Haulin’ Pollen

This game simulates bees gathering pollen and bringing it back to the hive.

Materials:
2 Hive boxes
100-150 ping-pong balls
Velcro dots - hook side only (enough for 4-6 dots per ping pong ball)
Velcro strapping - at least 16 pieces
8 rectangular pieces of felt (approx 6 inches by 9 inches)
Timer
Velcro squares (optional)
Bug antennae and/or bee costume (optional)
Paint for grass (optional)

Set-Up:
1. Affix 4-6 Velcro hook dots to each ping-pong ball. Check out http://www.buyhookandloop.com/index.asp to buy just the hook dots in larger quantities.
2. Each piece of felt will be made into a leg strap that wraps around a child’s ankle. Attach 2 strips of Velcro (either the hook or loop side) to one end of the felt. Attach the other part of the Velcro strips to the other end of the felt. When complete, the piece of felt should be able to wrap around an ankle and fasten with the Velcro to hold it in place. This becomes each child’s “pollen basket.” If you want, you can attach Velcro squares/rectangles (loop side only) to the felt. The balls should stick to the felt without it though.
3. In a large space, set out the 2 hive boxes at one end. This will be the starting and ending point.
4. Scatter the ping-pong balls in the remaining open areas. We painted 10 large circles on the grass to represent flowers and put groups of ping-pong balls in each one. Some of the “flowers” were close and some were far away.
**Playing the Game:**

1. Have 3-4 children on “Hive A Team” and another 3-4 children on “Hive B Team.” Allow them to wear bug antennae or bee costumes if you wish.

2. Explain how bees carry pollen on branched hairs on their lower legs. When there is a lot of pollen on the bees, it looks like they have “baskets of pollen” on their legs. Have each child put a felt leg strap on one leg. Tell them how long they have to bring pollen back to the hive. When time is called, the hive with the most pollen wins.

3. Send children out to collect pollen from the flowers. They must stick the ping-pong balls to the piece of felt to bring them back to the hive. If a pollen ball falls off, they must “restick” it to the felt or leave it on the ground. They cannot carry the balls of pollen in any other way. After they remove the pollen balls from their leg and deposit them into the hive box, children may return to the flowers to collect more pollen until time is called. The hive with the most pollen wins.

4. Return the ping-pong balls to the flowers. Repeat all steps until everyone has had a turn.