

Simple, fun ways to get young children active each day!

Ideas to encourage catching, throwing and kicking skills:

- Have a variety of balls available for children to explore and utilise in various ways. Use different sizes, shapes, textures and weights - such as foam, rubber, tennis, plastic balls, etc. Balls can also be made from wool or scrunched paper. Play simple passing, throwing, catching and kicking games.
- Small, light scarves can be thrown up into the air and caught using hands or other parts of the body. Alternatively, throw balloons up and catch them. See how long children can keep a balloon in the air before it touches the ground!
- Use a soft ball tied safely in the end of a stocking somewhere with enough space for children to practice hitting the ball with their hands or with a soft bat.
- Quoits are great for aim and direction throwing.
- Practice target kicking by setting up a soccer goal net or witches hats.
- Attach targets to walls outside or draw targets with chalk that children can throw a ball against.
- Use plastic containers of various sizes as targets for children to practice underarm or overarm throwing using a soft ball. Try varying the distances!
- Provide a variety of bats – plastic, rolled newspaper and foam (foam bats can be made from a pool noodle cut in half) for children to practice hitting.
- Lawn bowls can be played by using several balls of similar size and a larger ball as a target (or an empty 2 litre plastic milk container half filled with sand). Place a marker (chalk or masking tape) on the ground to mark the spot where players must roll the balls from and place the target a distance away. Each player rolls a ball using underarm movement in an attempt to get as close as possible to the target.
- Skittles can be played using plastic bowling pins or recycled 2 litre plastic milk containers half-filled with sand as targets. Roll the ball underarm to see how many skittles can be knocked over.
- Scoops or catching devices for balls can be made from household items such as recycled plastic milk containers cut in half.



Ideas to encourage balance skills:

- Big wooden blocks can be used for stepping and balancing on or jumping off, as they are low to the ground.
- Simple yoga or tai chi exercises can encourage children to balance in a variety of ways.
- Hoops and carpet squares can be used with challenges. Ask children to balance with half their body inside the object and half outside.
- String, tape, chalk lines or rope can be used as a line for children to practice walking along. Try placing them on the ground in different patterns.



Ideas to encourage jumping, leaping and hopping skills:

- Mark out some squares or a 'Hopscotch' game with chalk or masking tape to encourage practice of hopping, jumping and throwing skills.
- Hoops, carpet squares and foam square 'puzzle' mats are great for children to spread out and create 'stepping stone' paths for jumping, hopping and leaping on and off.
- A trampoline is great fun for jumping – ensure safety.
- Place streamers up high to encourage children to jump up and touch or grab.
- Two skipping ropes set apart on the ground can be used for distance jumping and leaping over – slowly increase the gap size.
- Mark out a set distance with a tape measure, chalk or masking tape. Challenge children by asking, 'How far can you jump horizontally?' or 'How high can you jump vertically?' Children can dramatise the movements of animals such as leaping like a lion, jumping like a frog or crawling like a crab.
- Bubble blowing can be used to encourage children to jump and catch them.



Further ideas to encourage children to get active each day:

- A digging patch allows children to use equipment such as child-sized shovels and rakes, buckets and wheelbarrows - increasing their strength and coordination.
- Big wooden children's blocks or cardboard boxes encourage building. Lifting and carrying these blocks and boxes is great work for children's muscles and joints.
- Grassed areas allow for running, rolling, crawling or ball games. Sloped areas are great for rolling or running up and down.
- Children love physically active games such as musical chairs, limbo, 'Simon Says', elastics and 'What's the time Mr Wolf'.
- Encourage movement through the use of music – for example, action songs, circle games, moving to musical instruments, dancing to jazz, classical, rap, and/or popular children's songs.
- Play energising music which will encourage children to get up and get moving and grooving.
- Play rhythmical partner games such as 'See-saw Marjorie Daw' or 'Row, row, row your boat'.
- Play charades – construct movement charade cards with the children.
- Use props such as scarves, streamers or ribbons to encourage children's movement.
- Parachute play (a bed sheet or large piece of material can substitute for a parachute) can be used to encourage children to use different travelling actions as they pass under and around the parachute (eg crawl, walk, hop, gallop, tiptoe).
- Kite flying is lots of fun. Encourage children to experiment by walking, then running with their kites.
- Streamers can be used for partner games like trying to catch the partner's streamer.
- Play games such as 'I can see . . ., what can you see?' - eg, 'I can see a plane flying high and low', 'I can see a tree swaying in the breeze', 'I can see a little boat on big waves'. The children perform the movement the adult calls out. The children can also take turns calling out 'I can see .. .'
- Play mirroring games where children mirror the movement made by an adult, or by their partner.
- Provide dramatic play props that encourage active play - such as hobby horses for galloping and cardboard boxes that children can use as cars.
- Involve children in active gardening experiences – eg, digging, planting, watering.

Please note: this list is not exhaustive, but rather provides suggestions to further encourage children to be physically active in their daily environment.