

# Development of Ball Skills

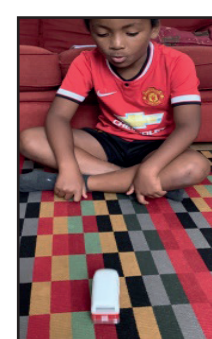
## Getting started - Stage 1 of 4

'Getting ready to' skills include: shared attention (looking at the same thing together), visual attention (focusing on something), motivation to engage, shoulder stability, Hand eye coordination, visual tracking activities (looking and following something with your eyes).

Physically imitating/copying simple actions  
(Hands in the air, hands on head, clapping)



Ability to visually focus – look through books, watch a car being pushed towards them



Taking something offered



Dropping/releasing into container/marked area



Hitting switches/buttons



Pushing and following large ball around a playground



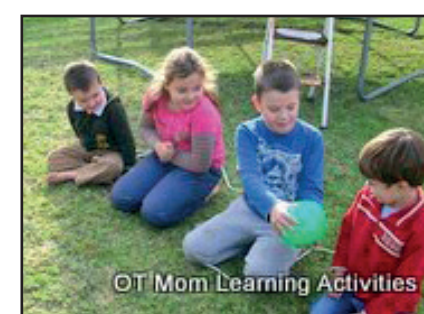
Taking hand to liquid bubble on a stick to pop it



Tracking bubble on a stick and popping it



Game: Pass one ball at a time and child places into a bucket or throws into the bucket or passes on to another child.



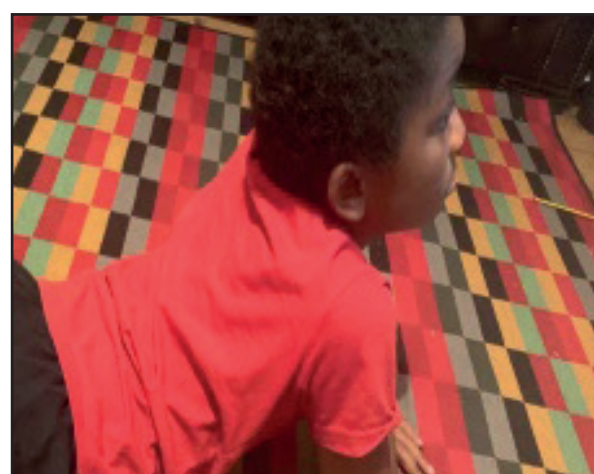
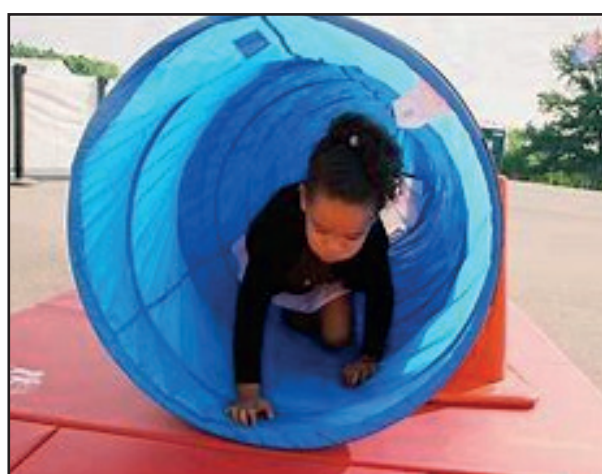
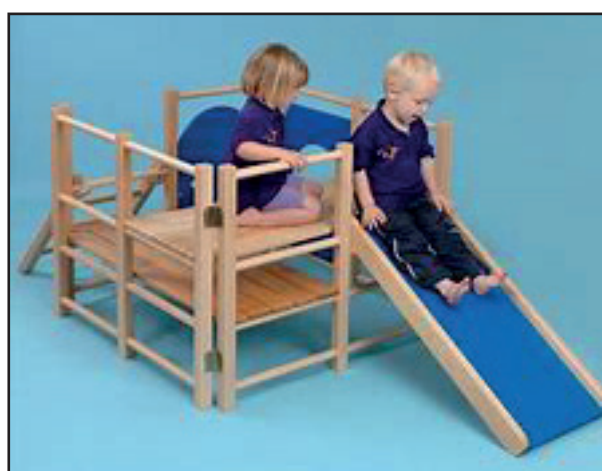
Watching you pop bubble on a stick

Visually tracking liquid bubbles/pointing  
/attempting to touch/pop



Shoulder strength and stability:

Lying on tummy and propping on forearms when watching TV or playing a board game and reading. Push-ups from floor, wall or chair, climbing equipment, crawling through tunnels/around obstacle course



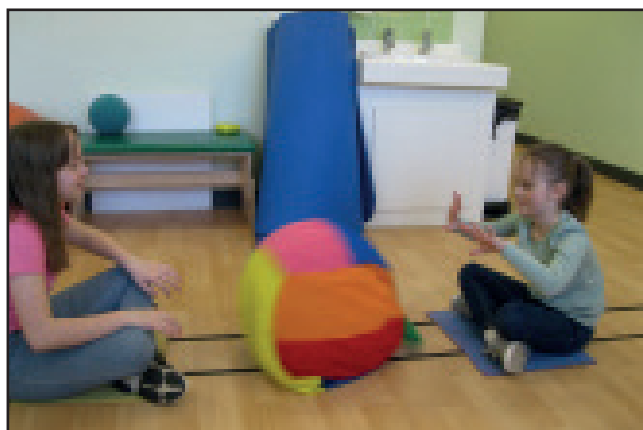


## Getting there - Stage 2 of 4

Children may flinch at oncoming balls so start near to them using a soft sponge ball/beach ball/balloon, rolling to them or throwing gently (away from their face- between chest and waist height). Gradually move back as skills and confidence increases.



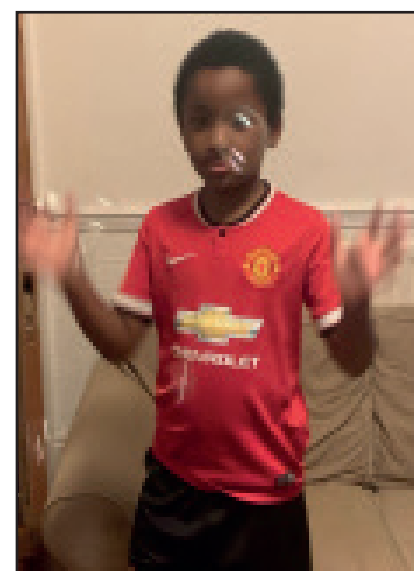
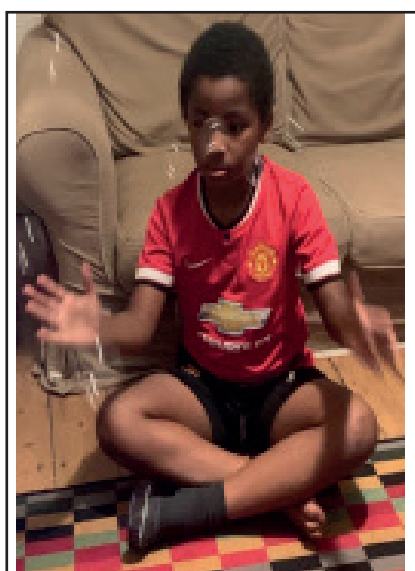
Rolling and passing balls before throwing them can also be a good place to start. Start by sitting opposite to the child not too far away with a large ball and roll it to them. Demonstrate and prompt preparing hands and eyes to receive the ball.



- If needed use hand over hand support to raise arms and trap the ball to develop initiation of the movements.
- Consider if it is helpful for your child to watch and model the activity being completed by another pair.
- Consider if verbal reinforcement is helpful "I catch!"



- Throw a beach ball into their hands (sitting on floor/mat). Wait for them to prepare their hands. Give physical prompt and verbal prompt if necessary.
- Sitting on a mat/marker, blow bubbles towards child and demonstrate reaching and popping. Progress to kneeling or standing on a mat and popping bubbles blown towards them (in front and to their sides to practise visual tracking and shifting weight). Demonstrate and model clapping hands together to pop the bubbles.



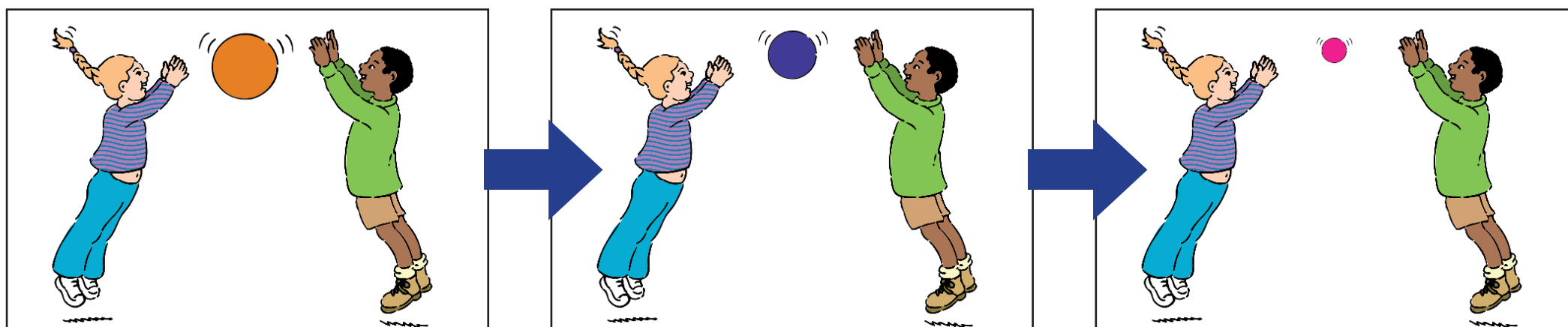
- Balloon play (standing) – Throw and catch, hit a balloon up in the air with their hand.
- Progress to standing within a hoola hoop or marked area on the floor and hitting the balloon – trying not to step out of the hoola hoop. How many times can they hit the balloon before it hits the floor.





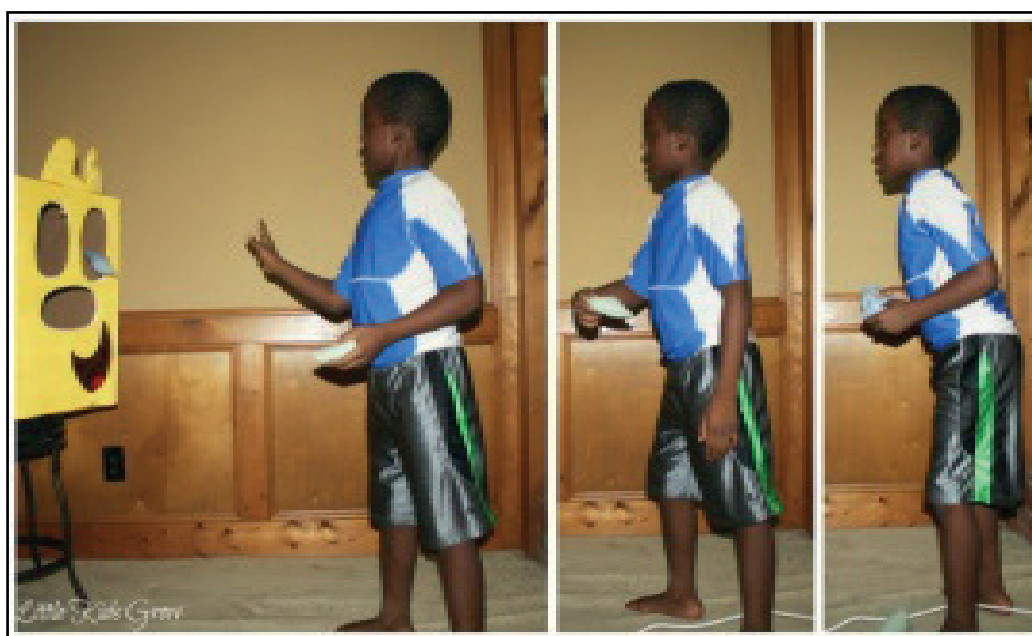
## Getting there - Stage 3 of 4

- Reduce the size of the ball when the child is able to catch more consistently.
- Record number of catches to monitor and motivate.
- Throw between shoulder and waist height to reduce flinching from the ball approaching the face.
- Encourage development of a single hand underarm throw

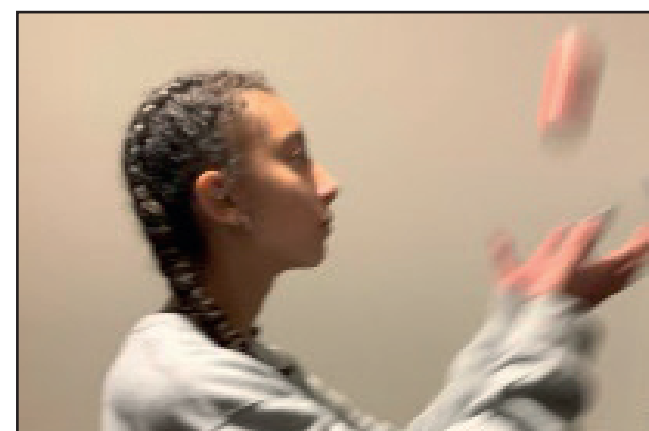
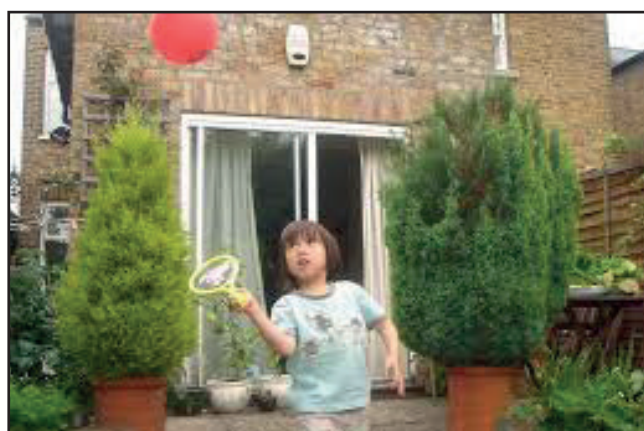


Day	Tally	Frequency
Monday		5
Tuesday		4
Wednesday		4
Thursday		7
Friday		3
Saturday		2
Sunday		5

Increase grading of direction/force. Throw bean bags/small soft/beanie toys into hoola hoops/buckets. Start near and work further back (use a small mat to cue where to stand). Demonstrate holding the whole bag rather than the edge as this gives more control.



- Consider increasing visual and/or auditory aspect of the task – use a ball with a bell in it, brightly coloured ball.
- Practise in quiet environment with reduced distractions.
- Throw a ball up from hands and catch. Increase the height the ball is thrown up in the air.
- Balloon tennis with hand and light racquets



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- Hit a suspended balloon or ball with hands or a bat.
  - Roll and kick balls into a goal made out of two objects. Start with goal posts quite far apart and the child close to them. Gradually, bring the goal posts closer together and move the child further away.
  - Practice passing –starting close together and moving back as control improves. Kick ball against and wall. Throw and catch ball against a wall.

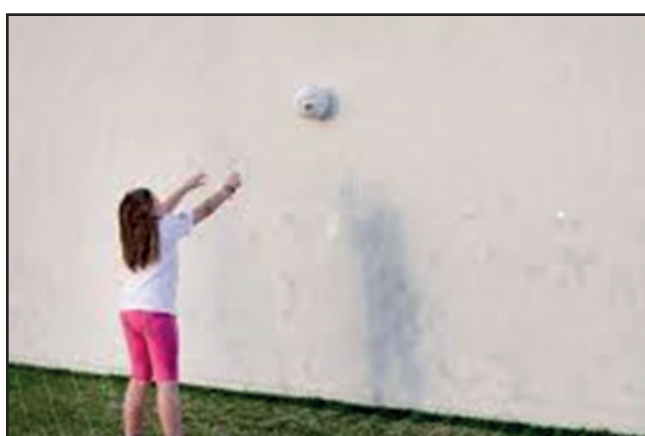


Open the hands to drop the ball and “clap” the hands gently on it as it bounces up. Throw and catch a tennis ball.

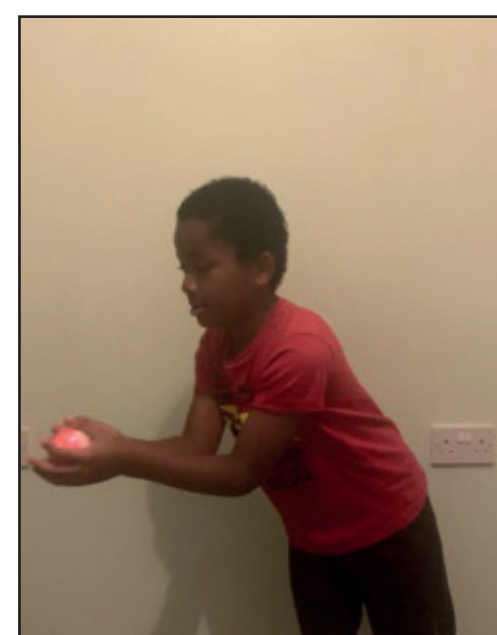
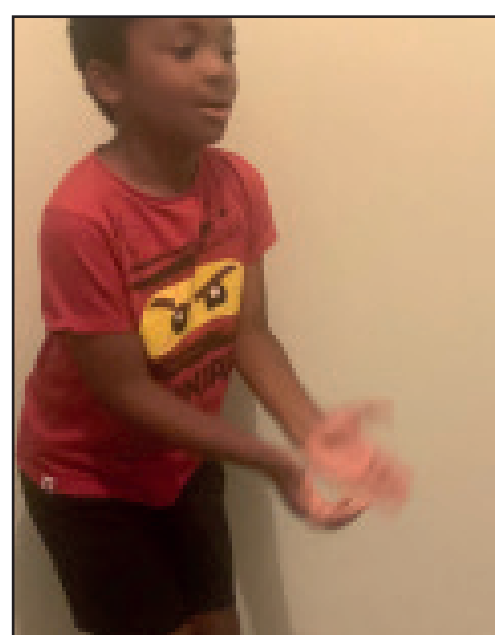
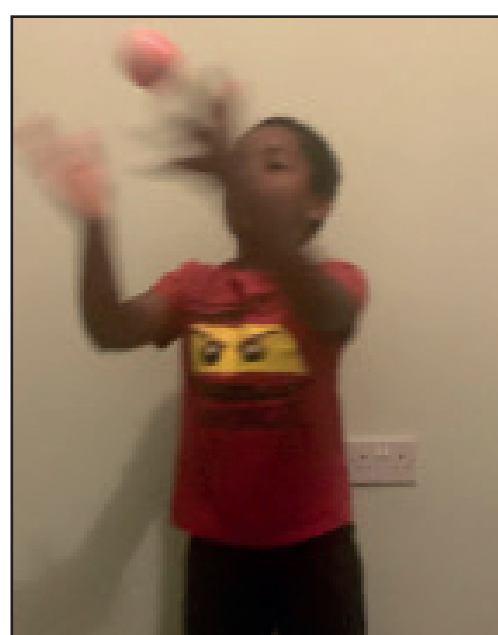


## Feeling confident - Stage 4 of 4

- Encourage single handed throws with smaller balls/beanbags. Practice grading force with underarm and overarm throws over different distances. Prompt them to think about if the throw was too hard or too soft. Encourage them to stand with feet apart, one in foot forward of the other.
- Throw a football size ball against the wall and catch it. Can they catch with just one bounce? Progress to using smaller balls, catching without it bouncing

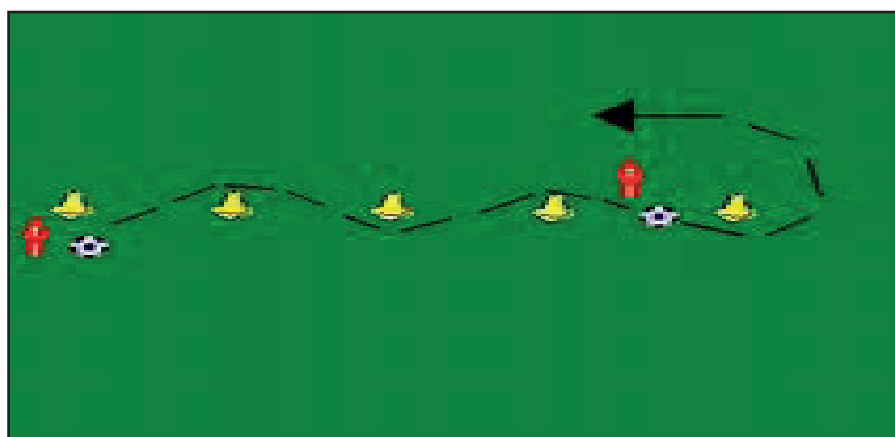


- Throw balls off centre (to the sides) to the child. Initially tell them or point to which side you will throw the ball. Progress to not telling them.
- Practice high and low catching – throw directly to them above head height and below waist height.
- Bounce and catch a large ball with one hand. Progress to walking and bouncing the ball.
- Stand opposite the child and bounce a ball to them so they can catch it. Pass it so they have to step or move to the sides or move forward to meet the ball.

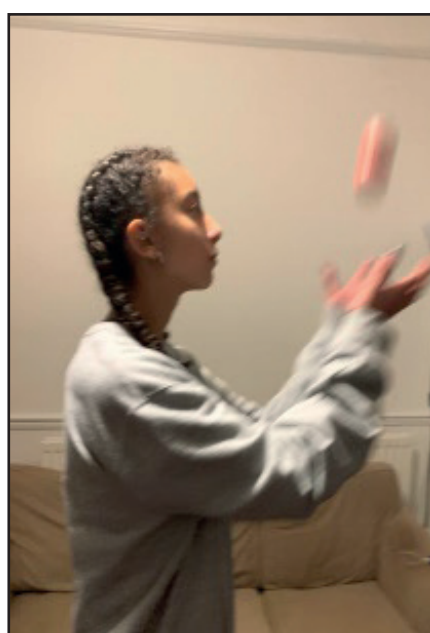




- Kick/dribble a ball across the room, in and out of cones (child may benefit from following someone or additional visual cues such as tape/spray on the floor)



- Throw a tennis ball up in the air and catch with two hands. Progress by throwing it higher.



Introduce bat and ball activities. Hit a ball suspended on a string, Progress to sponge ball and short handle racquet.

Hit a static ball on the floor with plastic cricket bat/hockey stick/rolled up newspaper. Progress to moving it around cones/obstacles. Practice passing to each other and hitting it into a goal.

