

Appendix

CLEAN OUT THE BACKYARD: KICKING

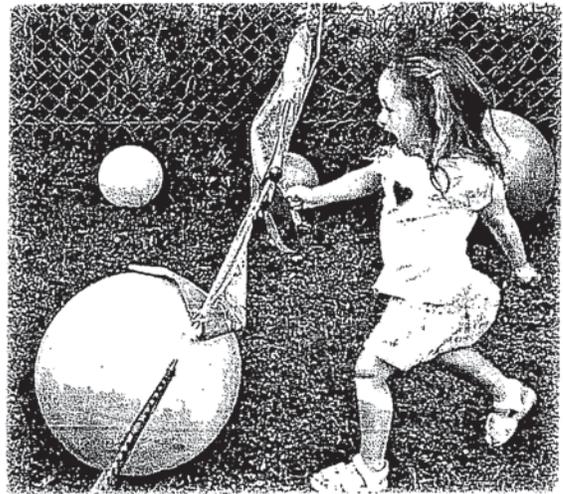


Children will get plenty of practice when you dump a bunch of soft rubber balls and let them clean up the backyard - kicking!

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice kicking • Develop cardiovascular endurance

EQUIPMENT

- Soft rubber balls of different sizes, at least 3 per child
Indoors use empty plastic gallon milk jugs instead of balls
- A barrier made from a length of rope draped with sheets, lightweight towels, or bright cartoon character fabric
- Sleigh bells or other noisemakers (optional)



INSTRUCTIONS

Divide the play area into half with the rope and fabric barrier. Keep the barrier about three feet off the ground. Hang bells or other noisemakers from the rope for excitement. Dump the same number of balls on each side of the barrier.

Start with an equal number of children on each side of the barrier. Tell the children to kick any balls on their side under the barrier to the other side. The goal is to get all the balls on the other side of the barrier. Hold the hands of younger children to provide the balance they need while learning to kick.

Some children might kick a ball with enough force that it could hurt someone. Give that child a separate and more challenging kicking task. Have him kick the ball as hard as possible across the yard to see how far it goes. Do not allow any child to play **Clean Out the Backyard** in a way that another child could get hurt.

Cues for Learning to Kick

Just Learning: "Stop and step next to the ball." "Look at the ball as you kick it."

More Experienced: "Bring your leg back and then kick." "Kick hard."

Easier: This activity works with most children, regardless of their kicking skills.

Harder: For school-aged children, tie a ribbon around the leg they do not usually kick with. Tell them to kick only with the leg that has the ribbon.

BUBBLE WRAP JUMPING

Inspired by Renée McCall



Tape some bubble wrap to the floor and every child will want to jump until all the bubbles are popped!

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice jumping • Develop cardiovascular endurance

EQUIPMENT

- Bubble wrap, at least a 10 ft. length, 24 inches wide

Equipment Tip: 1/2 in. bubbles pop best. Ask adults to save wrap for this activity. Some businesses will donate wrap, if asked.

- Clear packaging tape

INSTRUCTIONS

Tape the wrap to the floor so it won't slip. Don't let children mouth or bite the bubble wrap. Instruct the children to move in only one direction when jumping the length of the wrap. No return trips with more than one child jumping at the same time! Or tape a square piece of wrap to the floor for each child if you want them to jump in place.

Show children how to bend their knees and lift with their arms when they jump. Turn on lively music with a strong 4/4 beat to encourage children to jump to the music!

Cues for Learning to Jump for Distance

Just Learning: "Bend your knees." "Start with your arms behind you." "Swing your arms forward as you jump." "Land on both feet at the same time."

More Experienced: "Reach up and out (at a 45° angle) as you jump." "Fall forward when you land." Refer to **On/Off** to learn more jumping cues.

Easier: Hold smaller children's hands for extra balance. Allow children with developmental delays to walk if they are not yet ready to jump.

Harder: Tape 2 ft. squares short distances apart and have school-aged children jump from square to square.

Variety: Have the children walk a 'balance beam' made from a 6 in. wide, 10 ft. long strip of bubble wrap taped to the floor.



ALLIGATOR PIT

Suggested by Dana DeCarlo



Crossing an alligator pit on a narrow balance beam is a thrilling challenge for children! The alligator pit is really your floor, the balance beam is a flat foam pool noodle, and the alligator is you!

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice stability

EQUIPMENT

- A 'balance beam' made from two pieces of flat foam pool noodle sections, joined at ends and taped to the floor. Masking tape lines on the carpet will also work.
- Basket
- Many safe objects to carry, such as socks, beanbags, foam puzzle pieces, and pieces of foam cut from pool noodles.
- Duct tape

INSTRUCTIONS

Tape the balance beam to the floor. Place the basket at the far end of the balance beam. Have plenty of small toys and other safe objects for the children to carry at the near end of the beam. Tell the children where



alligators live and what they eat. The children's job is to walk the beam, and put things into the basket at the other end of the beam. Explain that the alligator who lives in the pit will not bother the children as long as they stay on the beam and don't drop anything that they are carrying. If they drop something, or step off the beam, the alligator will chase them until they drop everything they are carrying in the basket.

Give each child one item to carry across the beam and drop in the basket. After each child has gone once, increase what each must carry. Vary the skills. Ask children to carry beanbags balanced on their heads and shoulders. Have them jump across with foam blocks between their knees. Let them walk backwards across the beam with arms full of socks. When children drop objects into the pit, or step off the beam, chase them and move your extended arms up and down like an alligator's jaws. School-aged children might enjoy playing the part of the alligator during this activity.

Harder: Give the children more things to carry and harder ways of moving to make this activity more challenging. Tape a curved line on the floor as the balance beam to increase difficulty.

Variety: Pretend that floor spots are 'lily pads.' Arrange spots on the floor and let the children pretend they are frogs that must step, jump or hop from lily pad to lily pad across the alligator pit.

CLEAN OUT THE BACKYARD: THROWING



This activity gives children lots of practice throwing and it's really fun!

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice throwing • Cardiovascular Endurance

EQUIPMENT

- Many soft balls, fuzzy dice, or rolled socks, at least 5 per child
- A barrier made from a length of rope draped with sheets, lightweight towels, or bright cartoon character fabric
- Sleigh bells or other noisemakers (optional)
- Laundry basket to hold balls after activity (optional)

INSTRUCTIONS

Divide the play area into half with the rope and fabric barrier. Keep the barrier about three feet off the ground. Hang bells or other noisemakers from the rope for excitement. Dump the same number of balls on each side of the barrier.

Start with an equal number of children on each side of the barrier. Tell the children to throw any balls on their side over the barrier to the other side. The goal is to get all the balls on the other side of the barrier.

Do not allow children to throw directly at another child's face.

Focus on the Throw, not on Hitting the Target

When helping children learn to throw, focus first on the way in which they are throwing (process) rather than throwing for distance or accuracy (product). In several of the activities in this book, such as **Sock the Cans** and **Sock'n Smiley**, children are throwing at a target. When leading these activities, make the target very large and place it close enough to the children so they can hit it often, even though they are not very accurate at throwing. Use the target only to give some purpose to their throwing, but avoid putting the emphasis on actually hitting the target regularly. Instead, give the children encouragement and feedback on the way in which they are throwing, not on how many targets they can hit. It is difficult to develop a mature throwing technique when preoccupied with hitting the target.



Stages of Throwing

At first, children only move their throwing arm. The rest of the body does not move as they throw. After determining which hand the child usually uses for throwing, ask the child to take a stance with the foot opposite the throwing hand in front of the body. This stance prompts the child to throw using a more advanced technique. As children become better at throwing, they consistently step forward as they throw. But they step forward on the 'wrong' foot. This means that a child who throws with the right arm will step forward with the right foot. Conversely, a child who throws with the left arm will step forward with the left foot. Prompt children to step forward with the foot *opposite* their throwing arm. This is the mature way to throw.

Cues for Learning to Throw

Just Learning: "Look at the target." "Bring the ball to your ear before you throw." "Start with this foot in front" referring to the foot opposite the throwing arm. "Step as you throw." "Point at the target" as you release the ball.

More Experienced: "Stand with your side to the target." "Throw as hard as you can."

Rubber Band Hand and Tape Toe - Suggested by Craig Learn

Place a rubber band on the wrist of the child's throwing arm. Place a piece of tape on the toe of the foot opposite the throwing arm. Prompt the child to throw with the 'rubber band hand' and step with the 'tape toe.'

Easier: Young children can stand next to the barrier and drop objects over. Children with limited mobility can sit next to the barrier and drop the soft objects over.

Harder: Challenge school-aged throwers to see how far back they can stand to throw and still get objects over the barrier.

Variety: Suspend the rope barrier at a height that is over the children's head, drape it with two or more sheets to completely block the view of the other side of the barrier, then have the children throw. It is surprising and funny to see the soft objects come flying 'out of nowhere' from the other side of the barrier. Be sure to stand so that you can see all of the children on both sides of the barrier at all times.

EASY CATCHING

View On
DVD

It takes lots of practice before a young child can catch a tossed ball. Make it easier to learn how to grasp by gently swinging a suspended ball into the child's outstretched arms.

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice catching

EQUIPMENT

- A large, soft ball or a punch ball balloon. Punch ball balloons are much thicker and stronger than party balloons.
- One pair of pantyhose

Equipment Tip: Stretch the large top part of the pantyhose over a large, soft ball. If using a punch ball balloon, place the deflated balloon inside the open end of the pantyhose, and inflate until it fits snugly. Be sure the balloon is completely covered within the pantyhose. Tie off or cover the end of the pantyhose to prevent balloon pieces from escaping should a balloon burst.



INSTRUCTIONS

Hold the two toes of the pantyhose in one hand, so the ball end of the pantyhose is suspended off the floor or ground. Gently swing the ball toward the child's outstretched arms until he grasps it. Repeat this catching activity several times, but stop before he loses interest. When he can catch the swung ball easily, try tossing him a soft, fuzzy ball for further catching practice. School-aged children might help by tossing balls to younger children.

Cues for Learning to Catch

Just Learning: "Arms out" prompt children to stand with arms outstretched in front, ready to catch. "Look at the ball."

More Experienced: Aid timing by saying "Ready, catch." Prompt to "Catch with soft hands," or "Give with the ball." "Watch the ball all the way into your hands."

Easier: Lower the ball slowly into the child's outstretched arms until he becomes familiar with grasping the ball.

Harder: For school-aged children, toss a ball that is not held inside pantyhose. Increase the distance the ball is tossed when the child can catch most tosses. Prompt to "Move to the ball."

Variety: Change the size of the ball. Use different balls, such as a beach balls, fabric balls, or playground rubber balls. Suspend the pantyhose from a tree branch or a door frame. Have the child push the ball and catch it as it returns.

EASY STRIKING

View On
DVD

Striking balloons with foam pool noodle bats helps children develop the hand-eye coordination and timing needed in striking games such as badminton, racquetball, tennis and baseball.

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Practice striking

EQUIPMENT

- Round foam pool noodle bats, one per child
- Also refer to **Easy Kicking** for equipment required in this activity.

INSTRUCTIONS

Refer to **Easy Kicking** instructions for setting up this activity and safety considerations.

Cut one foam pool noodle in half to make two bats. They are ideal for 'batting' practice because they are light in weight, and generally won't hurt if a child is accidentally struck during the activity. Give each child a bat. Play some lively music and let the children have fun striking over and over again. Do not let children wrap pantyhose or any other rope-like materials around their necks at any time. Use a piece of pool noodle to cover the legs of the pantyhose to prevent wrapping and tangling. Slit the length of the pool noodle along one side and slip it over the pantyhose legs.



Helping Children Learn to Strike

To help children grasp the concept of starting the swing with the bat behind them, use the cue "rest the bat on your shoulder before swinging." This is a concrete cue that helps children, who may not yet understand spatial relationship cues, know where to position the bat before swinging. Yet it also can develop bad habits in children who have already mastered the basics of striking. As soon as the children can understand, switch to the cue "hold the bat behind and above your shoulder."

Cues for Learning to Strike

Just Learning: "Look at the ball." "Keep the bat on your shoulder, then swing."

More Experienced: "Stand with your side to the target." "Step forward as you swing."

Easier: At first children are likely to hack or chop at the ball. Use hand-over-hand assistance to help the children learn a level swing. Older, school-aged children could help with this. With practice, and hand-over-hand assistance, children will learn to swing the bat level as they strike the ball.

Let children who have difficulty standing while striking, such as those who use wheelchairs, sit while striking. Lower tethered balls to their seated chest height.

Harder: Use less air in the balloons to make the striking target harder to hit.

Variety: Lower the height of the suspended balloons so they now rest on the floor. Ask the children to pretend that they are playing ice hockey or floor hockey or golf as they strike the balloons on the floor.

SWAT THE FLY



When you want preschoolers to run excitedly, try **Swat the Fly**. It takes just moments to learn the rules and boundaries. Then children charge around the play area, laughing and shouting, as they enjoy this activity! While some children drag 'flies,' made from plastic Frisbees and nylon cord, others chase them, trying to 'swat' the 'flies' with foam pool noodles.

GOALS FOR CHILDREN • Develop cardiovascular endurance • Practice striking



EQUIPMENT

- Foam pool noodles, cut in half to make two swatters
- Frisbees or vinyl plastic plates
- Nylon cord for pulling each Frisbee

Equipment Tip: Drill a hole through a Frisbee or plate rim. Insert a four foot length of cord, and knot it under the rim. Make two copies of the 'fly,' for each Frisbee. Tape the image of the fly to each side of the Frisbee with clear packaging tape.

NOTE:

- Have drinking water on hand and watch children closely during this activity, especially during hot and humid weather!

INSTRUCTIONS

Explain to the children that some of them will drag flies, while others chase the flies, trying to swat them with foam bats. Demonstrate dragging, swatting and moving safely within the playing area. Have all children move in the same direction to avoid collisions. Explain that children may change from dragging to swatting whenever they wish.

Give some children 'flies' to drag, and the rest foam pool noodle 'swatters,' then start the activity. If anyone objects to swatting flies, put pictures of drums on the disks instead, and have children chase the drums with their foam Pool Noodle drumsticks.

Easier: Help younger children with their movement and swatting if needed. Children who are slow runners are likely to chase flies that are dragged more slowly. Children who are fast runners are likely to chase the fast flies.

Children who use wheelchairs or mobile prone standers can swat the flies that others drag past them.

Variety: For an indoor variation, make 'flies' from balloons inside netting or pantyhose. Suspend the 'flies' from an overhead structure, leaving space for swatters to swing safely. All children become swatters to practice striking.