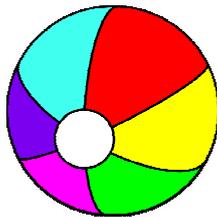




### Ball skills

Many children with coordination difficulties have difficulty with ball skills. This is because ball skills tasks involve using many different skills at the same time such as: co-ordination, bilateral integration, body awareness, movement planning and the ability to anticipate and respond to a moving object.



#### Hints and tips for developing ball skills:

- Try practicing with slower moving balls/objects such as balloons, foam balls, scarves, beach balls, wool pom-poms, larger balls, small bean bags etc.
- Begin with the child rolling the ball to a partner or rolling the ball to knock down skittles or empty plastic soft drink bottles. You can make 'tracks' to roll the ball between with broomsticks.
- Sitting with legs astride, ask the child to hold the ball near the ground in both hands. Ask them to open their hands to drop the ball then try to catch when it bounces up. You can then ask them to try this in high kneeling and standing.
- Ask the child to stand with their feet apart and pass a ball in a figure of eight round their legs – first in one direction then the other.
- Try to throw a ball against a wall, let it bounce then try to catch it. If this becomes too easy, try to clap between throwing and catching the ball

#### The following games can be played to develop ball skills:

##### Rolling eggs (Catch)

- Use a long table or create an inclined surface (e.g. cardboard leaned against the edge of the sofa).
- Roll pretend "eggs" (e.g. balls) to the child and encourage him/her to catch them using bare hands or a box/basket before they go off the table or slope.
- Start with slowly rolling down one 'egg' at a time.
- Once achieved, roll the 'eggs' in quicker succession.
- Vary activity by rolling down several different coloured "eggs" and get the child to catch only the called out colour (e.g. all the red "eggs").

##### Hot potato! (Throw & catch)

Throw the "hot potato" (e.g. balloon, ball, bean bag, screwed-up newspaper ball) in the air and catch it to your child's favorite music.

Try different styles of catching:

1. From one hand to the other
2. One-handed catch
3. Alternate with both right and left
4. Two-handed catch
5. Using a ball racquet
- 6.

Once achieved, a clap can be added into the routine before catching the "hot potato".

### Catch it (Bounce & catch)

Start with asking the child to open his/her hands to drop the ball then try to catch it. They can count

aloud the number of times they can catch.

- Using a bouncy ball like a basketball, gym ball or tennis ball makes it easier.
- Once achieved: Ask him/her to throw harder onto the floor before catching it.
- Allow a bounce before the catch.
- Add in a clap before the catch.
- Vary the activity by bouncing the ball to a partner who will try to catch it either with bare hands or

with an object (e.g. a container, a hoop with a bag sewn onto it etc.).

### Strategies for upgrade when your child finds the activity easy:

- Gradually move yourself or the target further away from the child.
- Use a smaller ball.
- Encourage him/her to use one-handed catch/throw for increased accuracy instead of power.
- Allow your child to decide which side of the body they prefer to use.
- Make the target smaller.
- Make the target a moving one.
- Change the timing (e.g. faster, random, unpredictable).
- Increase the organisation or action steps required (e.g. add in extra activity step/s, include additional targets).

### Strategies for downgrade when your child finds the activity too difficult:

- Get his/her attention first to let them know the ball is coming towards them.
- Stand closer or move the target nearer to the child.
- Use a bigger ball/object.
- Encourage him/her to use both hands.
- Introduce a container (e.g. box, basket) as an alternative to catching with bare hands
- Stand behind him/her to give hand-over-hand assistance of the hand position during the activity
- Use a heavier and/or different textured object as an alternative (e.g. a cushion, stuff -toys, beanie toys, bean bag, foam cubes, textured balls).
- Use a bigger stationary target.
- Adopt a slower and/or predictable timing to allow the child to make the necessary adjustments to their position and time to follow the ball.
- Use a variety of slow-moving balls/objects (e.g. balloons, beach balls, wool pom-poms, foam balls, scarves, feathers, tissues).
- Decrease the organisation required (e.g. make the activity simpler; reduce the activity steps involved)
- Change the activity from standing-up to sitting-down (e.g. cross-sitting on the ground)

