

Advice sheet

Ball Skills

A child typically learns to kick or throw a ball at 18 months to 24 months although others may develop this skill later. When teaching ball skills it is important to start at a level that the child can achieve and then slowly increase the level of difficulty, so that the child is challenged.



How can I help?

You can help your child develop their ball skills by providing them with a selection of different textured/coloured/sized balls to play with. Large balls are easier for beginners to throw and catch and a child will often develop confidence and ability with regular practice. It is often more enjoyable for a child to practise ball skills with a partner so spending active time together practising key skills such as catching/throwing/kicking is really helpful way to encourage your child.



Games to play

These activities have been selected as they are easy to do at home or in the garden or in local parks. They should be fun to practise with your child and require little preparation. They can

be carried out in any order and should ideally be practiced about three times a week for 10-15 minutes.

- Throw a ball at a target. Begin with 1.5m distance and increase as child achieves. The target could be an empty waste paper bin or a coloured bath mat.
- Roll a ball through a goal. You can make goals by using dining/garden chairs placed at opposing sides. Begin at 1.5m distance and increase distance as child achieves. Goal mouth should measure 75cm
- Throw a ball/bean bag at a target on a wall. A brightly coloured piece of paper stuck on the wall makes an attractive target. The target should be same height as the top of child's head. Begin with 1.5m distance and increase as child achieves.
- Child throws and catches with a partner. Child uses two hands working towards one handed throw and catch. Begin close enough for child to achieve. Increase distance when this becomes easy for your child. You can also make this harder by decreasing the size of the ball.
- Child bounces and catches large ball with two hands. Once achieved work towards using smaller ball and bouncing and catching with one hand.
- Child bounces ball between self and partner. Increase distance and decrease size of ball as child achieves.
- Child kicks a ball between self and partner. Decrease size of ball and increase distance as child achieves.

