



Month 5: Introduction **Catching, Throwing & Kicking**

Objectives of this month:

1. Caregivers will learn the importance of catching, throwing and kicking as these actions require proper coordination and strength from multiple body segments to produce the skill.
2. Caregivers will learn fun and easy ways of incorporating these skills into their environments.
3. Children will develop improved hand-eye and foot-eye coordination through ball play.
4. Children and caregivers will expand their repertoire of ball games and activities.

Importance of Catching

- Assists in the development of hand-eye coordination.
- Functional use of multiple joint segments improves control over the segments.
- Learning how to absorb the catch increases joint stability and full body control.
- Positioning for the catch creates fundamental communication between all body segments and increases overall tone of postural muscles.

Importance of Throwing

- Assists in the coordinated and functional use of the entire upper extremities.
- Provides proprioceptive information to joint receptors, thereby improving overall body awareness.
- Throwing is a full body exercise and therefore pulls in both sides of the body to work – bilateral coordination.

Importance of Kicking

- Develop strong foot-eye coordination (when our eyes work together with our feet).
- Assists in improving upright balance, as child has to maintain unipedal stance while kicking the ball forward with the swing leg.
- Assists in developing a child's sense of timing in terms of muscle recruitment through a functional movement.
- Kicking is a full body exercise, involving both the left and right sides of the body, as well as upper and lower extremities.

References:

Best Start. (2005). Have a ball: A toolkit for physical activity and the early Years. Toronto (ON): Ontario Prevention Clearinghouse

SPARC: Sports and Recreation New Zealand. (2008). Catching, throwing and kicking. Active Movement.

Developmental Expectations for Catching, Throwing & Kicking

- 12-14 months:** Baby is able to corral a ball rolled to him in sitting without losing his balance, and baby uses hand or arm to roll ball forward
In standing, baby throws small ball forward in any direction by extending arm at shoulder or elbow
- 15-18 months:** In standing, child lifts foot and contacts ball
Child maintains upright balance and throws small ball forward by extending arm
- 19-24 months:** Child kicks ball forward 3 feet
Child throws ball overhand and underhand causing it to move 3 feet forward before it hits the floor
- 25-30 months:** When given the verbal instruction to "catch", child presents extended arms directly in front, palms facing upward or facing each other, and attempts to catch a medium sized ball
Able to throw a small ball forward at least 7 feet forward using both an underhand and overhand throw
Child initiates overhand throw by moving arm upward and back
Child initiates underhand throw by moving arm down and back
Child uses opposing arm and leg movements to initiate a kick by extending leg back with knee bent – ball should move at least 6 feet forward
- 31-36 months:** Child catches medium sized ball with arms extended
- 37-42 months:** Child catches medium sized ball with elbows flexed and palms facing each other or up; can secure the ball to chest if necessary
Throws small ball 10 feet forward using overhand pattern that includes upper trunk rotation, arms & legs moving in opposition
Hits target placed 5 feet away with small ball using underhand pattern
- 43-48 months:** Hits target placed 5 feet away with small ball using overhand pattern
Throws small ball 10 feet forward using underhand pattern that includes upper trunk rotation, arms & legs moving in opposition
- 49-54 months:** Using an overhand toss, hits target from 12 feet
Catches small ball from 5-foot distance with arms bent and using hands only
- 61-72 months:** Kicks ball causing it to travel at least 12 feet in the air using opposing arm and leg movements, and extending leg back with knee bent
Bounces and catches small ball (tennis ball) using one hand only

References:

Folio, M. Rhonda., Fewell, Rebecca R. (2002). Peabody motor development chart. Pro-ed.

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