



Physical Strategies

3. Demonstrates gross motor skills

- Provide various, kid-friendly equipment for the child to use. Include a variety of shapes, sizes, textures, and weights to encourage experimentation and active participation.
- Assist in adjusting a child's position in space in relation to other objects, as needed. Some children need particular guidance about how to notice and move around other people and objects. Teach the safe use of each piece of equipment.
- Provide balls of various sizes, textures, and grips to explore. Include balls with chimes, bells, and visible items rolling inside.
- Provide opportunities for the child to practice releasing balls into targets such as large baskets, buckets, or a small basketball hoop.
- Use scarves or balloons to practice catching. These items are easier to catch than balls because they move slowly and give children time to position themselves for a catch.
- Provide lightweight clubs or mallets and balls of various sizes for children to practice hitting along the ground.
- Provide equipment that is appropriate in scale. Children like to throw and catch large rubber or beach balls. Smaller, softer balls are good for kicking. Also provide yarn balls or beanbags for catching or for throwing against a wall with varying force. Use short-handled, plastic or foam paddles or bats for striking.
- Hang paper balls for the child to hit without having to retrieve them.
- Use specific cues to help the child increase proficiency, e.g., "Look at the target before you throw". Use consistent terminology to avoid confusion.
- Provide the child with plastic cups and tennis or foam balls to practice throwing and catching skills. Increase difficulty by having the child throw and catch while sitting, standing, crouching, or walking.
- Set up large targets on an outside wall at various levels of height. Provide foam balls. Encourage the child to attempt to strike at target by kicking balls toward the wall.
- Provide a variety of balls for the child in a large outdoor area. Encourage the child to practice kicking a ball along the ground and through the air, challenging him/herself to kick farther each time.
- Set up stations in a large outdoor area where the child is asked to kick a ball back and forth with a partner. Observe the child as you remind them of the cues for kicking, e.g., contact the ball with the top of your foot, not your toes; contact the ball directly behind the center; focus on the ball, not your partner, until the ball leaves your foot.
- Set up cones in a large outdoor area. Ask the child to tap or dribble a ball around the cones, increasing and decreasing their speed and moving the ball in different directions, as appropriate.
- Provide a wide open space and a variety of different sizes and weights of balls. Ask the child to punt (drop kick) balls for distance, height, and accuracy. Children who have difficulty with punting can benefit from practicing with a balloon. This helps them understand the concept of dropping, rather than tossing, the object to be punted.
- Encourage the child to strike a beach ball at a wall, allow the ball to bounce once on the ground, and then catch the ball. Repeat the "strike, bounce, catch" sequence several times.
- Place a number of plastic balls on cones spaced apart in a large outdoor area. Ask the child to alternate using forehand and backhand motions as he/she strikes balls off cones with a racket.
- Play a dribbling tag game. Invite the child to dribble a ball throughout the movement space. Encourage the child to try to tag other players with a free hand while continuing to dribble the ball.