Catching 2.2: Hot potato tag
5 - 8 year olds

TIME: 30 minutes

SKILL: Object Manipulation

EQUIPMENT: Hoops, ropes, foam blocks, music, bean bags, variety of small lightweight balls suitable for small hands

Introduction (1 - 2 minutes)

Greet the children and ask them to sit in a circle.

Explain any special safety rules for the day.

Remind children to stop, look, and listen when you signal (e.g. blow whistle).

*Today we are going to practice how to catch.*

*Can you think of sports or games where you have to catch?*
Warm-up: Obstacle course (5 - 8 minutes)

- Leader arranges a variety of equipment (e.g. ropes, hoops, foam blocks, bean bags) around activity space.
- Leader explains: *When the music plays, you have to move around the activity space.*
- *When you come to the hoops, I want you to jump in and out with two feet. When you come to the foam blocks, I want you to hop over with one foot.*
- For safety, remind children they should not step or jump on any of the equipment.
- Leader can suggest different locomotor skills (run, skip, gallop) to move around activity space.

Demonstration: Catching (2 - 3 minutes)

- Leader chooses one child to help demonstrate catching.
- Leader and helper stand about 2-3 metres apart from each other and throw and catch a ball.
- Leader reminds the children of the following tips:
  » *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: Triangle toss and catch (5 - 8 minutes)

- Leader divides children into groups of three.
- Children spread out around activity space and form a triangle with their group.
- Each group has a ball.
- Children begin by tossing the ball clockwise and practicing their catching.
- Leader can suggest the following:
  » *Change the direction (i.e. counterclockwise).*
  » *Toss to either partner.*
  » *Toss and catch below the waist.*
  » *Toss and catch above the waist.*
  » *Toss with your other hand.*
**CUES**
- Eyes on ball
- Get “behind the ball”
- Hands together (triangle or bowl)
- Bring ball to body

**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).

**Game: Hot potato tag (8 - 10 minutes)**
- Leader divides children into pairs.
- Each pair has either a ball or a bean bag.
- Leader explains: *When I yell “cold potato”, partners throw to each other.*
- *When I yell “hot potato”, whoever has the ball (or is about to catch the ball) must toss it in the air to themselves 3 times.*
- *When you finish tossing to yourself, you must run to try to tag your partner.*
- *When I yell “cold potato” again, start tossing and catching with your partners 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 (1 - 2 minutes)**
- Ask children to sit quietly in a circle.
- Review what they learned today.

*Who can show me what your hands look like when you are catching a ball below the belly button?*

*Who can show me what your hands look like when you are catching a ball above the belly button?*