

## A6 – Ball skills

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Ball skills are a combination of many different elements such as:

- **Timing:** to predict where and when the ball will land
- **Tracking:** with the eyes as the ball moves through the air
- ability **to use two hands together** in a coordinated way
- ability to judge **distance, speed and direction**
- making **postural adjustments** to be in the right place at the right time
- ability to **grasp and release** at the right moment
- ability to **grade movements** smoothly

### Equipment

Use large balls such as blow-up balls (Gummi Balls), balloons, Velcro ball with paddle to catch, screwed up paper, beanbags, square chiffon scarves, cushions, etc. Use balloons that move slower in the air so that the child has a better chance of hitting or catching it.

**For emerging visual tracking and attention skill** you may need to address this by blowing bubbles for the child to pop with index finger, then elbow, knee, then pointed toe.

Blow a small number of bubbles up in the air and encourage the child to watch them float down, then clap hands together to pop them.

### Activities

Introduce the activities at a graded level, within the child's individual level of tolerance and achievement, to help the child to develop skills.

- Rolling a ball between you as you sit on the ground and progress to sit in a group circle
- Rolling a ball towards a target, goal, hoop and add complexity with colour coordination to throw the yellow ball into the yellow bin, red beanbag into red hoop, etc.
- Make skittles with plastic bottles partly filled with sand, water and glitter. Roll a ball to knock them over or throw small stuffed toys.
- Aim a ball at a moving object (a wind-up toy) and encourage visual attention to track the target
- Place a ball in a stocking to swing & catch or make a suspended ball out of an old pair of tights with a ball in the end. Suspend this at eye level and swing it from one person to another. Hit it with a cling film tube held horizontally held in both hands. Try taking turns.
- Roll the ball to chase and stop it
- Stand at either end of a table to roll the ball along the table, catching it as it falls off the end.
- Hit a balloon back & forth with flat hands or keep a balloon in the air using hands
- Use scrunched up paper and a receptacle such as a box or wastepaper bin. Aim paper balls into it. Vary the distance of the receptacle and the height at which it is placed. Make sure the child can succeed.

- Place a large circle target of bright coloured paper or card stuck to a wall at eye level. Throw balls, cushions, beanbags or scrunched up paper at it.

### **Kicking Games**

Encourage the child to kick the ball as far as they can. Kick the ball to a friend or between goal posts.

**Frequency of use:** Complete 10-15 minutes sessions every day or at least three times a week.

**Monitor the child's level of response** (interest and motivation) in the task and adjust accordingly (to simplify or increase) to obtain a level of challenge by reducing the size of the target or increasing the distances.