



## Ball Skills

There are many different ways to grade ball catching to make sure it is at the level appropriate to your child. Being able to catch a ball should make your child feel he/she has achieved something so it is important to get the level of challenge 'just right'.

There are four variables you can grade in ball catching are:

- Position
- Size of ball
- Distance
- Speed

### Position

- The most stable position is sitting on the floor
- This is followed by kneeling, sitting on a stool or chair and then standing
- Finally encourage your child to stand on an uneven or wobbly surface.

### Size of ball

- If your child has very poor ball catching skills then start with a balloon as these move through space more slowly and will give him/her more time to prepare for catching.
- Then try a large soft ball and gradually reduce the size of the ball.
- You can also try i.e. a bean bag or a 'koosh'-ball as these are easier to catch than a small ball.

### Distance

- Start with a short distance (e.g. 1 meter) between you and your child and gradually increase the distance once he/she can catch a ball at that distance.
- Always encourage your child to look at you before you throw a ball.
- Encourage him/her to bring arms out and position them at the appropriate distance from each other depending on the ball's size.

### Speed

- Throwing slowly will allow more time for your child to organise themselves and prepare to catch the ball

### For example:

- A child who has very poor ball skills might benefit from:
  - Sitting on the floor
  - Using a balloon
  - Having a very short distance between you
- In contrast a child who is more skilled at catching a ball might need the challenge of:
  - Standing on a wobble board or on one leg while catching and throwing a ball
  - Catching a tennis ball
  - Catching over a much longer distance
- Other variations of ball skills could include:
  - Throwing a ball up in the air and catching
  - Rolling a ball at a target or between two people
  - Bouncing and catching a ball in one hand
  - Clapping before catching a ball
  - Throwing a ball into a container i.e. large cardboard box
  - Throwing a ball at a target i.e. basketball net or to knock down skittles
  - Walking on knees and kicking the ball