



DATE:

ORGANIZATION/PROGRAM:

ACTIVITY LEADER:

GROUP OR CLASS:

## Balance 1.1: Balance poses

3 - 5 year olds

**TIME:** 30 minutes

**SKILLS:** Balance, jump, hop, crawl

**EQUIPMENT:** Bean bags, skipping rope, masking tape, or existing floor markings

### Introduction (2 - 3 minutes)

Gather the children in the activity area and sit down in a circle.

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

Explain any special safety rules for the session.

## Warm-up: River Bank (5 - 6 minutes)

- Create a long straight line on the floor using a skipping rope, masking tape, or an existing floor marking.
- One side of the line is the “river”, and the other side is the river “bank”.
- All the children start on the “bank” side of the line with the leader.
- When the leader says “river”, everyone jumps two-footed to the other side.
- When the leader says “bank”, everyone jumps two-footed back again.
- Continue like this for a short while, then mix up the instructions by saying “bank” when the children are already on the bank, and “river” when the children are already on the river.
- See how many children jump at the wrong time, and share a laugh with everyone!
- Don’t eliminate any children—simply ask the ones who jumped at the wrong time to go back to the correct side, and then continue playing.

## Activity 1: Balance Poses (8 - 10 minutes)

- Either indoors or outdoors, ask the children to form a large semi-circle around you.
- Facing the children so they can see you and you can see them, demonstrate different balance poses and ask the children to imitate you.
- Some example poses (you can invent more):
  - » Stand up on the tips of your toes, arms reaching high overhead.
  - » Stand with legs wide apart, arms reaching up and out (wide star)
  - » Stand with legs together, arms reaching sideways like wings (narrow star)
  - » Stand on one leg, other leg bent at the knee, arms raised to the side like wings.
  - » Stand on one leg, arms raised to the side like wings, then bend forward at the waist and lift rear leg (airplane pose).
  - » Stand on all fours, head down, rear in the air (downward dog pose in yoga).
  - » From all fours, raise and hold one leg high in the air.
  - » From all fours, raise and hold one arm high in the air.
  - » Advanced challenge: Stork stand / tree stand (balance on one foot, then place other foot against support leg below knee, stretch out arms like wings)
  - » Where possible, adjust the difficulty of the poses according to age and ability of the children.

### TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Whenever you pose on one leg or one hand, be sure to repeat the same pose standing on the other leg or hand (develop ambidexterity).
- If some children demonstrate good mastery of different balance poses, ask them to lead the group with a pose.

## Activity 2: Bean Bag Balance Challenge (8 - 10 minutes)

- Provide one bean bag to each child.
- Create a start and finish line about 5 metres apart.
- Children line up across the start line.
- On your command, the children must walk to the finish line and carry their bean bag using a different body part each time:
  - » On their head
  - » On one shoulder
  - » On their nose
  - » On one ear
  - » Between their legs
  - » Between their knees
  - » Between their elbows
- After they have carried their bean bags these different ways while walking, try again using these patterns of locomotion:
  - On their back while crawling
  - On their stomach while crab walking
  - Between their knees while jumping
  - Between their elbows while hopping

### TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Each time you present a new challenge, demonstrate the movement to the children.

## Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Gather the children and sit down in a circle again.

Talk about what the group did today, and ask the children what was their favourite part.

Transition to your next activity—whether free play or other.

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