



Catching 2.3: Gopher ball

5 - 8 year olds

Introduction (1 - 2 minutes)

Call the children into a circle or into designated lines and greet them.

Explain any special safety rules and remind the children to stop, look, and listen whenever you signal.

Explain in 20-30 seconds what you will be doing today.

How are your hands different when you catch a ball below your belly button compared to when you catch above your head?

TIME: 30 minutes

SKILL: Object manipulation

EQUIPMENT: bean bags, variety of small lightweight balls suitable for small hands

ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM:

ACTIVITY LEADER:

GROUP NAME:

DATE:

DISCLAIMER: The lesson plans and activities provided on this website are for educational purposes only. Physical activity is not without its risks and the activities provided on this website may result in injury. We disclaim any liability from and in connection with the activities provided on this website.

Warm-up: Throw it up (5 - 8 minutes)

- Children spread out around activity space.
- Each child has a bean bag.
- Leader explains: *When I say “go”, you have to walk around and throw your bean bag up in the air and catch it.*
- *If you drop your bean bag, you have to lie down on the floor, count to 5, and then get up again and continue.*
- Leader can suggest the following:
 - » *Run, hop, gallop or skip around activity space.*
 - » *Clap hands before catching your bean bag.*
 - » *Go down on one knee before catching your bean bag.*
 - » *Jump up before catching your bean bag.*
 - » *Spin around before catching your bean bag.*
 - » *Throw your bean bag up with one hand and catch it with the other.*

Demonstration: Catching (2 - 3 minutes)

- Leader chooses one child to help demonstrate catching a ball thrown to them below the waist, above the waist, and bounced to them.
- Leader and helper stand about 3 metres apart and throw and catch a ball.
- While demonstrating, leader reminds the children:
 - » Keep your eyes on the ball until it arrives in your hands.
 - » Get your body behind the ball (i.e. in front of its flight path).
 - » If you see the ball passing to one side, move your whole body to the side. Don't just reach your arms to the side.
 - » If the ball is arriving above your belly button, your palms face forward and your fingers point up, and your two thumbs point toward each other (triangle).
 - » If the ball is arriving below your belly button, your palms face forward and your fingers point down, and your two pinky fingers are close together (bowl).
 - » As you receive the ball with your hands, you should bend your arms and bring the ball in towards your body.

Practice: Partner catch (5 - 8 minutes)

- Leader divides children into pairs.
- Each pair has a ball.
- Partners stand facing each other along two designated lines so that all balls are being thrown in the same direction.
- Leader explains that the children are going to practice throwing and catching the ball.
- *With your partner, I want you to try to catch the ball 5 times in a row.*
- *After you have caught the ball 5 times, take a step back.*
- Leader should encourage children to be creative and throw the ball to their partner in different ways (e.g. high, low, bounce pass).

Game: Gopher ball (8 - 10 minutes)

- Leader divides children into groups of 4.
- 3 of the children are “gophers” lying on their stomachs beside each other and are numbered 1 to 3. The fourth child stands facing them.
- *When I call out a number, “1, 2 or 3” the person standing will bounce the ball.*
- *If your number is called, you must get up and catch the ball before it bounces a second time.*
- *You get one point every time you catch the ball before it bounces again. The first child to reach 5 points wins.*
- After one child wins, they become the thrower and the game starts again.

Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Call the children back into a circle and review what they learned today.

Was it easier to catch a ball that was thrown to you, or a ball that was bounced to you?

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Time and practice is needed to develop the skill of catching.
- At this age, the ball will touch the ground many times.
- Praise children if they use even one key element of catching (see Cues).

CUES

- *Eyes on ball*
- *Get “behind the ball”*
- *Hands together (triangle or bowl)*
- *Bring ball to body*

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Tell children to switch partners after 2 or 3 rounds.
- Remind children of their “space bubble” and to look up when they are running.