



**CURRICULAR COMPETENCY & OUTCOME:**

Students develop and demonstrate movement skills in a variety of activities.

DATE:

ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM:

ACTIVITY LEADER:

GROUP OR CLASS:

## Catching 2.3: Gopher ball

5 - 8 year olds

**TIME:** 30 minutes

**SKILLS:** Object manipulation

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

### 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?*

## 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).

### 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*

## 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.

### 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.

## 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?*

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