and choice, periodically pause the activity and share the variations with participants. Ask them to determine how they would like to change the activity to maximize the fun,

inclusion, and meaningful participation for everyone. Encourage participants to add any variations of their own.

## Safety

- Visually inspect the equipment and activity area to identify and remove hazards. Check that the activity surface provides sufficient traction.
- Establish the boundaries for the designated playing area at a safe distance from walls and obstacles. Share the boundaries with participants.
- Review the safety rules and activity instructions with participants prior to the activity.
- Instruct participants to be aware of their surroundings, including the locations of other participants during play.

## Version 1: Mother Earth Defenders (triads or small group play)

### Equipment

- 1 hula hoop per group
- 1 object per group (e.g., bean bags, rubber chickens, balls)

### How to Play

- Divide participants into small groups (e.g., triads, groups of 4 – 6).
- Ask 1 participant in each group to volunteer to be designated as the “protector.”
- Have groups select an object that represents something that must be protected (e.g., water sources, culture, language, animals, children) and place it in the hoop.
- Group members try to touch the protected object while the protector tries to tag them.
- The protector stays outside of the hoop and may not go through the hoop or touch the protected object.
- If a participant touches the object, they move to another group and try to touch that group’s object.
- If a participant is tagged by the protector, they move to another group to try and touch their object.

- Alternate roles frequently so all participants have the opportunity to be the protector.
- After a period of play, provide participants with some or all of the variations. Ask them to decide how they might change the game to enhance the fun, inclusion, and participation for everyone. Encourage participants to add any variations of their own.

## Variations

- Have a tag free zone where participants cannot be tagged.
- Use a larger object (e.g., pylon, baseball base) in the centre of the hoop to make it harder to protect.
- Use a smaller object (e.g., bean bag, small ball) in the centre of the hoop to make it easier to protect.
- Add additional objects representing other resources that need protecting.
- Use ropes or floor markers to hold the object rather than a hoop.
- Use an implement (e.g., pool noodle) to tag other participants when acting as the protector.
- Have two or more protectors at each hoop.
- Use a smaller hoop.
- Have multiple objects in the hoop and challenge participants to remove the object instead of just touching it.

## Version 2: Protect and Collect (pairs or triad play)

### Equipment

- 1 hula hoop
- 3 easily manipulated objects (e.g., bean bags, rubber chickens, pool noodle pieces, or any objects that won't roll away) for every pair of participants

### How to Play

- Have participants select a partner or pair up participants. Provide each pair with a hula hoop and 3 objects. Scatter pairs around the playing area.

- Have pairs place their hoop on the ground in the designated playing area away from any wall or obstacles. This is their home base.
- Have pairs place their objects around the outside of their hoop, touching the edge of the hoop.
- Have partners decide who will be the protector and who will be the collector.
- Pairs start together at their hoop (home base).
- On a pre-determined signal, the collectors travel to other pairs' hoops and attempt to take an object without being tagged.
- If successful, they bring the object back to their hoop and add it to the outside of their hoop.
- If the collector is tagged trying to take an object, they must surrender the object and then try to take an object from another pair's home base.
- The protector remains at home base attempting to tag anyone who tries to take one of their objects. The protector must stay in their hoop or have one foot inside it at all times.
- After a period of play, provide participants with some or all of the variations. Ask them to decide how they might change the game to enhance participation, inclusion, and fun for everyone. Encourage participants to add any variations of their own.

## Variations

- Have 3 participants in one group with 2 being collectors and 1 assuming the role of protector.
- Partners take turns assuming the role of protector and collector (after a successful capture of a cone or after a pre-determined time).
- Protectors use pool noodles to tag. Offer a variety of lengths to choose from.
- Participants change the way they must move (e.g., walk, run, crab walk, gallop).
- Participants choose to play alone by assisting the other protectors or collectors.
- Have the protector keep both feet inside the hoop.

## Version 3: Clean Up Mother Earth (large group play)

### Equipment

- Cones, pylons, skipping ropes
- Hula hoops
- Pinnies; 1 per participant
- Various objects that can be safely carried (e.g., various sizes of balls, bean bags, footballs, rubber chickens, tennis balls, discs, relay batons)

### How to Play

- Divide participants into two groups. Identify groups with pinnies.
- Set up a large rectangle or square playing area with boundaries marked with cones or pylons. Divide the area into two with pylons or skipping ropes.
- Provide each group with 3 – 4 hula hoops and a set number of bean bags in each. Have groups place their hoops at the back of their side of the playing area or have groups decide where to place their hoops. Inform groups they can change the location of their hoops after each round of play.
- The game begins with each group on their half of the playing area.
- The goal of the game is for each group to get rid of all their objects by crossing over into the opposing group's side and putting their objects into one of the other group's hoops.
- If a participant is tagged while on the other group's side, they must return to their side, put their object back in their hoop, and choose a different object.
- Participants cannot be tagged on their own side.
- The team with the fewest number of objects in their hoops after a designated time wins the title of "Mother Earth Defender."
- After a period of play, provide participants with some or all of the variations. Ask them to decide how they might change the game to enhance participation, inclusion, and fun for everyone. Encourage participants to add any variations of their own.

## Variations

- Divide the playing area into quadrants and create four groups.
- Allow participants to choose their role in the game (e.g., taggers).
- Provide participants with pool noodles to tag. Offer a variety of lengths to choose from.
- Allow participants to underhand throw or roll objects into the hoop from a distance.
- Add additional hoops or objects to increase or decrease the challenge.