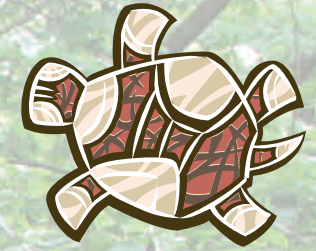


# HUMBER ARBORETUM ECO CENTRE

## FIRST NATIONS' GAMES



### INTERESTING FACTS

- ✦ Some of the games that were played by First Nations people were seasonal and were played only during the winter or the summer.
- ✦ Many of the First Nations people played similar games. Because these games often involved symbols they could be played by people who didn't speak the same language
- ✦ Some games were restricted to men, others to women, but a few were open to both men and women. For example Shiny (a form of hockey) was a women's game.
- ✦ Many of the games that we play today are based on traditional Native People's games including cat's cradle and other string games, team ball games, puzzles, games of chance, juggling, and tug of war.
- ✦ Lacrosse, Canada's national sport, was originally a First Nations' game. Many Native peoples believed that the game was a gift from the creator. The players were taught that playing the game taught people the lessons of courage, strength, honour, respect, generosity and fair play.



### COOL ACTIVITIES

- ✦ **Stick Catch:** The origin of this game is not known. This game can be played individually or with a partner. Pencils or sticks about the size of a pencil may be used. Starting with one stick, participants balance the stick across the back of their hand. They must then drop their hand away and quickly try to catch the stick with that same hand before it falls to the ground. As each player successfully catches the stick, the number of sticks balanced on the back of the hand is increased. Players must catch all of the sticks successfully each time before increasing the number of sticks.
- ✦ **Pina:** This game originated with the "Nootka Indians." It was originally played by stripping branches from a fern frond. Instead of hurting ferns it can be played with a circle of people. One player takes a deep breath and walks around the circle. They tap each person on the head and say "Pina" as they pass. The object is to get back to their place in the circle before taking another breath.

### REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Why did First Nation's people play games? (ANS: Games helped them to develop skills, build strength, build camaraderie, and to learn customs and culture)
2. What did First Nation's children learn from preparing for and playing the Corn Dart game? (ANS: Constructing the Corn Darts taught skills like the importance of proper construction, patience and aerodynamics. This would help in the building of arrows, hunting tools, and buildings when they grew older. Playing the game taught patience, aim, judging distance, hand-eye coordination, and personal strength. These skills would be used by adults in hunting and battle.)
3. What did playing Little Rocks games teach First Nations people? (ANS: Playing Little Rocks helped to develop counting, mathematical and pattern recognition skills. Playing may also have enhanced players social skills, sense of fair play, and helped to develop camaraderie).

