

Basic Catching Activities

Catching is the third step in basic ball handling skills, and it is usually the last of these skills to be mastered, sometime after 2 years of age. Teaching your child to catch is an activity which should be approached cautiously - if he or she isn't ready and gets hit with the ball, it will knock his or her confidence and you may have difficulty convincing them to try again.

Foster and Hartigan suggest the following tips for teaching your child to catch successfully:

- Let your child hug the ball close to his/her body. This hug forms the basis of the catch.
- Once he or she enjoys hugging the ball close to his or her body, he or she will begin to actively seek the ball and time his or her hands to trap the ball against his/her chest. You can help by guiding the ball to his/her tummy in slow motion, encouraging him or her to trap it in a tummy hug.
- Again using slow motion, guide the ball into your toddlers hands for a two-handed catch.
- Bounce the ball and encourage him or her to chase it and catch it "on the bounce".
- Bounce the ball so that it arrives level with his/her navel. Don't expect him/her to catch it first go, but when he/she does, give plenty of praise.
- Throw the ball to, or below, his tummy level.



Beanbag Challenges

- Throw a beanbag in the air, turn around, and catch it again.
- Throw the beanbag up and backwards over your head and try to catch it behind your back.
- Throw the beanbag in the air, clap your hands once, and catch it. Now try clapping your hands twice, then three times, and so on. How high can you go?
- Throw the beanbag in the air and clap your hands under your right leg before catching it. Now try with your left leg. Now clap behind your back. Invent some more challenges.
- Throw the beanbag up, jump, and try to catch it. Jump twice. Jump three times!
- Throw it up, kneel down and try to catch it.
- Throw and catch with just your right hand, then with just your left.
- Try throwing it up and catching it with your eyes closed!
- Balance the beanbag on your right foot, then throw it up and catch it from there. Can you do it with your left foot too?
- Can you throw the beanbag up and catch it on your left foot?

Scarves

- Screwing scarf up and making it into a small ball in hands (great for hand movement). On the count of 3 get children to throw the scarf up into the air and catch it. Repeat this, getting children to screw their scarf up each time.
- Throw a scarf with a bean bag in the middle of it up into the air try and catch both the scarf and bean bag as they will fall at different rates.
- Random scarf catching in locomotion – In pairs, ask one child to move away from the other and randomly throw the scarf in any direction. The second child has to catch it before it hits the ground and then takes off to do the same. Suggest to the children that they throw it high, low, to the side or behind or in front.