



Catching 3.4: Gopher ball

8 - 12 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.

Today we will practice catching a ball that is bounced to you.

Why will it be important to get your body behind the ball today?

TIME: 30 minutes

SKILL: Object manipulation

EQUIPMENT: music, balls

ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM:

ACTIVITY LEADER:

GROUP NAME:

DATE:

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Warm-up: Back to back (5 - 8 minutes)

- This game is similar to musical chairs, except the chairs are replaced by partners “sitting” back-to-back.
- When the music starts, children must move around the activity space.
- Leader specifies different locomotor movement each time (e.g. walk, run, hop, gallop, skip).
- When the music stops, children must find a partner, stand back-to-back, and then both pretend to “sit” as if they have chairs.
- The child who fails to find a partner, or the last set of partners to make a “chair,” must do 10 jumping jacks and then rejoin the group.
- Play several rounds. Be sure to mix partners by naming new conditions each round. For example: :
 - » *Girls with boys.*
 - » *Different partner than last time.*
 - » *Someone wearing the same colour as you.*

Demonstration: Catching a bounced ball (1 - 2 minutes)

- Leader demonstrates how to catch a ball that is bounced to you.
- Leader and child stand about 5 metres apart.
- Child bounces a ball to the leader and the leader catches it.
- Leader then bounces a ball against the wall and catches it. Repeat by bouncing the ball at various heights.
- 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: Bounce pass (5 - 8 minutes)

- Leader divides children into pairs and each pair has one ball.
- Partners stand facing each other along two designated lines so balls are bounced in the same direction.
- Leader explains: *We are going to practice bouncing and catching the ball.*
- *With your partner, I want you to try and catch the ball 10 times in a row.*
- *When you have caught the ball 10 times, take one step backwards.*
- Leader asks pairs to find a spot against the wall.
- *With your partner, one of you must bounce the ball against the wall and the other must catch it.*
- *Try bouncing the ball at different heights against the wall.*
- *Try to catch the ball 10 times in a row.*

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.
- Gophers are numbered 1 to 3.
- The fourth child stands facing them.
- The person standing will bounce the ball and then call out a number, “1, 2 or 3”.
- *If your number is called, you must get up and catch the ball before it bounces a second time.*
- *You score one point with every catch, and the first person with 5 points wins.*
- *Winners become the new throwers and the game starts again.*

Wrap-up (2 minutes)

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

Can you think of sports or games where you have to catch a bouncing ball?

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Time and practice is needed to develop the skill of catching.
- Praise children for what they are doing well.
- Remind children of the cues.

CUES

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

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- After 2-3 rounds, throwers can add extra challenges.
- Example: *When you hear your number, stand up, turn around once, and then catch the ball.*