



# Ball Skills

## Preparation

- Ⓢ Make sure the child has the energy and motivation to practice.
- Ⓢ Warm up exercises prior to activities.
- Ⓢ Make sure they feel the ball to get an idea of its weight and size before playing any ball games.
- Ⓢ Make sure they understand the distance they are throwing or kicking the ball to, by making them walk the journey the ball is intending to travel.
- Ⓢ Practice pivoting on one foot, moving left and right.
- Ⓢ Make sure the child is standing square onto the direction of the ball.
- Ⓢ The child should maintain a good posture with head upright, back straight, feet hip distance apart, with relaxed knees and arms.
- Ⓢ Encourage the child to watch the ball. Allow your child to watch others playing ball so they can practice tracking the ball. Also get them to think about how children change their posture and how they prepare their arms and legs for the activity.
- Ⓢ Encourage the child to prepare their hands ready to catch – hand over hand positioning may help with this.
- Ⓢ Practice bending knees and clapping to a beat, use music or counting numbers where helpful.
- Ⓢ If practising kicking, make sure the child can balance on one leg. **See Balance Advice sheet.**



# Activities

- Over–Under game – stand in a circle and pass a ball to each other, alternating over the head / under the legs.
- Rolling a ball up and over the body, keeping it in contact with the body at all times
- Start by lying on tummy, sitting or half kneeling on the floor and rolling a big ball to knock over skittles. As the child gets better at this activity, encourage the child to gradually use smaller balls and move to kneeling and then standing.
- Throwing at a fixed target (at eye level) or throwing a bean bag into a hoop– start close and gradually move further away. Initially use a big ball and then choose smaller and smaller balls. Start with a big target or hoop and make it increasingly smaller.



- Balloon games –batting with right and left hand. Start by doing this from a stationary position such as sitting on an exercise ball or chair and have a person throw it to them. As they get better, call out left and right so the child can use the requested hand to bat it back. Then do the same activity in half kneeling and standing and then let the child play ‘keep it up’, trying not to let the balloon hit the floor.



- In practicing throwing and catching start with a soft toy such as a teddy and throw the toy to the child’s chest level, gently from one metre and as the child gets better, move further away and use a big soft ball and gradually choose smaller soft balls, until the child can catch a football or tennis ball from a distance of two metres.

- From a distance of two metres, using a soft football, bounce the ball to a partner or wall and step to catch it on the rebound.

- Kicking a ball towards a goal (mark out a big goal and make it smaller as the child improves)

- Velcro glove and ball games or Velcro target games.

- In a circle play throwing and catching from person to person. Throw it to the next person going in one direction then change. Then throw to a person whose name you call out, and be prepared to catch when you hear your name. Hot potatoes game.

- Games where the ball is attached to base such as swingball should only be attempted as the child has achieved all other activities listed successfully.

- Playing basketball, netball, football, tennis, badminton...



# Practice

- Talk through the correct body position, giving verbal prompts.
- Give praise throughout.
- Always try to throw and catch using both hands evenly.
- Try to encourage throwing from the chest rather than underarm.
- Physical hand over hand help when throwing will help the child learn what the movement should feel like.
- Encourage the child to use the inside of their foot when kicking the ball rather than their toes.
- Where helpful practice throwing and catching to a beat (either musical beat or by counting to a beat)



# Adjustments



- Ⓢ Practise in a static supported position such as sitting, then progress to standing and moving with the ball.
- Ⓢ Start with rolling a ball back and forth, then progress to bouncing back and forth, then finally to throwing/ kicking back and forth.
- Ⓢ Start close and gradually increase the distance.
- Ⓢ Start with using large, slow moving balls, and progress to smaller, fast moving balls.  
E.g. a balloon, bean bag, football, and finally a tennis ball.

