



Month 5: Catching, Throwing and Kicking

Toddlers

Kick, Kick and Catch!

1. Tie a piece of string to a balloon. Attach the string to the back of a chair or doorframe. Allow the toddler to attempt to kick it. Raise the balloon higher for greater difficulty.
2. Kick and chase balloons around the house. After kicking the balloon attempt to catch it with two hands.
3. Stack some empty boxes (Kleenex boxes) then kick them over.
4. Throw a balloon into the air and attempt to catch it.

The Retrieving Game

Have your toddler throw a ball or bean bag. This can be at a target (game of catch), or may be just a simple "throw it as far as you can" game. After the throw have the toddler get the object and repeat.

The BIG BALL!

Using a large ball (beach ball) in an outdoor setting with plenty of space, have the toddler push the ball around. The toddler will use his own personal means as to what method the ball gets from point A to point B. He may choose to pick the ball up, kick it, pick it up and throw it, smack it, etc. All forms will benefit the growth and development of this aspect of the toddler. Getting involved yourself will motivate the toddler to keep playing.

It's All About Bubbles!

1. Try kicking, jumping, clapping or flicking bubbles. It's a race to pop them all before they hit the ground!!!
2. Try catching a bubble on your shoe, toe, knee, elbow, finger etc.

Pop-Bottle Bowling

Take 5 empty, plastic 2-litre pop bottles and fill the bottom 1/8 with sand or water to provide some stability. Place them on the ground as you would see with 5-pin bowling. Have your toddler stand 5-10 feet from the pins and roll a soccer ball at the pins. This movement will assist in the development of your child's under-hand toss. As another option for knocking down the pins, have the child kick the ball towards the pins – practice using both the left and right feet to kick.

Stop that Hoop!

Grab some hula hoops and have fun! Have an adult roll a hula hoop or multiple hoops in various directions and have the children run to stop them. The children can then try rolling the hoops back to the adult in the middle. This activity will assist a child in predicting where a moving object will travel in space, and how they have position their bodies to catch that object.

Keep Up

Standing in a circle, try to keep the beach ball in the air without touching the floor. The children can use their hands or their feet.

This activity can be done with a group or with partners.

Through the Tunnel

Stand with your legs spread wide and challenge your child to roll or kick the ball through the "tunnel" that is formed. As they become better, stand farther away and see if they can still get it through the tunnel.

Variety is the spice of life ...

When working on kicking, catching and throwing with your toddler, be sure not to limit your play to balls only. Lightweight scarves move slowly through the air and may be easier to catch than a ball when first learning this skill. For catching and throwing, practice with bean bags, soft, lightweight balls, bouncy balls, larger balls with knobs or grips, grab balls, balloons, ribbons or scarves, small stuffed animals ... get as creative as you'd like. Fun items to kick include towers made of cardboard boxes or lightweight blocks, a coloured stone as you walk down the sidewalk (have the child try to keep the stone always on the sidewalk and watch where it goes), anything that will create a noise – some bells attached to a ball of yarn, for example.

References:

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