Play

Developing gross motor skills

Physical games

Playing physical games gives children opportunities to develop confidence in managing movement challenges such as balancing, climbing, crawling, bending or stretching.

Children explore new ways to move, and learn how to control these movements safely in various spaces around them, as they join in physical games. Here are some examples of physical games to play with your child.

Tag

**What you will need**
- A large space outdoors
- Two or more players

**What to do**
1. Choose one person to be ‘it’ and try to tag the other player/s.
2. The other player/s need to run away from the person who is ‘it’.
3. The person who is ‘it’ will try to tag the player/s, using their fingers gently.
4. The tagged player will then be ‘it’.

Follow the leader

**What you will need**
- A large space outdoors or indoors
- Obstacles such as chairs, tables, boxes, baskets and ropes

**What to do**
1. Set up the obstacles around the outdoor or indoor space.
2. Encourage your child to stand behind you and tell them to follow everything that you do.
3. Lead the way, following the obstacle course, walking over, under, around, between and through objects.
4. Move in different ways such as jump, hop, run, crawl, climb, sidestep, zigzag, walk and balance, as you lead the way.
5. Encourage your child to be the leader and you can follow them around the obstacle course.

Extension activity

Play ‘Follow the leader’ as a movement game with your child.

- Stand in front of your child and tell them to follow everything that you do.
- Move your body in different ways such as high, low, turn around, bend and stretch, and do actions with body parts.
- Encourage your child to be the leader and show you some movements to follow.
Physical play

Children develop their large movement skills, control, coordination and strength as they explore physical play.

Physical play includes running, climbing, balancing, jumping, hopping, skipping, kicking, throwing and catching. This type of play helps children to become confident in their movement skills, and to develop hand-eye and foot-eye coordination.

Suggestions to support physical play

There are many ways to encourage your child to develop their physical skills. Encourage your child to try a range of physical activities including:

- moving the body — in different ways, in different directions, move different body parts
- swings — leaning forwards and backwards, stretching legs, pushing legs out, swinging from ropes or bars using arms
- riding — bikes, scooters and other wheeled toys
- rope play — crawling under, walking on, skipping, jumping over a rope, while the rope is still or being moved
- balance and control — walk on edges of tyres, garden edges or a hose, step into middle of tyres or hoops, step over mat, brick or hose
- push, pull and lift — push a box or wheelbarrow forwards, pull self along a rope or pull self up on a pole, lift a bucket of sand or water.

Creating an obstacle course

You can create an obstacle course with your child using everyday items around your home.

- Use items such as chairs, tables, tyres, ropes, logs, rocks and boxes to set up obstacles for your child to explore moving around, over and through.
- Encourage your child to decide on the path to take around the obstacle course and actions that may be needed to pass certain areas.
- Follow your child through their obstacle course.

Staying safe

- Supervise your child during physical play.
- Check the obstacles are stable and safe to climb on.
- Talk with your child about rules and safe ways to move.

Basic ball skills

Ball skills help children develop body control and strength. By practising basic ball skills, children can develop hand-eye coordination, foot-eye coordination, and control of their larger muscles. Children also learn to track objects as they move, and judge distance when they roll, throw, hit and kick balls of various sizes.

Activities to help your child develop ball skills

Roll a ball

- Roll a ball in a straight line to hit a target. Move a little further away after each turn.
- Roll a ball to knock down homemade skittles (e.g. plastic bottles filled with dirt, sand or water).

Throw and catch a ball

- Throw a ball at a target on a wall or fence.
- Throw a ball into a target on the ground (e.g. a basket, box or hoop).
- Bounce a ball on the ground with two hands and catch it.
- Throw a ball in the air and catch it as it comes back down.
- Throw and catch a ball with a partner.

Hit a ball

- Hit a large ball with a rolled newspaper to strike a target (e.g. a tree or a fence).
- Hit a small ball, hanging in old pantihose, with a hand, bat or racquet.

Kick a ball

- Kick a ball at a wall and stop it with a hand or a foot as it bounces back.
- Kick a ball or balloon that is hanging just above the ground (e.g. hang the ball, from a string or in an old pair of pantihose, from the clothes line or a tree branch).
- Kick a ball along between two rope lines.

It may be easier for your child to develop basic ball skills while using a beanbag. You can make a beanbag ball by filling an old sock with rice or dried beans. When your child is able to catch a beanbag, use larger balls and then move on to smaller balls.

For further information, visit www.qld.gov.au/kindy

Disclaimer: the information in this resource sheet is offered as a guide only, and should not be treated as an exhaustive statement on the subject.