

Ball Activities for Young Kids

**These are great activities for toddlers to early school age.
Some of these can also be modified for older kids to work on
strengthening, balance, and endurance.**

**Make them into a circuit if you have a slightly older kid who
is using them**

Most of all have fun!



Ball Activities for Young Kids



- 1. Kicking**
- 2. Single Leg Stance**
- 3. Bounce and Catch**
- 4. Rolling**
- 5. Squat and Throws**
- 6. Catching**
- 7. Wall Rolls**
- 8. Rollie Pollie**
- 9. Over Unders**
- 10. Around the World**

Kicking



Ball Activities for Young Kids

Why?

- **Coordination:** Kicking requires the right muscle activation timing
- **Strength:** Kicking farther requires increased force production
- **Balance:** Kicking requires your child to stand on only one foot

When?

- **Standing at Support:** Encourage kicking while holding on
- **Early Walking:** 'Walk through' a ball on the floor
- **Independent Walking:** Purposefully kick a ball with one foot

Activities

- Take turns kicking the ball back and forth
- Create a 'goal' to try to kick the ball into
 - Two chairs, an empty box, a hoop, etc
- Set up 'pins' to knock over
 - Paper towel rolls, cup pyramid, you (pretend to fall over when the ball taps you)
- Kick for distance

Standing on One Foot



Ball Activities for Young Kids

Why?

- Balance on one foot is hard and your child may need a little help
- The ball is an unsteady surface that gives a little support but still makes the leg on the ground work hard

How?

- Place a foot on a playground ball and keep the other on the ground
 - **Easier:** deflate the ball slightly
 - **Harder** fully inflate the ball
- Make sure to practice on both legs!

Activities

- Bat a balloon back and forth
- Draw/write on an easel or other vertical surface
- Play a game (board games, cards, etc)
- Play catch
- Pop bubbles
- Any activity that can be completed standing still!

Bounce and Catch



Ball Activities for Young Kids

Why?

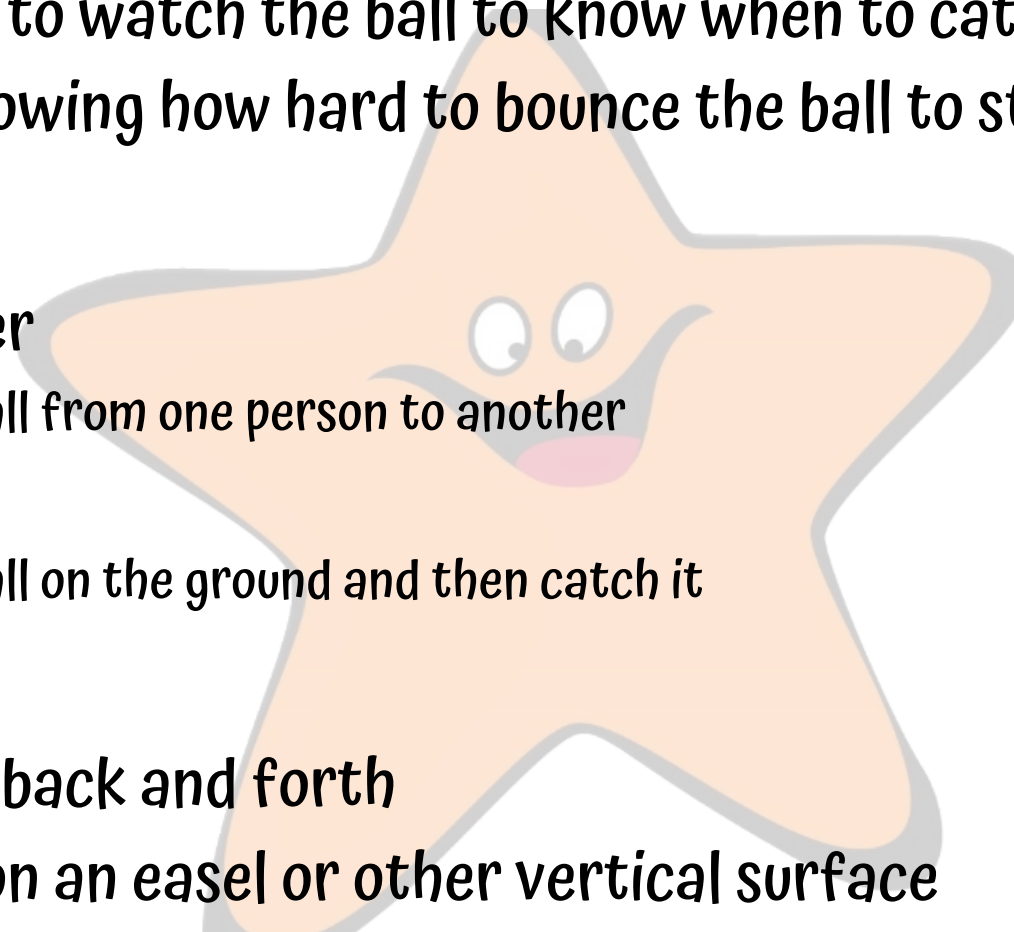
- **Coordination:** Being able to time movements to catch the ball
- **Visual:** Need to watch the ball to know when to catch it
- **Grading:** Knowing how hard to bounce the ball to still catch it

How?

- **With a partner**
 - Bounce the ball from one person to another
- **Alone**
 - Bounce the ball on the ground and then catch it

Activities

- Bat a balloon back and forth
- Draw/write on an easel or other vertical surface
- Play a game (board games, cards, etc)
- Play catch
- Pop bubbles
- Any activity that can be completed standing still!



Rolling



Ball Activities for Young Kids

Why?

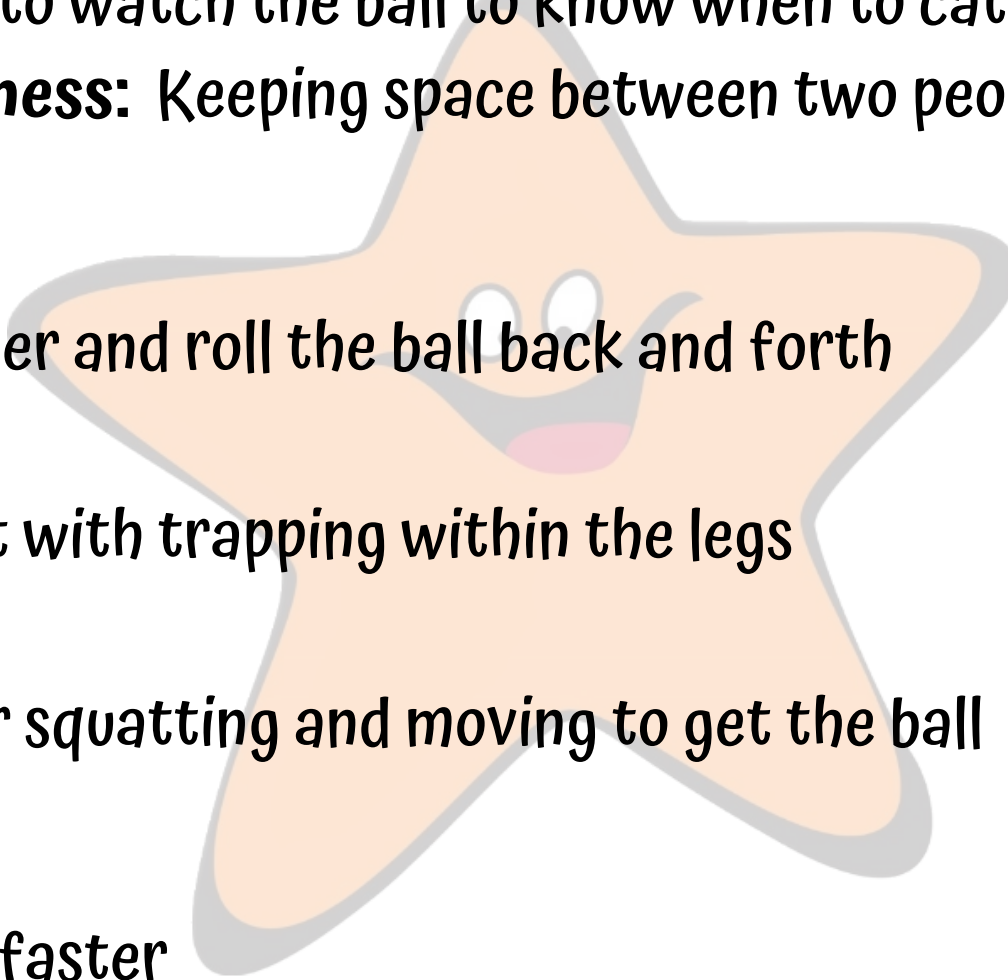
- **Turn Taking:** Being able to roll the ball back and forth with a partner
- **Visual:** Need to watch the ball to know when to catch it
- **Body Awareness:** Keeping space between two people

How?

- Face each other and roll the ball back and forth
- **Sitting:**
 - may start with trapping within the legs
- **Standing:**
 - allows for squatting and moving to get the ball

Activities

- Roll slowly or faster
- Roll at different angles so they have to reach or move
- Move further away from each other
- Find a target (or a goal) to roll the ball to



Squat and Throw



Ball Activities for Young Kids

Why?

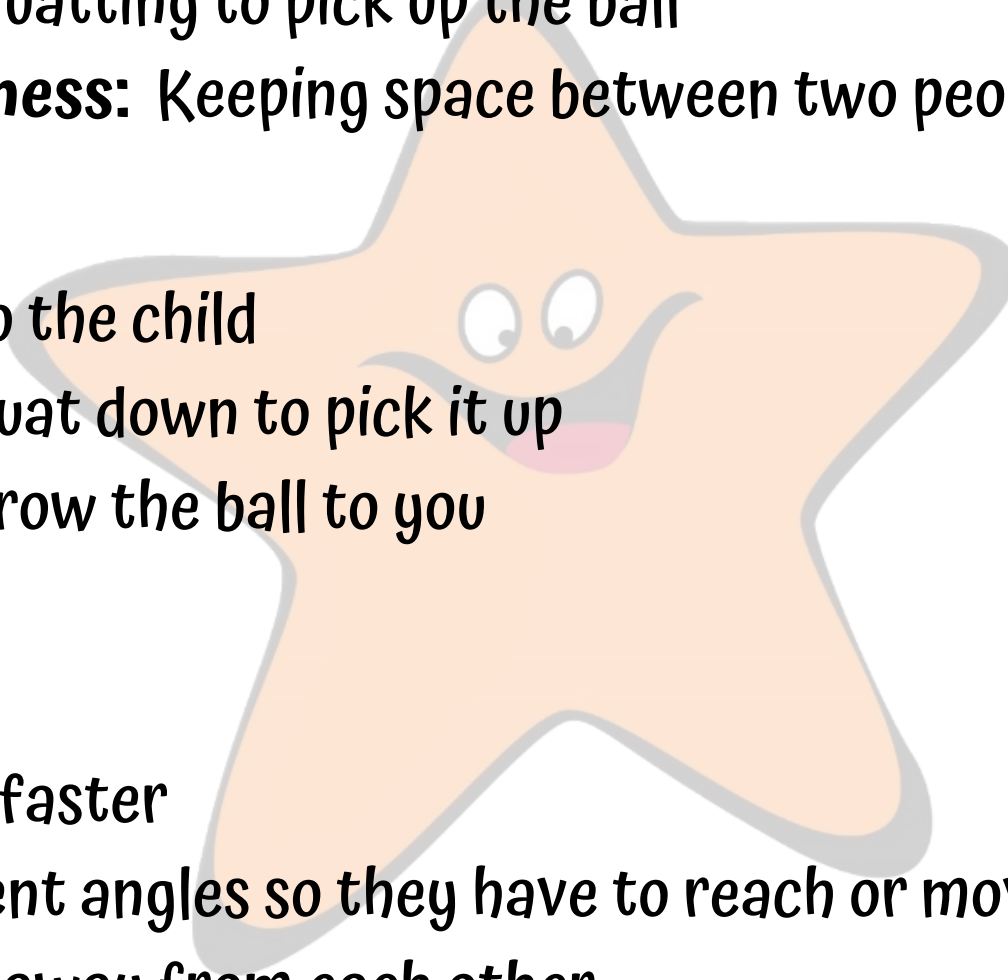
- **Balance:** Maintaining standing while throwing the ball
- **Strength:** Squatting to pick up the ball
- **Body Awareness:** Keeping space between two people

How?

- Roll the ball to the child
- Have them squat down to pick it up
- Have them throw the ball to you
- Repeat

Activities

- Roll slowly or faster
- Roll at different angles so they have to reach or move
- Move further away from each other
- Find a target (or a goal) to throw the ball at
- Change the ball size or weight



Catching



Ball Activities for Young Kids

Why?

- Hand-Eye coordination for catching
- Motor planning for when to time the catch
- Enhance ball/play skills

How?

- Start with almost dropping the ball in their hands
- Make sure they are watching the ball
- Give verbal cues such as counting before you throw

Variations

- Large ball is easier to catch than a small ball
- Slightly deflated ball is easier to catch than a fully inflated ball
- Underhand toss is easier to catch than an overhand throw
- Standing closer is easier than standing further apart
- Slower toss is easier than a faster throw
- Vary the angle you toss from to make it more challenging

Wall Rolls



Ball Activities for Young Kids

Why?

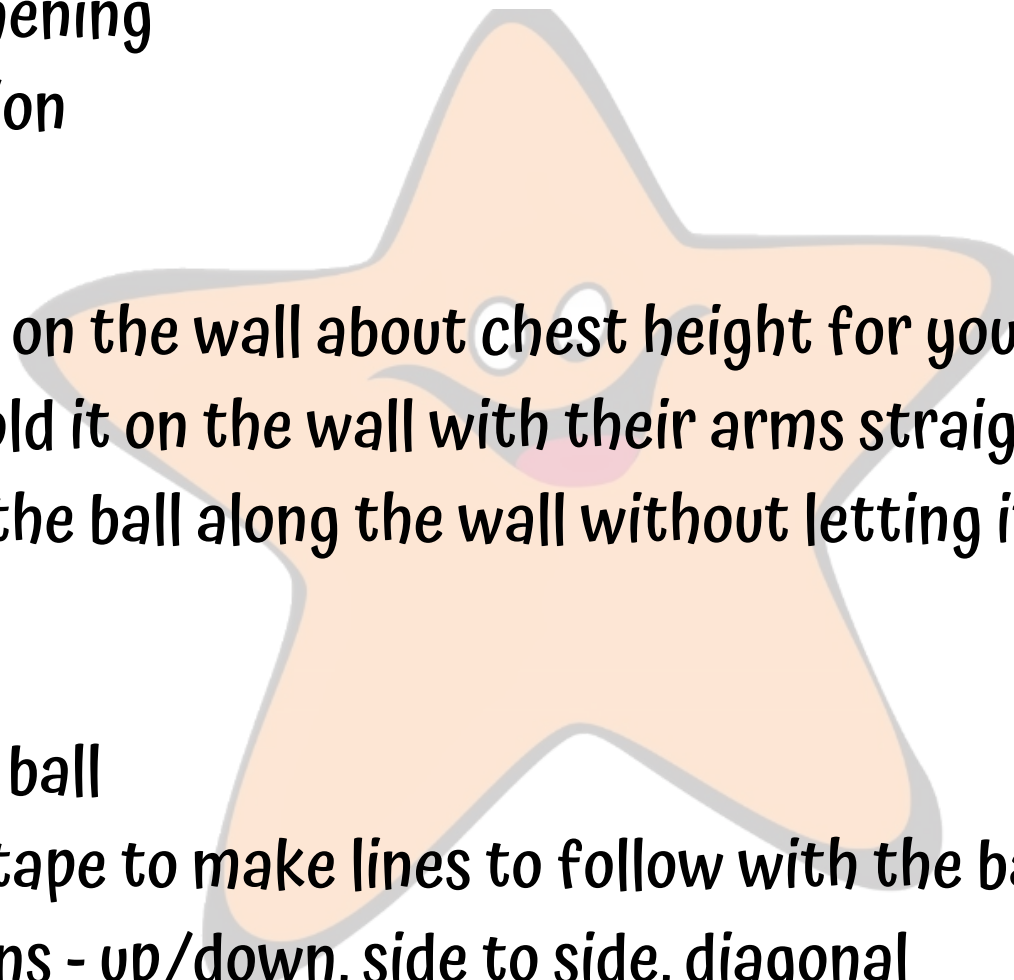
- Hand-Eye coordination
- Arm strengthening
- Visual attention

How?

- Place the ball on the wall about chest height for your child
- Have them hold it on the wall with their arms straight
- Slowly move the ball along the wall without letting it fall

Variations

- Use a heavier ball
- Use painters tape to make lines to follow with the ball
- Vary directions - up/down, side to side, diagonal
- Use smaller or larger balls
- Draw shapes or letters and see if someone can guess



Rollie Pollie



Ball Activities for Young Kids

Why?

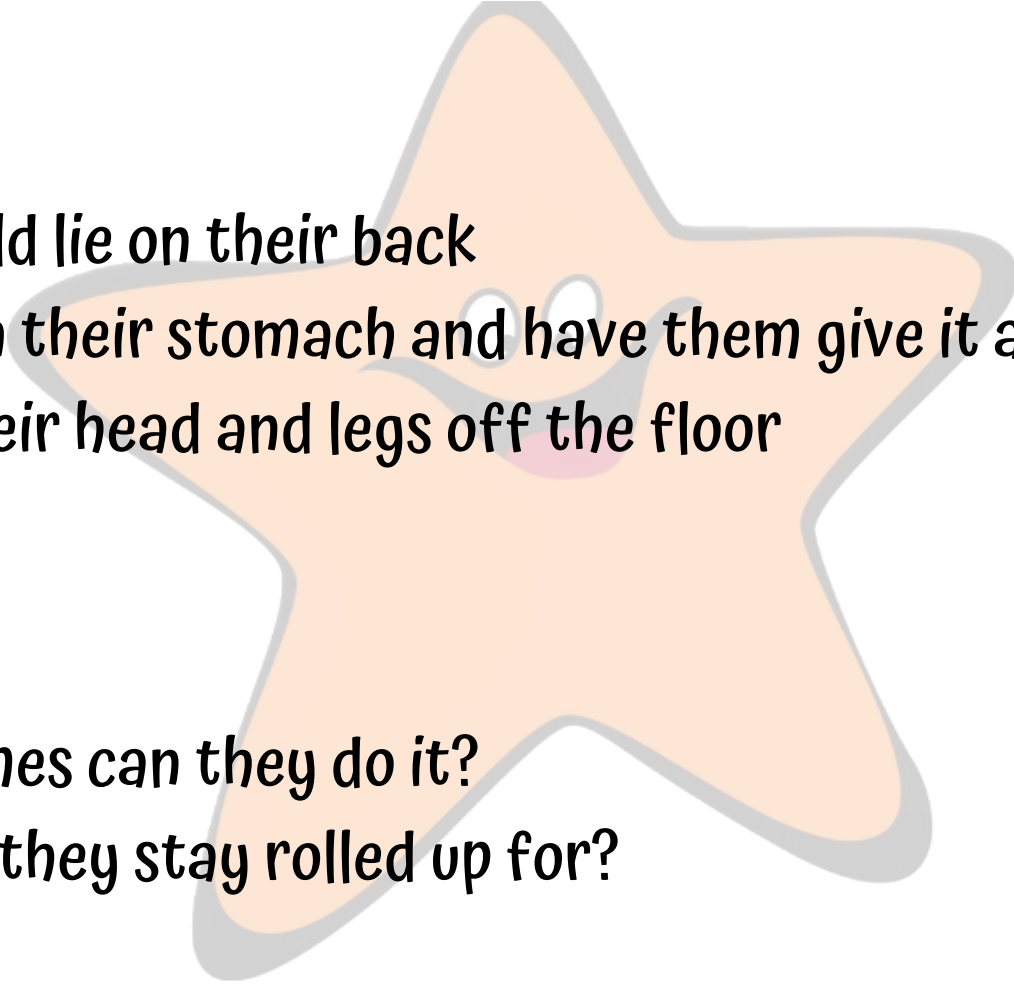
- Core strength and endurance

How?

- Have your child lie on their back
- Place a ball on their stomach and have them give it a big hug while also lifting their head and legs off the floor

Variations

- How many times can they do it?
- How long can they stay rolled up for?



Over Unders



Ball Activities for Young Kids

Why?

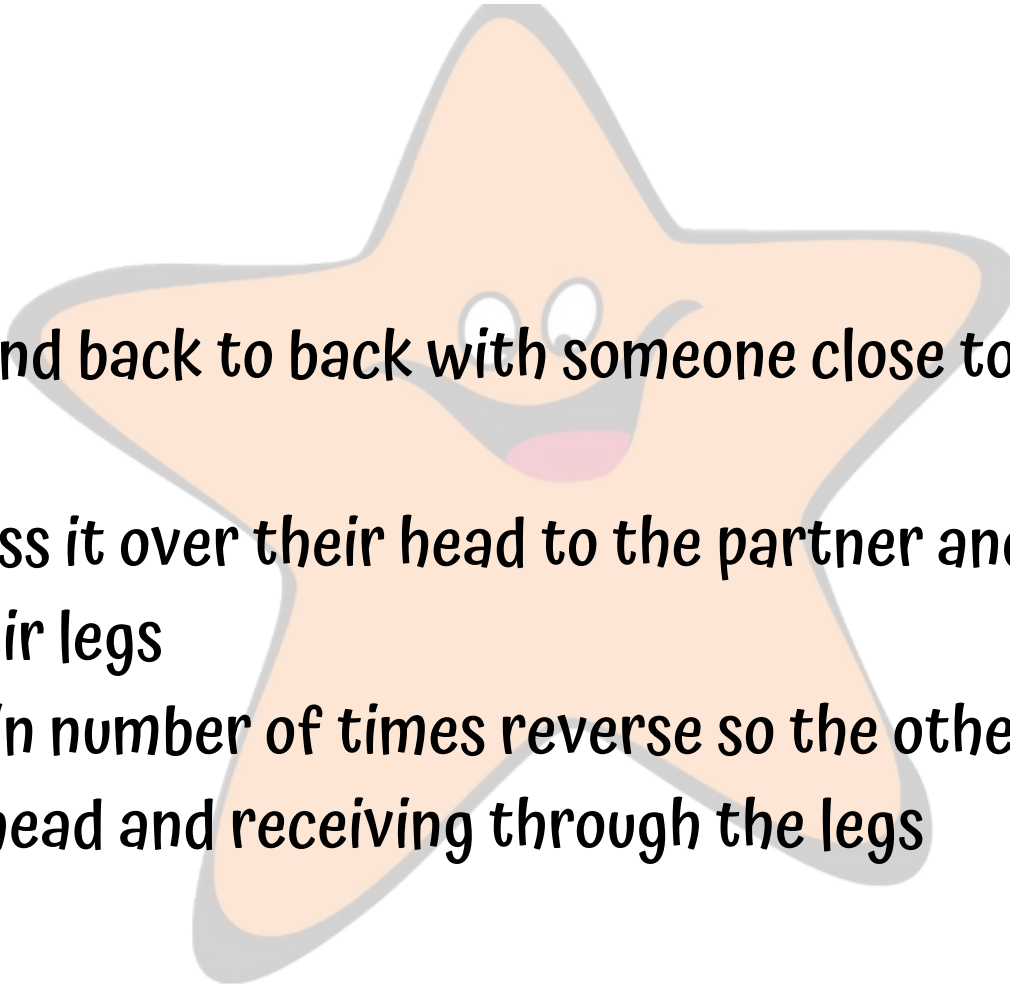
- Partner play and cooperation
- Balance
- Sequencing

How?

- Have your stand back to back with someone close to their height (ideally)
- Have them pass it over their head to the partner and then receive it through their legs
- After a certain number of times reverse so the other person is passing over head and receiving through the legs

Variations

- How many passes before the ball drops?
- Eyes open vs eyes closed



Around the World



Ball Activities for Young Kids

Why?

- Partner play and cooperation
- Body awareness
- Sequencing
- Trunk rotation

How?

- Have your stand back to back with someone close to their height (ideally)
- Have them pass it around one side of their body and then retrieve it from the other side
- After a certain number of times reverse so they are passing and retrieving in the opposite direction

Variations

- How many passes before the ball drops?
- Eyes open vs eyes closed
- Sitting vs Standing

