



Explaining - Ball Skills

This information sheet aims to help you and your child to learn about ball skills.

Throwing and catching

Can be a complex skill to overcome. We do so by breaking the skill down bit by bit to enable your child to achieve success.

- Start off using a bean bag or larger/softer ball (for catching). Balloons travel slowly so are good to start.
- Have your child stand still and throw the ball or bean bag into the air and catch it. Once this skill has been developed, the height at which the ball or bean bag can be thrown can be increased. Develop this further by experimenting with different types of balls.

NB: Start off with this before progressing onto throwing and catching between your child and yourself or another.

Working together

- Bounce a large ball on the floor and catch it. Once this is achieved progress onto a smaller ball.
- Progress further by bouncing the ball on the ground whilst walking.
- To practise overarm, underarm and chest passes, use a large target to aim for and give physical and verbal prompts to ensure a good position. Carry out the bounce and catch method first to allow the thrower of the ball and the catcher more time to plan their position in relation to catching the ball.
- Progress onto a smaller ball, and increase the distance between partners. Progress onto throwing without a bounce – try with a bean bag or soft ball first. A beach ball is often useful as it travels slowly.

NB: Start with underarm throwing, and progress onto a chest pass and overarm throwing.

'Hitting' the ball

- Start by hitting a stationary ball. A 'T' stand like a large golf tee will help eye/hand co-ordination. Start with your child hitting the ball with their hand (using a soft/foam ball) before introducing a bat or racquet.
- Progress to a large surface area bat/racquet, then try different types of bats/racquets.
- Travelling ball: start by throwing the ball from a short distance, slowly increase the distance. Have a target to aim for when hitting the ball
- Give verbal and physical prompts to help with positioning.
- If a bowler is throwing a ball to the child, allow the ball to bounce before it is hit to help the child with timing.

Kicking the ball

- A ball can be kicked with the front of the foot, known as 'laces', or the side/instep of the foot. Kicking the ball with the instep allows close control. Kicking with the laces allows the ball to travel further.
- Start with a soft ball and kick from a stationary position. Have a large target/goal to aim for to work on eye/foot coordination.
- Progress onto a harder ball and increase the distance to aim at.
- Progress further to dribbling with the ball walking slowly and carrying out little 'touches' to the ball then progress to kicking a travelling ball.
- Passing skills and stopping the ball with the foot is a more advanced skill to work on, as is judging and applying force, altering distances between partners may help to judge force.

Additional skills to practise

- Running and weaving in/out of cones.
- Running in a straight line, and side to side.
- Relay races help with speed and teamwork