

# CATCHING



Catching

## Development

We don't normally see fully developed catching skills until the ages of 6-9 years. Children need a lot of opportunities to attempt to catch as they learn to track the trajectory of a ball

## Skill Criteria Checklist:

|    |  |
|----|--|
| 1. | Eyes focused on the ball   |
| 2. | Feet move to place body in line with ball                          |
| 3. | Hands move to meet the object                                      |
| 4. | Hands and fingers relaxed and slightly cupped to catch the ball    |
| 5. | Catches and controls the ball with hands only (well timed closure) |
| 6. | Elbows bend to absorb the force of the ball                        |

## TEACHING STRATEGIES

### Beginners (at the emergent level of catching skill development)

- Focus on skill criteria number 1 & number 3
- Use smaller bright coloured soft balls or beanbag balls – this encourages children to catch with their hands in front of their body. If using larger balls children can get in the bad habit of trapping the ball on their chest
- If children don't feel confident to catch a ball, consider using an object that moves more slowly through the air like a balloon. This encourages them to keep their eyes open and track the object through the air
- The easiest ball for a child to catch is one they bounce themselves. Try bouncing and catching small basketballs

To help children enjoy some success while still developing tracking skills:

- Use buckets as a catching implement
- Play games such as Cat & Mouse
- Practice moving the ball around body and rolling the ball then chasing after it



## Developing

- Introduce butterfly fingers for balls above the waist and wriggly worms for balls below the waist
- Try catching with different sized balls
- Play games such as Catch Tag and Sticky Catches

## Acquired/accomplished level

- Challenge children to catch balls thrown at a greater speed or distance
- Start moving to catch the ball
- Try catching with one hand
- Try games that employ some strategy

### Teaching Cues

- ✓ Eyes on the ball
- ✓ Soft fingers
- ✓ Butterfly hands: thumbs together and fingers pointing up for balls being caught above the waist
- ✓ Wiggly worms: fingers pointing down for balls being caught below the waist
  - ✓ Move hands to the ball

## Common Errors

- ✦ Trapping the ball on the chest
- ✦ Turning head away from the ball or closing eyes
- ✦ Stiff and extended arms

