Balance 2.1: Balance ball pass
5 - 8 year olds

TIME: 30 minutes

SKILL: Balance

EQUIPMENT: soft balls, music, pictures of balances

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.

When would you need to have good balance?
Warm-up: One foot hot potato tag (5 minutes)

- Leader chooses 2 children to be “it”.
- Children who are “it” each have a bean bag or foam ball and must tag the other children by touching them with the bean bag or ball.
- All children must move around activity space by hopping on one foot.
- When a child is tagged, they are given the bean bag/foam ball and they are now “it”.
- Leader uses cones to mark off one corner of the activity space as a “safe zone”.
- Children can go to the safe zone for a 10 second rest then must join back in.
- Leader should specify how many children can be in the safe zone at once (e.g. Only 4 people are allowed in the safe zone at a time.).

Demonstration: Static balance (3 - 5 minutes)

- Leader demonstrates the following static balances (hold balance for 5-10 seconds):
  - **Stork stand:** balance on one foot, place other foot against support leg at or above knee, stretch arms out.
  - **Downward facing dog:** palms and feet flat on floor, stomach facing floor, push bum up to form a bridge, arms and legs are straight, head hanging down between arms.
  - **Upward facing dog:** lie face down, hands beside shoulders, palms on floor, press up with arms, lift head and torso as high as possible, elbows close to body, hips on floor.
  - **Dolphin pose:** same as downward dog, but balance on elbows instead of hands.
  - **Airplane pose:** stand with arms out to sides at shoulder height, lean forward, front leg bent, back leg straight with toes touching the ground.

Practice: Static balance (5 minutes)

- Leader tapes pictures of balances from demonstration around the walls of the activity space and a sheet with “your own balance” printed on it.
- Leader divides children into six groups.
- Each group starts at one station and practices that balance.
- Rotate to next station every 30-60 seconds.
- Leader should encourage children to hold balance for 5-10 seconds.

**TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION**

- Play soft music while children are practicing.
- Praise children for their efforts.
- Encourage children to invent their own balance.
- Encourage children to hold balance as long as possible.

**CUES**

- Head up
- Eyes looking forward
- Hold pose 5-10 seconds
- Body still and tight
Game: Balance ball pass (10 minutes)

• Leader divides children into groups of 4 or 5.
• Groups spread out around activity space and each group makes a circle.
• Each group has a soft ball.
• Leader explains that they will call out a balance and then begin the music.
• *When the music is playing, I want you to hold the balance I call out and try to pass the ball around the circle.*
• *Count how many times you can pass without anyone dropping the ball or losing their balance.*
• Repeat activity calling out different balances that were practiced.
• Circles can be made smaller or larger to create more or less challenge.

Wrap-up (2 minutes)

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

*What did you do to hold your balance longer?*