



# hop™

Healthy  
Opportunities for  
Preschoolers



Family  
Resource





**Literacy, Education, Activity and Play**

LEAP BC™ is an initiative of 2010 Legacies Now,  
in partnership with the Province of British Columbia and  
the University of Victoria

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"Literacy isn't something that starts at school - it's a pattern of learning and understanding that begins practically from birth. Our government is committed to making B.C. the most literate jurisdiction in North America, and programs like Healthy Opportunities for Preschoolers are key to achieving that goal. Children who are engaged in active learning from the earliest ages are more likely to succeed in school and be more active as they grow up."

*Hon. Gordon Campbell  
Premier of British Columbia*

"Through programs like LEAP BC, 2010 Legacies Now encourages early literacy and lifelong learning for all British Columbians. The HOP Family Resource presents simple activities that children and their families can do together. By learning through fun activities and play, children will build a strong foundation in literacy, physical activity and healthy eating."

*Bruce Dewar  
CEO, 2010 Legacies Now*

# Introduction

Parents are children's most important teachers. Through their actions and decisions, parents show their children what they value and help children develop their abilities. Children of preschool age are developing and learning at an unprecedented rate, and they learn best when learning is active.

Young children have a natural desire to explore their environment and to participate in new activities and challenges. When activities simultaneously involve several areas of the child's development (such as physical, social, language, creative and intellectual), learning is most powerful. The activity suggestions in this book capitalize on children's desire to learn actively and naturally.

These activities are fun and provide many opportunities for parents and caregivers to spend time playfully and productively with children. Play lies at the heart of childhood and is a major source and stimulus for learning. This book describes activities and ideas that encourage play with a purpose.

The Healthy Opportunities for Preschoolers (HOP™) Family Resource is part of the LEAP BC™ program, which is an initiative of 2010 Legacies Now in partnership with the Province of British Columbia and the University of Victoria. LEAP BC™ provides children from birth to age five with a strong foundation in literacy, physical activity, and healthy eating. The program offers resources and training to support parents and caregivers as they actively participate in children's learning.



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# Key ideas

On the pages that follow, you will find the key ideas that are central to this book. Designed for three to five-year-old children and their parents and caregivers, these ideas reflect current professional consensus on ways to support the growth and development of children.

The links to these key ideas are noted on each activity page. They remind us of just how much learning can be built into simple and enjoyable play activities. Engaging in this type of play lays a foundation of attitudes, habits, skills, and values that will last a lifetime.





## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



1. Play with your child.
2. Play actively every day.
3. Play vigorously.
4. Develop movement skills.
5. Build physical activity into your day.
6. Use physical activity to support learning and social development.
7. Promote creativity and self-expression.

## LITERACY



1. Support play and activity with talk and other forms of communication.
2. Vary the vocabulary.
3. Play with, and emphasize the letters and sounds of the language. Read aloud with your child.
4. Promote pretend play.
5. Count, sort, classify, and predict.
6. Draw, paint, and write with your child.
7. Be a role model.
8. Honour your home language.



## HEALTHY EATING



1. Plan and provide a variety of healthy foods.
2. Offer new foods often.
3. Offer meals and snacks at the same times each day.
4. Make time to eat together.
5. Help your child develop eating skills.
6. Let your child's hunger and fullness cues guide you.
7. Involve your child in cooking and gardening activities.





# Physical activity

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY



1. Play with your child.
2. Play actively every day.
3. Play vigorously.
4. Develop movement skills.
5. Build physical activity into your day.
6. Use physical activity to support learning and social development.
7. Promote creativity and self-expression.

**Physical Activity:** When most of the body is moving (e.g. riding a tricycle, running or digging in the garden). It does not include play such as puzzles or drawing.

1. **Play with your child:** Joining in connects you with your child. While you have fun, you are also helping your child develop in many different ways. As a bonus, playing with your child is a great way for you to be active.
2. **Play actively every day:** Preschoolers need at least two hours of active movement every day. They shouldn't be inactive for more than an hour at a time, except when sleeping.
3. **Play vigorously:** Preschoolers need opportunities every day to use up energy. Running, jumping, and skipping are great because they use the large muscles in the legs and trunk and burn



energy. Healthy body weight, bone strength, cardiovascular fitness, and muscle strength come from large muscle activity.

4. **Develop movement skills:** Preschoolers need many opportunities to practice and gain confidence in basic movement skills. These skills are the building blocks of more complex movement patterns and include:
  - a. Skills to manipulate objects such as throwing a bean bag, catching a scarf, and kicking a ball. Manipulative skills are also called “eye-hand” and “eye-foot” coordination activities.
  - b. Locomotion skills such as hopping, jumping, and skipping.
  - c. Body control skills such as balancing and making shapes with their body.
  - d. Body awareness skills such as moving in a space and timing of movement.
5. **Build physical activity into your day:** A healthy lifestyle includes choosing active options when you can. For example, walking to drop off children at school or taking the stairs instead of an escalator. Young children learn from what they see us do.
6. **Use physical activity to support learning and social development:** Play time is when your child can actively explore the environment, practice cooperating, sharing, and dealing with conflict. Play strengthens thinking skills and language and literacy development.
7. **Promote creativity and self-expression:** Preschoolers need opportunities to express themselves through movement and to make believe. Play that allows children to create new ideas and solutions helps develop their thinking and social skills.



# Literacy

## LITERACY



1. Support play and activity with talk and other forms of communication.
2. Vary the vocabulary.
3. Play with, and emphasize, the letters and sounds of the language. Read aloud with your child.
4. Promote pretend play.
5. Count, sort, classify, and predict.
6. Draw, paint, and write with your child.
7. Be a role model.
8. Honour your home language.

**Literacy:** Interpreting ("read") and using ("write") the symbol systems (e.g. letters, numbers, images, music) valued by society.

1. **Support play and activity with and other forms of communication:** Play and movement activities offer powerful opportunities for children to build and strengthen their language and literacy skills.
  - a. Talk or sign about what you're doing: show, do, describe as you go and encourage your child to do the same.
  - b. Read with your child (e.g. signs, labels, books, poems).
2. **Vary the vocabulary:** Preschoolers are like "language sponges" eager to absorb new words and test their meanings. Descriptions of movement provide endless opportunities for vocabulary enrichment:



- a. Movement words: climb, scramble, balance, race, hop, etc.
  - b. Directional words: left, right, sideways, backwards, down, etc.
  - c. Describing words: lightly, rambunctiously, softly, etc.
  - d. Analogies/similes: "limp like a puppy with a sore paw."
3. **Play with, and emphasize, the letters and sounds of the language:** Playful exposure to similar sounding or rhyming words (e.g. bat, mat, cat), songs, and chants ("...and they swam and they swam, right over the dam") provides preschoolers with a natural and pleasurable way to distinguish between and manipulate sounds (phonemic awareness).
  4. **Promote pretend play:** Pretending allows young children to take on new roles, new characters, and "live" through both new and familiar scenarios (e.g. "Okay, pretend I'm the baby unicorn and you're my sister."). Pretend play stretches and frees the child's use of language, and powerfully supports learning.
  5. **Count, sort, classify, and predict:** Counting, tallying, sorting, sequencing, comparing, measuring, categorizing, and predicting build mathematical understanding and thinking skills.
  6. **Draw, paint and write with your child:** Creating lists, maps, drawings, signs, and recipes as part of everyday activity provides opportunities to explore how written language works, and demonstrates how experiences can be recorded and represented.
  7. **Be a role model:** Young children learn from what they see us do. They need to see our pleasure in language and activity.
  8. **Honour your home language:** Talk and read with your child in the language most comfortable for both of you. This provides a strong bridge to competence and literacy in additional languages.



# Healthy eating

## HEALTHY EATING



1. Plan and provide a variety of healthy foods.
2. Offer new foods often.
3. Offer meals and snacks at the same times each day.
4. Make time to eat together.
5. Help your child develop eating skills.
6. Let your child's hunger and fullness cues guide you.
7. Involve your child in cooking and gardening activities.

**Healthy Eating:** Enjoying nutritious foods in a relaxed and social environment.

- 1. Plan and provide a variety of healthy foods:** Offer a variety of vegetables and fruits, grain products, milk and alternatives (e.g. yogurt, cheese) as well as meat and alternatives (e.g. fish, tofu, eggs) from *Canada's Food Guide*\*.
- 2. Offer new foods often:** Allow your child to taste a new food with no pressure to eat any number of bites. It may take 15 to 20 tries before a child accepts a new food.
- 3. Offer meals and snacks at the same times each day:** Children need the routine of regular eating. They have small





stomachs and need to eat every two to three hours. Children will eat better if they do not nibble on food or drink beverages other than water between meal and snack times.

4. **Make time to eat together:** Be good company. Take the time to sit down to role model eating and talking with your child. Enjoy relaxed and social eating without interruptions (e.g. toys, TV, or phone calls).
5. **Help your child develop eating skills:** Help your child to progress from foods that are smooth to foods that are more difficult to chew. Use child-sized plates, bowls, spoons and forks. Use child friendly dishes to help children learn to serve themselves.
6. **Let your child's hunger and fullness cues guide you:** Appetites vary from day to day so offer small amounts and allow your child to ask for more. Avoid pleading with or forcing your child to eat.
7. **Involve your child in cooking and gardening activities:** Children who help to choose, prepare and grow food are more likely to eat well. Books, rhymes, songs, and play activities can increase children's awareness of, and interest in, food and eating.

\* *Canada's Food Guide* is available to download at:  
[www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide](http://www.healthcanada.gc.ca/foodguide)



# How to enjoy this book with your child

The activities in this book are designed to be fun for both you and your child, and have been carefully crafted to ensure that *lots of learning will be going on*.

The pages and call outs below show the main features of the activity pages.

Identifies key benefits and skills.

Recommended equipment that is low cost, easily made or accessible.

The page number directs you to the "Let's make" section for equipment and recipes.

Suggests books, usually found in your local library, to extend the activities.

"Let's play" offers many activities to choose from. Some are more challenging than others; however they are not arranged in order of difficulty.

Some words may be new to your child. These are included to help expand vocabulary. Have fun exploring and explaining these new words.

**hop**

## Bubble chase

- Physical activity links:** Playing actively every day; developing spatial awareness; eye-hand coordination; playing with your child
- Language/literacy links:** Vocabulary development (describe and explain); predicting; emphasize the letters and sounds of the language
- Equipment:** Bubble mix, bubble wand or pipe cleaners shaped into a wand
- Where:** Indoors (bathtub) or outdoors
- Let's make:** Bubble recipe and bubble wands for different types of bubbles (see pages 100-101)
- Book link:** *Pop! A Book About Bubbles* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

### Let's play

- ❖ With your child take turns blowing bubbles; while one blows the other tries to pop the bubbles before they hit the ground.
- ❖ Pop the bubbles using different actions (e.g. karate chop, tickle) or body parts (e.g. knees, elbows, fingers).
- ❖ Sing "Pop! Goes the Weasel" while you play.
- ❖ Try to catch the bubbles back onto the wand without breaking them.

**POP GOES THE WEASEL**

All around the cobbler's bench  
The monkey chased the weasel.  
The monkey thought 'twas all in fun -  
Pop! Goes the weasel.

Johnny has the whooping cough,  
Mary has the measles.  
That's the way the money goes -  
Pop! Goes the weasel.

A penny for a spool of thread  
A penny for a needle.  
That's the way the money goes -  
Pop! Goes the weasel.

All around the mulberry bush,  
The monkey chased the weasel.  
That's the way the money goes -  
Pop! Goes the weasel.

- Anonymous

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Including books, poems, songs, and stories in other languages that you know will add rich language experience to the activities.

If you find you don't have some of the equipment or ingredients, or your library doesn't have the particular book, go ahead and substitute, modify, or invent your own way.



You'll find tips on how to help your child with a skill or activity where you see the HOP™ rabbit.



On some pages you'll see dotted pictures like this bear. This shows that pretend play is encouraged.

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY & LITERACY

**Try this way**

- ❖ Read the poem "My Big Balloon," then conduct an experiment to see how blowing differently (e.g. hard, soft; steadily, in puffs) changes the bubbles. Have your child describe what she saw and explain what happened.
- ❖ For more ways to play with bubbles, read *Pop! A Book About Bubbles*.

**MY BIG BALLOON**  
 I can make a big balloon,  
 Watch me while I blow.  
 Small at first, then bigger,  
 Watch it grow and grow.  
 Do you think it's big enough?  
 Maybe I should stop.  
 For if I blow much longer,  
 My balloon will surely pop!

- Jackie Silberg and Pam Schiller

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"Try this way" offers variations in activities including links to books to support language and literacy development.

Illustrations show the main activity ideas.

Poems are included to encourage movement and imagination while adding fun with language.



# Bean bag golf

**Physical activity links:** Playing with your child; developing movement skills (eye-hand coordination); playing actively

**Language/literacy links:** Counting; drawing; vocabulary (e.g. days of the week, sea creatures); pretend play; predicting

**Equipment:** 1 throwing object (such as a bean bag or tennis ball) per child; 2 or more start markers (tees); 2 or more hoops or old tea towels (holes)

**Where:** Outdoors

**Let's make:** Bean bags (optional) (see page 105)

## Let's play

- ❖ Set out a golf course with the start markers (tees) about three to four metres away from the hoops (hole). Make as many golf holes as you wish.
- ❖ Start at the first tee and throw the object overarm or underarm towards the first hoop.
- ❖ Continue to throw the object and count how many throws until it lands inside the hoop.
- ❖ Move to next tee.
- ❖ With multiple players, the child whose object is furthest from the "hole" throws first each time. Others wait behind this thrower before moving to the next closest bean bag.





## Try this way

- ❖ Vary distances between the tees and hoops. Have your child predict how many throws it will take to get the bean bag into each hoop. Throw to see if the prediction is confirmed.
- ❖ Have your child draw pictures of sea creatures he might see in an aquarium. Ask him to put the pictures he has drawn into each hoop. Add pretend by inviting your child to imagine he is feeding the fish and mammals at the aquarium. The task is to make sure the food (bean bag) reaches the sea creatures. Some creatures may need more food than others, so throw lots of objects.
- ❖ Set out a scarf or sheet for a hazard/trap. If the bean bag lands in the hazard it can only be picked up while standing on one foot.
- ❖ Have seven tees and holes, one labelled with a card for each day of the week, but not arranged in order. The task is to play the holes in sequence from Monday to Sunday.
- ❖ Encourage the children to design their own golf course.





# Bocce

**Physical activity links:** Playing with your child; developing movement skills (throwing, eye-hand coordination); developing social skills (turn taking, cooperation)

**Language/literacy links:** Vocabulary (movement words: e.g. slide, toss, close, far, near); count and measure; predicting

**Equipment:** 1 small ball (jack), several bean bags or soft toys per child, an everyday object for measuring

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Let's make:** Bean bags (optional) (see page 105)

## Let's play

- ❖ Place a small ball or "jack" a few metres away from the starting point.
- ❖ With your child take turns to underarm throw or slide your bean bags toward the "jack". Try to get the bean bags as close to the "jack" as you can.





## Try this way

- ❖ Have your child find an object, such as a block, a toy car, or a shoe, to use as a measure. Play the game and then measure how close each bean bag is to the "jack."
- ❖ Before tossing the bean bags, guess the distance of the closest and the furthest bean bag from the "jack." Measure to confirm.
- ❖ For a child with a vision impairment, have her walk back from the "jack" to the starting point so she knows how many steps away the "jack" is. Give clues to the accuracy of the throw (e.g. "one step too far").





# Bounce it

**Physical activity links:** Developing movement skills (bouncing, eye-hand coordination); playing with your child

**Language/literacy links:** Vocabulary (speed and height words: e.g. high, medium, low; fast, slow); chants; counting; writing numbers

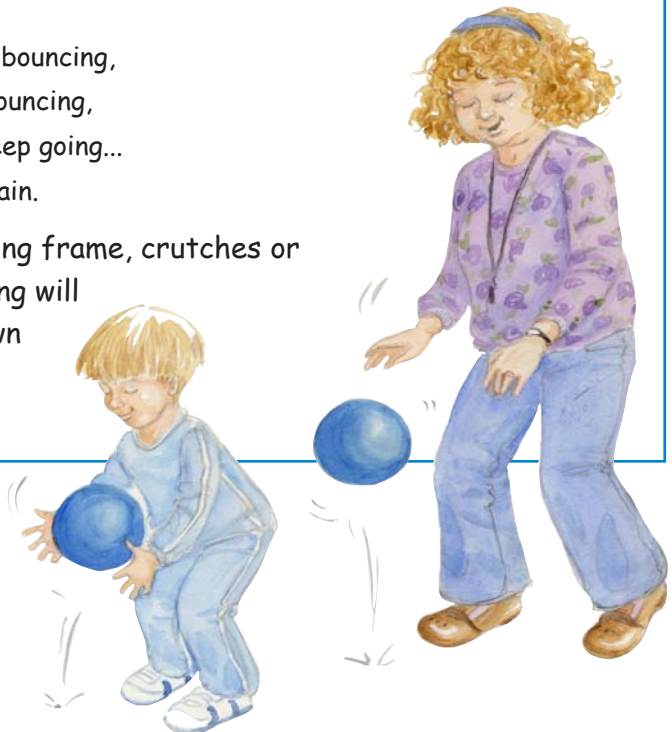
**Equipment:** 1 medium sized ball; 1 tennis ball; 1 beach bucket per child

**Where:** Outdoors

**Book links:** *Bouncing* by Shirley Hughes; *Bouncing on the Bed* by Jackie French Koller; *Bouncing Time* by Patricia Hubbell

## Let's play

- ❖ Show your child how to drop and catch a medium sized ball while standing.
- ❖ Encourage him to drop and catch as many times as possible in a row. Count the number of bounces and try to match or beat that number the next time. Help him write down the highest number reached.
- ❖ Keep count by chanting:  
One, two, three, ball bouncing,  
Four, five, six, still bouncing,  
Seven, eight, nine, keep going...  
Get to ten... begin again.
- ❖ Children who use a walking frame, crutches or canes to help with walking will benefit from sitting down so their hands are free to bounce the ball.







## Try this way

- ❖ Try bouncing and moving (e.g. follow a line, play follow-the-leader).
- ❖ Change the rebound height by bouncing hard and soft. "Bounce low, tummy high, and reach for the sky."
- ❖ Older children might like to try bouncing a medium sized ball with one hand.
- ❖ Count and bounce on every second or third number (e.g. one, **two**, three, **four**; 1,2,3,4,5,6...).
- ❖ Bounce a tennis ball with one hand, holding a beach bucket or plastic container in the other hand. Catch the ball in the bucket.
  - As you do this, sing "Five Little Monkeys"... and bounce and catch the ball with the bucket each time the phrase "and bumped his head" comes around.
- ❖ Read any one of the books about bouncing with your child.

### FIVE LITTLE MONKEYS

*Five little monkeys*

*Jumping on the bed*

*One fell off and bumped his head, [bounce and catch the ball in the bucket]*

*Momma called the doctor and the doctor said [retrieve the ball from bucket]*

*"No more monkeys jumping on the bed!" [wag finger at the bucket]*

*Four little monkeys... etc.*

- Anonymous





# Bubble chase

**Physical activity links:** Playing actively every day; developing spatial awareness; eye-hand coordination; playing with your child

**Language/literacy links:** Vocabulary development (describe and explain); predicting; emphasize the letters and sounds of the language

**Equipment:** Bubble mix, bubble wand or pipe cleaners shaped into a wand

**Where:** Indoors (bathtub) or outdoors

**Let's make:** Bubble recipe and bubble wands for different types of bubbles (see pages 100-101)

**Book link:** *Pop! A Book About Bubbles* by Kimberly Brubaker Bradley

## Let's play

- ❖ With your child take turns blowing bubbles; while one blows the other tries to pop the bubbles before they hit the ground.
- ❖ Pop the bubbles using different actions (e.g. karate chop, tickle) or body parts (e.g. knees, elbows, fingers).
- ❖ Sing "Pop Goes the Weasel" while you play.
- ❖ Try to catch the bubbles back onto the wand without breaking them.

### POP GOES THE WEASEL

*All around the cobbler's bench  
The monkey chased the weasel.  
The monkey thought 'twas all in fun -  
Pop! Goes the weasel.*

*Johnny has the whooping cough,  
Mary has the measles.  
That's the way the money goes -  
Pop! Goes the weasel.*

*A penny for a spool of thread  
A penny for a needle.  
That's the way the money goes -  
Pop! Goes the weasel.*

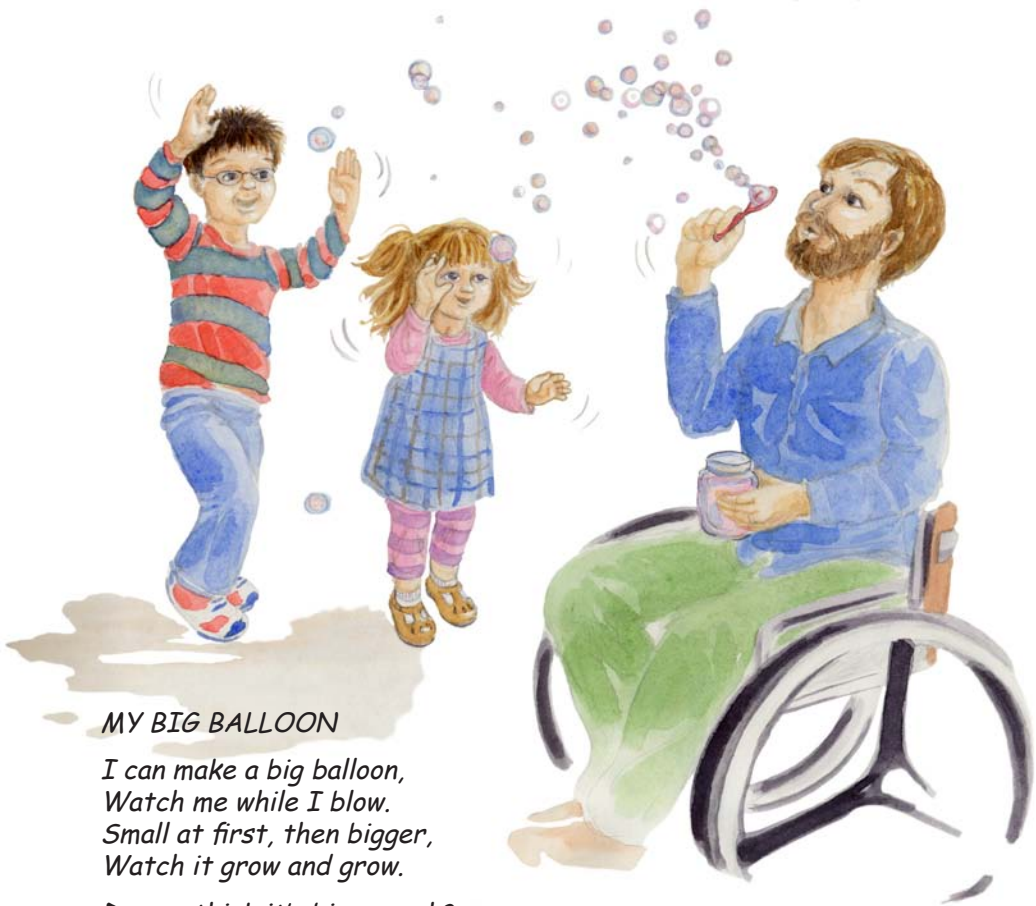
*All around the mulberry bush,  
The monkey chased the weasel.  
That's the way the money goes -  
Pop! Goes the weasel.*

- Anonymous



## Try this way

- ❖ Read the poem "My Big Balloon," then conduct an experiment to see how blowing differently (e.g. hard, soft; steadily, in puffs) changes the bubbles. Have your child describe what she saw and explain what happened.
- ❖ For more ways to play with bubbles, read *Pop! A Book About Bubbles*.



### MY BIG BALLOON

*I can make a big balloon,  
Watch me while I blow.  
Small at first, then bigger,  
Watch it grow and grow.*

*Do you think it's big enough?  
Maybe I should stop.  
For if I blow much longer,  
My balloon will surely pop!*

*- Jackie Silberg and Pam Schiller*



# Cloud catching

**Physical activity links:** Developing movement skills (eye-hand coordination, catching, throwing); creativity

**Language/literacy links:** Pretend play; vocabulary (body part words, similes)

**Equipment:** 1 scarf, tissue, handkerchief or paper towel per child

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Book link:** *Once Upon a Cloud* by Rob D. Walker

## Let's play

- ❖ Read the poem "Clouds," then toss the scarf (cloud) in the air and let it fall to the ground.
- ❖ Try catching the "cloud" with different body parts: head, knee, back, foot. Invite your child to suggest other possibilities... elbow? bottom? chin?

### CLOUDS

*White sheep, white sheep  
On a blue hill,  
When the wind stops  
You all stand still.  
When the wind blows  
You walk away slow.  
White sheep, white sheep,  
Where do you go?*

- Christina G. Rossetti





## Try this way

- ❖ Add actions before catching: clap hands then catch; squat down then catch; touch nose then catch; turn around then catch. Add challenge by trying to do two or three actions before catching.
- ❖ Toss a scarf back and forth to a partner. Try throwing two scarves at the same time and catching each other's scarf.
- ❖ Read the poem "My Kite." Pretend the scarf is a kite and you are a tree. In a big space, have your child run with the "kite" above her head and then let it go. You run behind and catch the kite in your "terrible tree branches"... then run and let it go for your child to catch.
- ❖ Read *Once Upon a Cloud* with your child and talk about clouds (e.g. the different shapes and colours, where clouds come from, what they are).

### MY KITE

*It was splendid,  
 My kite ---  
 It flew and it flew  
 When we let out the string  
 In the wind,  
 And we knew  
     It would fly with the birds ---  
     It would fly to the sea ---*

*Then its tail  
 Tangled up in a  
 Terrible tree.*

- Myra Cohn Livingston





# Creative balances

**Physical activity links:** Developing movement skills (body awareness and manipulation, balance); creativity

**Language/literacy links:** Vocabulary (e.g. sit, squat, cross-legged); number knowledge; support activity with talk and sign (interpreting instructions)

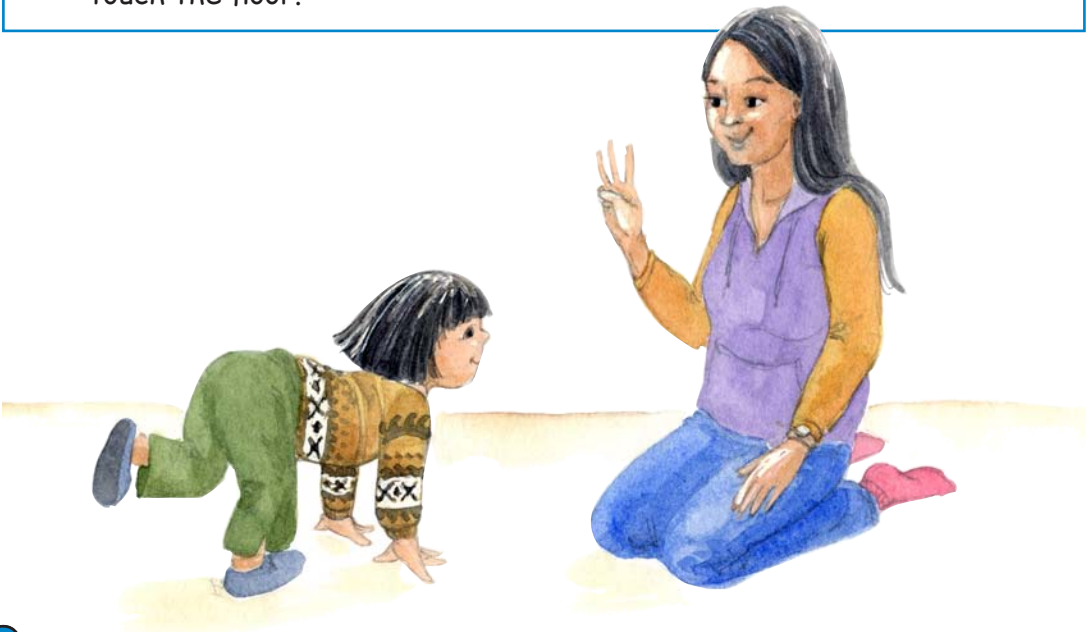
**Equipment:** None

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Book link:** *The Little Red Hen and the Grains of Wheat* by L. R. Hen and Jago

## Let's play

- ❖ Show your child different ways to balance. Invite her to copy your actions (e.g. stand on one leg, on tiptoes, two knees and one hand, bottom and two hands, cross-legged, squat, etc.).
- ❖ Play "Puzzle Balances": ask your child to show how she can balance on different combinations of body parts (e.g. "balance on your bottom and two elbows," "balance on one foot and one hand," "balance on a part that has no toes"). Call out a number for how many parts can touch the floor.





## Try this way

- ❖ Read *The Little Red and the Grains of Wheat* with your child. Point out that it's written in two different languages. Have your child find all the places in the book where the animals are balancing.
- ❖ Invite your child to create new ways of balancing (e.g. "Can you think of another way to balance?") and describe what they've done (e.g. "Look Mom, I'm on one knee and two elbows!").
- ❖ Join your child in partner balances by leaning on or away from each other, matching hands, knees, bottoms... Stand in a balanced position with your feet apart, hold your child's hand and have him lean away from you, trying to lift his outside foot off the ground.





# Follow the trail

**Physical activity links:** Developing movement skills (body control skills and spatial awareness); creativity

**Language/literacy links:** Vocabulary (position words: over, under, through, beside, between, along); pretend play

**Equipment:** Ten metres of string, wool, or rope

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Book link:** *We're Going on a Bear Hunt* by Michael Rosen

## Let's play

- ❖ Outline a winding trail on the floor, carpet, grassy area, or down the hall. Have your child follow the trail using crawling and creeping actions.
- ❖ Suggest, or ask your child to suggest, different ways of moving along the trail (e.g. scampering like a squirrel, stalking like a cat, creeping backwards).
  - Some children have difficulty inventing movement ideas; they can benefit from copying other's responses before creating their own movements.
- ❖ Read the "Caterpillar" poem together, and take turns doing snail tickles up each other's backs.







## Try this way

- ❖ With your child, arrange the trail to go over, under, between and around objects in the house. Out loud, describe where the trail goes and invite your child to do the same.
- ❖ Introduce number sequences: "Creep three paces forward, crawl back four, shake like a wet dog, then crawl forward six more."
- ❖ Work in pairs, with your child leading the creeping or crawling while you, or another child, follow behind holding onto his ankles; take turns and rotate positions.
- ❖ After reading *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*, pretend the rope is the trail to the bear's cave... and join your child in sequencing and reversing all the actions along the way.

### CATERPILLAR

*"Who's that ticklin' my back?" said the wall, (crawl fingers up your child's back)  
"Me," said a small caterpillar, "I'm learning to crawl."*

- Anonymous





# Freeze dance

**Physical activity links:** Vigorous play; creativity and self-expression; social skills; developing movement skills (e.g. locomotor and body control)

**Language/literacy links:** Vocabulary development; support play with talk and sign (e.g. interpreting directions); pretend play

**Equipment:** Music (e.g. CD player, radio, singing)

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Book link:** *Animals Can Be So Playful* by Diane Swanson

## Let's play

- ❖ Invite your child to move to the music (e.g. walk, skip, roll, twirl, jump, sway). Stop the music and call "freeze." The challenge for your child is to stay perfectly still until you start the music again (e.g. three to four seconds).
- ❖ Play freeze dance differently by:
  - Calling out different characters or objects and have your child move between "freeze!" commands like: an ice-skater spinning; a puppy with a sore paw; a cat stalking a bird; a sleek racing car; a donkey pulling a very heavy load...
  - Read "On Our Way" with your child and act out movements in the poem.





## Try this way

- ❖ Read the book *Animals Can Be So Playful* and act out the movements in the pictures. Take turns coming up with and calling out movement ideas. Use these actions in freeze dance.
- ❖ While playing freeze dance have your child interpret feeling words with movement: happily, sadly, energetically, solemnly, mysteriously, joyfully, etc.

### ON OUR WAY

What kind of walk shall we take today?  
 Leap like a frog? Creep like a snail?  
 Scamper like a squirrel with a furry tail?  
 Flutter like a butterfly? Chicken peck?  
 Stretch like a turtle with a poking-out neck?  
 Scuttle like a crab? Kangaroo jump?  
 Plod like a camel with an up-and-down hump?  
 We could try a brand-new way --  
 Walking down the street  
 On our own two feet.

- Eve Merriam





# Head, shoulders, knees and toes

**Physical activity links:** Developing movement skills (body awareness, rhythm, and timing)

**Language/literacy links:** Learning the sounds of the language (rhyme, chanting); support activity with talk and sign (interpreting instructions); vocabulary (body parts)

**Equipment:** None

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Book link:** *Eyes, Nose, Fingers and Toes* by Judy Hindley

## Let's play

- ❖ Sing or say the following while touching each body part with both hands:
  - Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes
  - Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes
  - And eyes and ears and mouth and nose
  - Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes
- Children who use crutches or canes for mobility will be able to do this activity more easily if they sit down.
- ❖ Read and make up the actions for "Wiggle Waggle" and "I Use My Brain." Touch each body part mentioned and have your child do the same.



## Try this way

- ❖ Repeat verse from "Let's Play"; progressively leave out singing each body part but still perform the actions. For example, the next verse would be:

\_\_\_\_, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes

\_\_\_\_, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes

And eyes and ears and mouth and nose

\_\_\_\_, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes

Ultimately the children will perform actions only.

- ❖ Read the book *Eyes, Nose, Fingers and Toes* together.



### *I USE MY BRAIN*

*I use my brain to think, think, think.  
I use my nose to smell.  
I use my eyes to blink, blink, blink.  
I use my throat to yell.  
I use my mouth to giggle, giggle, giggle.  
I use my hips to bump.  
I use my toes to wiggle, wiggle, wiggle,  
And I use my legs to jump.*

- Jackie Silberg

### *WIGGLE WAGGLE*

*Waggle my fingers  
And wriggle my toes,  
Waggle my shoulders  
And wiggle my nose.*

- Margaret Mayo



# Helicopter

**Physical activity links:** Vigorous play (building strong bones and muscles); developing movement skills (jumping, timing)

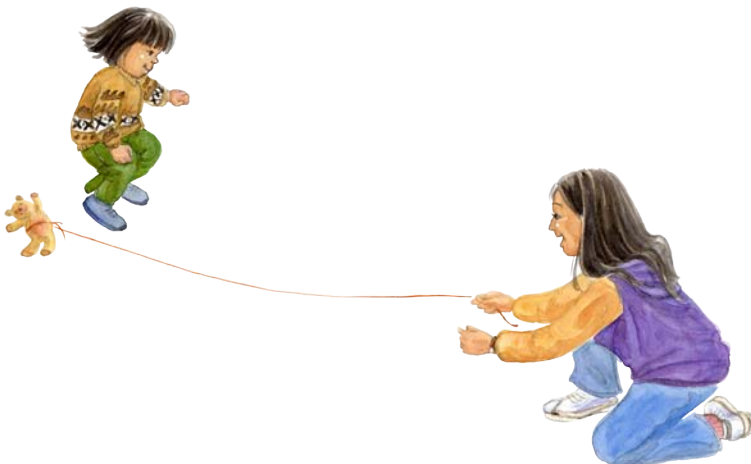
**Language/literacy links:** Support activity with talk; playing with the letters and sounds of the language (chanting, counting rhymes, spelling)

**Equipment:** A skipping rope weighted with a soft object (e.g. a bean bag) at one end

**Where:** Outdoors or large indoor space

## Let's play

- ❖ Holding the skipping rope at one end, kneel or bend down and slowly move the rope in a circle around your body. To keep the rope moving without spinning yourself around, you'll need to pass the rope from hand to hand. Keep the rope low to the ground.
- ❖ Invite your child to jump over the rope when it reaches her.
  - If this is too difficult, wiggle the rope like a snake on the ground for your child to jump over.
- ❖ Each time your child jumps over the rope, call out one letter of her name (or the name of animals, friends, etc.) until the word is complete (R H E E N A); invite your child to take over the spelling.





## Try this way

- ❖ To increase the challenge you can turn or wiggle the rope faster.
- ❖ Accompany the spinning of the rope with skipping rhymes and chants:

Around and around  
and around we go,  
Where we'll end up,  
Nobody knows!
- ❖ Count each jump backwards to blast-off!

Ten - nine - eight - seven - six - five - four - three - two  
- one - blast-off!





# Hit the target

**Physical activity links:** Developing movement skills (throwing, eye-hand coordination)

**Language/literacy links:** Vocabulary (number or letter recognition); counting and addition; measurement; drawing and writing

**Equipment:** Throwing objects; targets (paper or sponge balls for indoors)

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Let's make:** Bean bags (optional) (see page 105)

**Book link:** *One Bright Monday Morning* by Arline and Joseph Baum

## Let's play

- ❖ With your child, create and set up a variety of targets (e.g. empty milk cartons to knock down, paper targets on the wall). Throw underarm or overarm to hit the targets.
- ❖ Take turns calling out for each other which target to aim for, and whether to throw underarm or overarm (e.g. "overarm at the pink heart"; "underarm to the juice bottle").
- ❖ Read the poem "Throw the ball" together.



### HOW TO THROW A BALL OVERARM

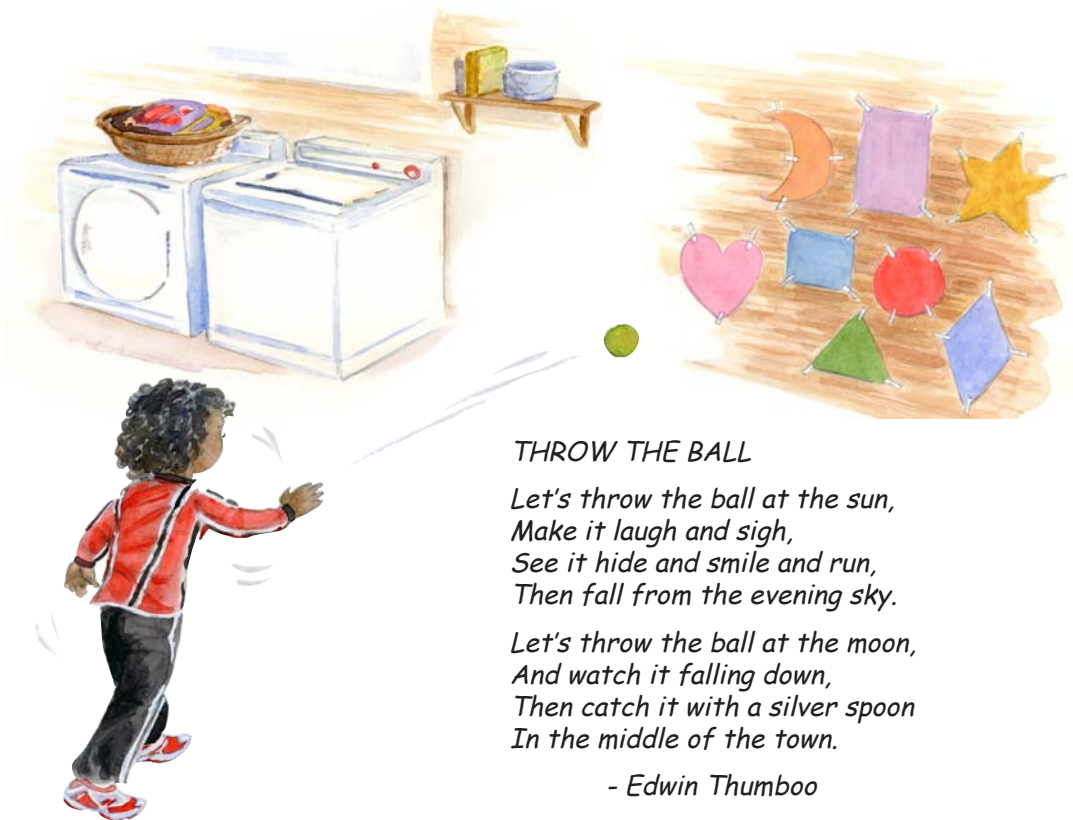
*Stand side on,  
Make a star,  
Point your finger,  
Throw it far.*





## Try this way

- ❖ Put your child in charge of setting the distance to the targets. Invite her to measure and mark the distance by measuring with footsteps; help her count and record the number.
- ❖ Change target size, colour, shape, height from ground; and have your child aim from largest to smallest, from closest to furthest, from lowest to highest, etc.
- ❖ Put numbers 1 through 5 on targets and:
  - Take turns with your child hitting each one in sequence.
  - Hit number 1 once; number 2 twice, number 3 three times, etc. Then read *One Bright Monday Morning* to discover another number pattern.
  - Have three throws and help your child total the number of points scored ( $1 + 4 + 2 = 7$ ).



### THROW THE BALL

*Let's throw the ball at the sun,  
Make it laugh and sigh,  
See it hide and smile and run,  
Then fall from the evening sky.*

*Let's throw the ball at the moon,  
And watch it falling down,  
Then catch it with a silver spoon  
In the middle of the town.*

- Edwin Thumboo



# Join the band

**Physical activity links:** Developing movement skills (body and spatial awareness, rhythm, timing); playing actively

**Language/literacy links:** Playing with sounds (distinguishing, creating, describing); pretend play

**Equipment:** Homemade instruments; CD player (optional)

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Let's make:** Musical instruments (see pages 102-104)

**Book link:** *Nicholas Cricket* by Joyce Maxner

## Let's play

- ❖ With your child, experiment with the different sounds the instruments can make. Play loudly, softly, quickly, slowly.
- ❖ Play along in time to rhythmic clapping or music (e.g. on CD or tape), moving all around the space. Stop the music or clapping every now and then and change instruments. Vary the rhythm and encourage your child to try to keep the beat.





## Try this way

- ❖ Read *Nicholas Cricket*. Pretend to be a marching band and swing and strut and sashay as you march and play. Step out with heavy steps to strong beats and light ones to soft beats.
- ❖ Model different musical moods: happy sounds; gentle sounds; angry sounds, etc. Invite your child to identify the feelings that fit the sounds created... and to create sounds for you to describe with words. Call out different "moods" (e.g. happy; tired; giggly; angry) and have your child respond with music, varying instruments, rhythm and volume.
- ❖ Read or sing and enjoy "BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! OOMM - PAH! - PAH!" and play all the imaginary instruments.

*BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! OOMM - PAH! - PAH!*

*We can play on the big bass drum  
And this is the way we do it:  
BOOM! BOOM! BOOM!  
Goes the big bass drum,  
And that is the music to it.*

*We can play on the xylophone  
And this is the way we do it:  
PING! PONG! PONG!  
Goes the xylophone,  
And that is the music to it*

*We can play on the silver flute  
And this is the way we do it:  
TOOT! TOOT! TOOT!  
Goes the silver flute,  
And that is the music to it.*

*We can play on the big fat tuba  
And this is the way we do it:  
OOMM - PAH! - PAH!  
Goes the big fat tuba,  
And that is the music to it.*

*We can play on the tambourine  
And this is the way we do it:  
JINGLY - JING!  
Goes the tambourine,  
And that is the music to it.*

*- Margaret Mayo*



# Knock down

**Physical activity links:** Developing movement skills (rolling, kicking, throwing, hockey pass skills, eye-hand and eye-foot coordination); supporting learning (problem solving skills)

**Language/literacy links:** Letter, number identification; vocabulary (shape, color)

**Equipment:** 1 ball per child; targets to knock down such as shoe boxes; plastic hockey stick or rolled up newspaper

**Where:** Outdoors or large indoor space

## Let's play

- ❖ Stand the targets up like bowling pins and draw a line two to five metres in front of the targets for the bowler to stand behind.
- ❖ Invite your child to knock over the pins by rolling the ball.
  - Children with vision impairment can be assisted to know the direction of the pins by having music playing behind the pins or a fan blowing air from the pins to the child.
- ❖ Together with your child, rearrange the pins to make them more difficult to hit, e.g. further apart.





## Try this way

- ❖ Ask "How else can you knock the pins down?" or "What other parts of your body can you use to knock the pins down?" "Can you kick the ball or use a hockey stick to push the ball?"
- ❖ Decorate targets with shapes or letters. Have your child name the shapes or letters on the targets they've knocked over. Variation:
  - Try and knock down pins in sequence, such as first D, then G, then X.





# Leap frog

**Physical activity links:** Vigorous play (building strong bones and muscles)

**Language/literacy links:** Counting; vocabulary (alphabet letters, in, on, over words)

**Equipment:** Cushions, felt squares, or tea towels

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Book link:** *Puddles* by Jonathan London

## Let's play

- ❖ Scatter cushions (lily pads) around area.
- ❖ Invite your child to squat like a frog and leap frog over the tea towels, moving around the area. Have her count how many lily pads she can clear without touching them.
- ❖ Play "SPLASH!" — your child jumps over the puddles except when you call out "Splash!"... and then she has to land in the nearest puddle.
- ❖ Read the "Sometimes" poem and help your child feel her heart thumping.
  - Children with mobility difficulties can move around the tea towels using their preferred way of moving.





## Try this way

- ❖ Challenge older children to call out an alphabet letter for every lily pad they jump over. See how far along the alphabet they can get before getting "puffed out."
- ❖ Every time your child jumps over a tea towel, encourage her to call out, in sequence, a letter of her name (J O R D I N).
- ❖ Read *Puddles* and arrange the tea towels to make a trail of "puddles." Challenge your child to leap from puddle to puddle without landing on dry ground.



### *SOMETIMES*

*Sometimes  
when I skip or hop  
or when I'm  
jumping*

*Suddenly  
I like to stop  
and listen to me  
thumping.*

*- Lilian Moore*





# Let's fly

**Physical activity links:** Playing with your child; vigorous play; developing movement skills (e.g. jump, leap, body and spatial awareness)

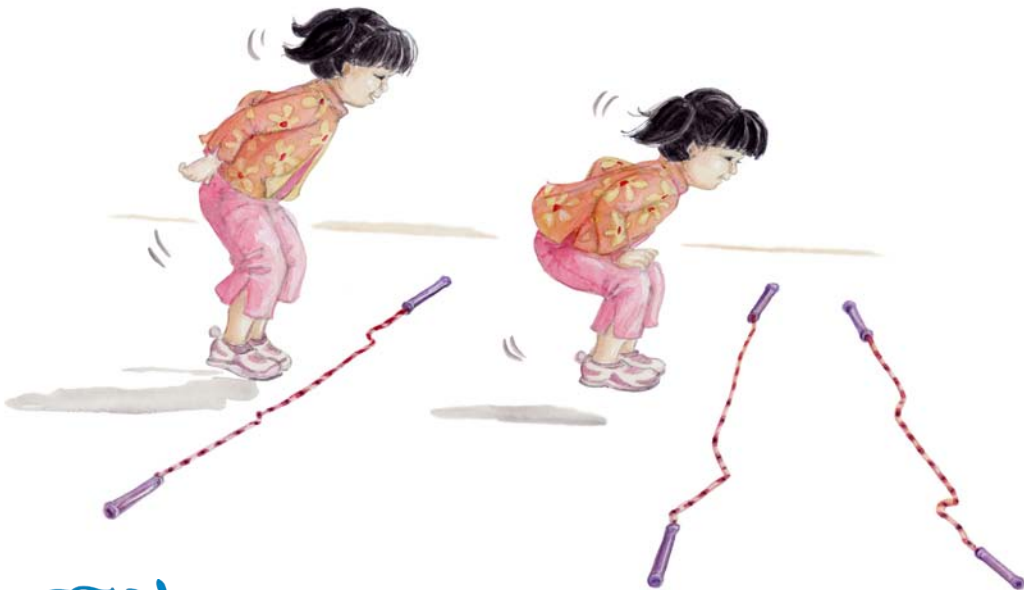
**Language/literacy links:** Pretend play; play with the sounds of language

**Equipment:** Chalk or small ropes

**Where:** Outdoors or large indoor space

## Let's play

- ❖ With chalk or ropes, mark out a series of lines with different distances between the lines.
- ❖ Invite your child to move across by hopping or jumping without touching the lines.
  - Encourage children with a mobility difficulty to cross the lines using their preferred mobility strategy.



*Swing your arms up so that you fly,  
bend your knees to softly return from the sky.*





## Try this way

- ❖ Read the "I Can Fly" poem to your child; then together invent new ways to move across the lines (e.g. "Show me a different way to get to the other side.")



### *I CAN FLY*

*I can fly, of course,  
Very low,  
Not fast,  
Rather slow,  
I spread my arms  
Like wings,  
Lean on the wind,  
And my body zings  
About.*

*Nothing showy -  
A few loops  
And turns -  
But for the most  
Part,  
I just coast.*

*However,  
Since people are prone  
To talk about  
It,  
I generally prefer,  
Unless I am alone,  
Just to walk about.*

*- Felice Holman*



# My friend beanie

**Physical activity links:** Developing movement skills (body and spatial awareness); cooperation

**Language/literacy links:** Vocabulary (location words: on, under, between; and action words: sag, wiggle, wag); counting; predicting

**Equipment:** 1 bean bag per child (beanie)

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Let's make:** Bean bags (see page 105)

**Book link:** *From Head to Toe* by Eric Carle

## Let's play

- ❖ With your child, explore all sorts of ways to balance the bean bag on different parts of the body. For example: **on** the head, shoulders, nose, ear, bottom; **between** the legs, knees, toes, elbows. Use the "Body Language" poem for ideas about where to put "beanie." Invite her to find other ways to balance "beanie" on her body.





## Try this way

- ❖ Challenge your child to invent tricky balance positions for beanie on his body. Ask him to predict how many seconds he can hold beanie in place before it drops - then try it.
- ❖ Play "pass the package" by passing the bean bag back and forth with a partner. For example, pass the bean bag from your foot to your child's foot and back again. Try again, using elbows; holding beanie between shoulder and chin, etc. Pretend the bean bag is magic and it will splatter and shatter if dropped; take great care not to let it hit the ground.
- ❖ Read *From Head to Toe* and play "Copy Cat"; take turns showing different tricks with "beanie" for others to try.

### BODY LANGUAGE

*Hips wiggle  
 Tummies sag  
 Shoulders shrug  
 Tongues wag  
 Feet patter  
 Scalps tingle  
 Teeth chatter  
 Chests heave  
 Backs ache  
 Hair curls  
 Nails break  
 Arms fold  
 Legs jump  
 Ankles sprain*

*Hearts pump  
 Noses twitch  
 Hands clap  
 Elbows bend  
 Fingers snap  
 Skin wrinkles  
 Knuckles crack  
 Knees knock  
 Lips smack  
 Thumbs twiddle  
 Eyes blink  
 Heads nod  
 Brains think!*

- Anonymous



# Obstacle course

**Physical activity links:** Vigorous play (building strong bones and muscles); developing movement skills (body and spatial awareness)

**Language/literacy links:** Vocabulary: location words (e.g. through, over, under, on, beside); map drawing and labeling; pretend play

**Equipment:** Cushions; rope; chair; hoop; cardboard box; stool; towels

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Book link:** *Little Mouse's Trail Tale* by JoAnn Vandine

## Let's play

- ❖ With your child, set up an obstacle course and talk about all the ways of moving through it (e.g. crawl under a chair, jump over cushions, log roll along a towel, stand on and jump off a low bench, walk backwards along a rope, move around a toy box, crab walk across a rug, etc.).
- ❖ Read "Comin' Through," then invite your child to create an obstacle course and have him describe the movements needed to get through.
- ❖ Have your child draw a map of the course and trace with his finger:  
a) his favourite, b) the easiest, c) the hardest, etc. route through it.

### *COMIN' THROUGH*

*Over, under,  
between, around,  
Lots of ways  
to cover the ground.*

*Crawling, creeping,  
leaping, too  
Watch out now,  
I'm coming through!*

*- Anonymous*



## Try this way

- ❖ Together read the poem "Condo Kid" and make a course to match the actions (e.g. down, up, over, under, between, through, around, out); call out the lines of the poem as your child moves through the course.
- ❖ Pretend to be a snake, a cat, a cow, or the mouse in *Little Mouse's Trail Tale*. Design a course for that animal.

### CONDO KID

*In our condominium  
Down goes the garbage  
Up goes the elevator  
Over goes the airplane  
Under goes the motor car  
Between goes the balcony  
Through goes the pussy cat  
Around goes the rainstorm  
Out goes the puppy dog  
And  
In goes Me!*

- Sonja Dunn





# Paint the house

**Physical activity links:** Vigorous play (building strong muscles); creativity and self-expression; developing planning and sequencing skills

**Language/literacy links:** Support play with talk (e.g. describing and story telling); vocabulary (colours)

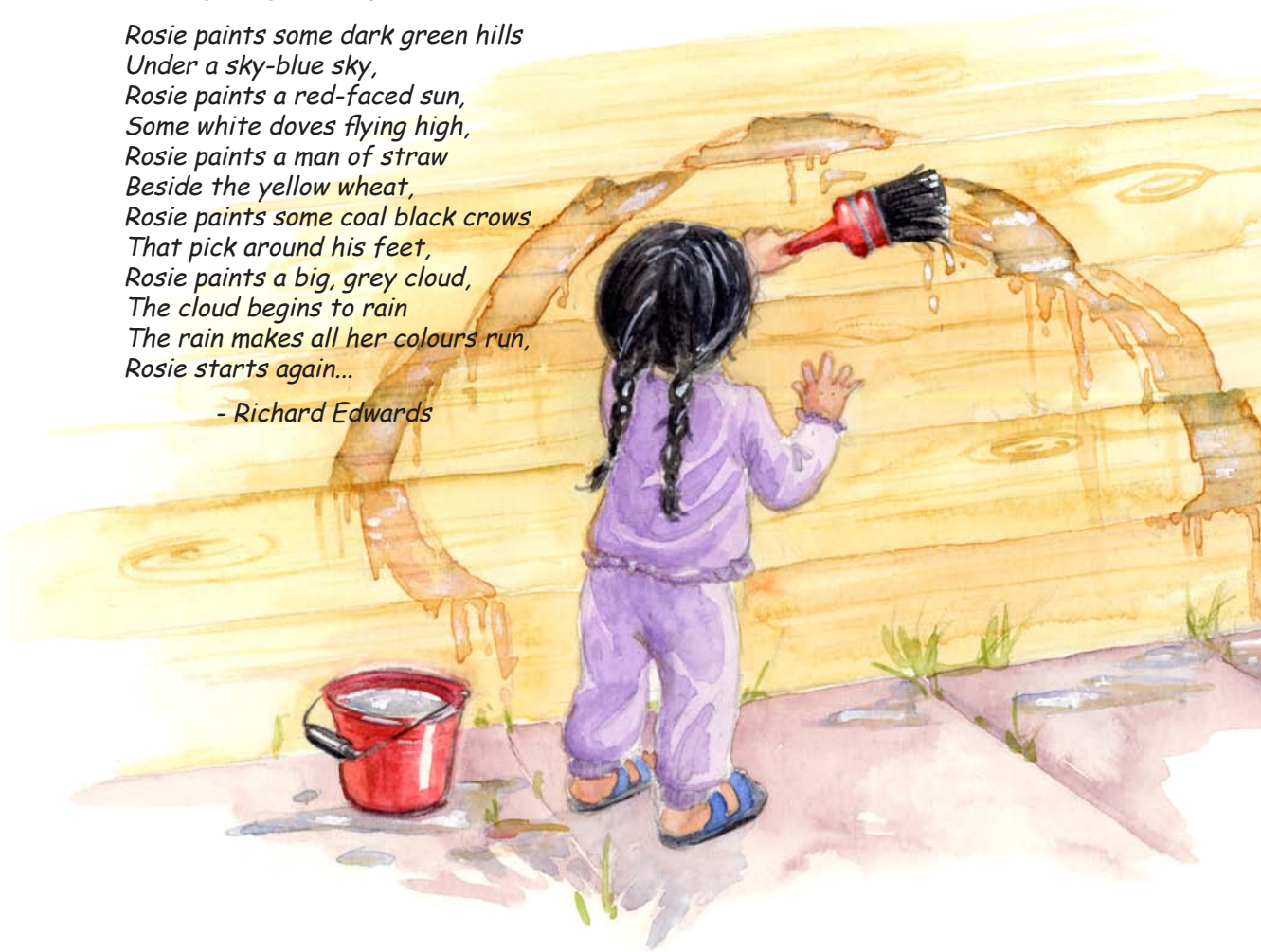
**Equipment:** A bucket or bowl with water; paintbrush; chalk (optional)

**Where:** Outdoors (Note: warm weather)

## ROUND AND ROUND

*Rosie paints some dark green hills  
Under a sky-blue sky,  
Rosie paints a red-faced sun,  
Some white doves flying high,  
Rosie paints a man of straw  
Beside the yellow wheat,  
Rosie paints some coal black crows  
That pick around his feet,  
Rosie paints a big, grey cloud,  
The cloud begins to rain  
The rain makes all her colours run,  
Rosie starts again...*

- Richard Edwards





## Let's play

- ❖ Show your child the areas she is allowed to paint with water. These might include paths, trees, play equipment, or a fence. Place a bucket of water nearby and invite her to use her imagination and paint that area however she likes.

## Try this way

- ❖ Use chalk to outline your child's name, a picture or shape for her to trace.
- ❖ Ask your child to tell you about what she has painted. This can be a wonderful prompt for story telling.
- ❖ Help her imagine some of the many different colours she could use: red, green, orange. Introduce some colour words that might be unfamiliar: violet, scarlet, turquoise, rose, lilac, canary yellow, etc.
- ❖ Invite your child to dip the brush into the "magic paint pot" and name the many different colours that you find there. Encourage her to describe the colour by naming something that is that colour: the red of a fire-engine; the green of a frog; the red of watermelon, etc. Read "Round and Round" together for other ideas.



# Parachute lift off

**Physical activity links:** Developing movement skills (timing, planning); cooperation skills

**Language/literacy links:** Playing with the sounds of the language (chanting, rhymes)

**Equipment:** 1 sheet or tablecloth for a parachute; light balls, rolled up socks or soft stuffed animals

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

## Let's play

- ❖ Ask the children to help you spread out the parachute. Then everyone sits or stands holding the edge with two hands. Lift the parachute up and down together. Ask the children to describe the feeling of the rushing air. Then recite the wind poems as you whoosh the parachute up and down.
- ❖ Play "Popcorn." Place light balls, rolled up socks, or soft toys in the centre. Together, quickly lift the parachute up and down. The "balls" will then begin to jump off the sheet. Continue until all the "balls" have been bounced off. Chant the Popcorn poem while you do this.

### POPCORN CHANT

*You put the oil in the pot  
And you let it get hot.  
You put the popcorn in  
And start to grin.  
Sizzle sizzle sizzle sizzle, POP!*

*- Anonymous*







## Try this way

- ❖ Play "Row, row, row your boat." Everyone sits down with legs stretched in front, under the parachute. Those on one side row by pulling the parachute towards them and those on the other side then pull it back towards them in a rowing back and forth motion. Sing the "Row, row, row your boat" song as you do this.

Row, row, row your boat  
Gently down the stream  
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily  
Life is but a dream.



### WEATHER

*It is a windy day.  
The water's white with spray.  
And pretty soon, if this keeps up,  
The world will blow away.*

*- Marchette Chute*

### WIND ON THE HILL

*No one can tell me,  
Nobody knows,  
Where the wind comes from,  
Where the wind goes.*

*- A. A. Milne*



# Playful parachute

**Physical activity links:** Developing movement skills (timing, planning); developing social skills (cooperation, turn taking)

**Language/literacy links:** Sounds of the language (letter knowledge); pretend play

**Equipment:** 1 sheet or tablecloth to act as a parachute; bean bag or rolled up pairs of socks

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

## Let's play

- ❖ Spread out the parachute.
- ❖ Children stand up and hold the parachute at waist level. Together the children lift the parachute up and down counting 1, 2, 3. On "3" the parachute is lifted above the head.
- ❖ Choose one child each time to walk under the parachute to change sides.
- ❖ Identify the child whose turn it is with a letter clue: "Someone who has a name that begins with the letter B... yes, Brad, that's you... come on through!"





## Try this way

- ❖ Put a bean bag or rolled up socks (treasure) under the parachute. Instead of changing sides, have the chosen child go underneath, collect the hidden treasure and describe for the others what this imaginary treasure is.
  - If you're playing these games with children with mobility difficulties all players can sit down and change sides or collect the bean bag using each child's preferred way of moving.
- ❖ Ask the children to imagine the parachute is a turtle shell. Have the children go under the spread out parachute on their hands and knees. The challenge is to crawl in one direction together without the parachute falling off.





# Push around

**Physical activity links:** Playing with your child; developing movement skills (eye-foot coordination, ball control); developing social skills (turn taking, cooperation)

**Language/literacy links:** Support activity with talk and sign (describing actions)

**Equipment:** 1 ball; a bean bag or soft toy; a plastic hockey stick or rolled up newspaper for the stick

**Where:** Outdoors or large indoor area

**Book link:** *The Mole Sisters and the Wavy Wheat* by Roslyn Schwartz

## Let's play

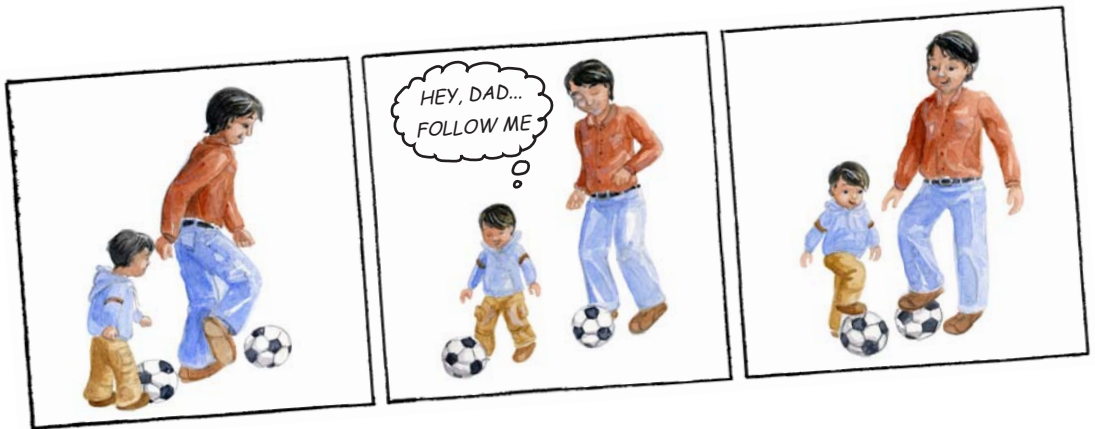
- ❖ Holding onto the stick with two hands, the children push the ball or object along the ground, moving around the whole area.
- ❖ Play follow the leader. Go where the leader goes, stop your body and the ball when the leader stops. Take turns being the leader.





## Try this way

- ❖ Instead of using a stick, he can tap a ball gently with his foot to move around the area. Create an obstacle course for some extra fun and challenge.
  - Encourage your child to describe out loud progress around the course: "First I went around and around the bucket. Then over to the cushion, and then behind the teddy bear."
- ❖ Together read *The Mole Sisters and the Wavy Wheat* and invite your child to describe their journey using "direction" words.
- ❖ Draw lines on the ground to make a "race track" for him to follow.
- ❖ Challenge your child to move around the course in a different sequence, or pattern, each time; challenge him to circle around each object without the ball touching it.





# Rainbow scatter

**Physical activity links:** Vigorous play; developing body control and movement skills  
**Language/literacy links:** Support activity with talk and sign (sequenced directions); vocabulary (letter and number identification, "except")

**Equipment:** Coloured cards or felt squares with a number, a letter, a colour word or a shape on each card (Note: these can be homemade)

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

## Let's play

- ❖ Scatter cards around the area.
- ❖ Call out a sequence of colours, numbers or letters to move to. For example: "red, blue, then green."
  - If a child has difficulty identifying the colors, letters, numbers or remembering the sequence, do the activity together. For example, ask the child to identify the red card. Point to red and then move to the red card together. Then identify the blue card, and so forth.





## Try this way

- ❖ Call out different ways for your child to move to the cards — e.g. hop, skip, jump, leap, gallop, crawl, stay low.
- ❖ Give letter cues: "move to a letter that's in your name"; "move to a letter that makes the sound a snake makes"; "move to a letter that the word 'Dad' starts with"; etc.
- ❖ Add challenge by including negative words. For example:
  - "Run and touch four cards, but DON'T touch the number 3."
  - "Walk between the cards, and when I clap my hands land on any card EXCEPT a blue one."
  - "Jump around two different cards, which DON'T have the letters B or G on them."

## Safety tip

- ❖ If more than one child is playing, encourage them to watch where they are moving to avoid collisions. Using duplicates can provide more options so they all don't go to the same card.



# River bank jump

**Physical activity links:** Vigorous play (building strong bones and muscles); developing movement skills (body and spatial awareness, jumping, leaping)

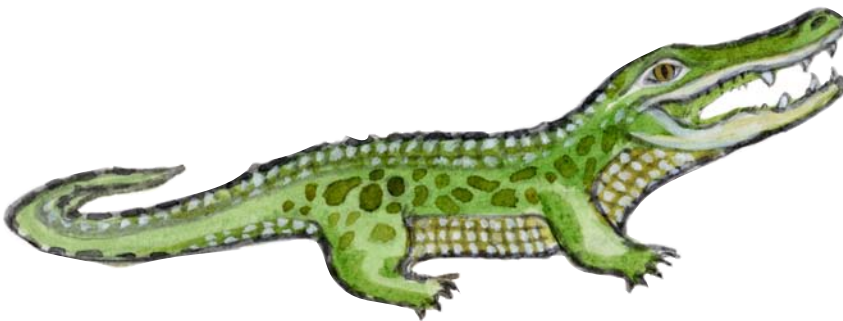
**Language/literacy links:** Pretend play; playing with the sounds of language

**Equipment:** Chalk or small ropes

**Where:** Outdoors or large indoor area

## Let's play

- ❖ With chalk or ropes, mark two lines to make a river: wide at one end, narrow at the other. Encourage him to choose the width he feels comfortable jumping.
- ❖ Invite your child to jump in and out and over the river. Call out: "on the bank"; "in the river"; or "across the river."
  - For children with a mobility difficulty invite them to cross the lines using their preferred mobility strategy.
  - Some children have difficulty imagining a river. You can make the river more real by using something different from the floor as the river (e.g. a towel on the carpet).







## Try this way

- ❖ Introduce an element of suspense and peril by pretending the river has hungry alligators in it. Set the mood by reciting or acting out "Three Little Monkeys."



*Swing your arms up so that you fly,  
bend your knees to softly return from the sky.*



### THREE LITTLE MONKEYS

*Three little monkeys swinging from a tree,  
Teasing Mr. Alligator, "Can't catch me!"  
Along came Mr. Alligator slowly as can be  
Then ... SNAP!*

*Two little monkeys swinging from a tree,  
Teasing Mr. Alligator, "Can't catch me!"  
Along came Mr. Alligator slowly as can be  
Then ... SNAP!*

*One little monkey swinging from a tree,  
Teasing Mr. Alligator, "Can't catch me!"  
Along came Mr. Alligator slowly as can be  
Then ... SNAP!*

- Anonymous



# Rocket launch

**Physical activity links:** Developing movement skills (e.g. catching technique, hand-eye coordination, timing)

**Language/literacy links:** Counting; vocabulary (e.g. colour, pattern words); play with the sounds of the language (e.g. rhyme and rhythm)

**Equipment:** 1 bean bag (rocket) per child; rocket launcher

**Where:** Outdoors

**Let's make:** Rocket launcher (see page 106)

## Let's play

- ❖ Place a bean bag or soft toy on the end of the rocket launcher; invite your child to stomp on the other end.
- ❖ Watch the rocket blast into space; catch the rocket on the way down.
- ❖ Chant:

Zoom Zoom Zoom!  
We're going to the moon  
We'll hop into our rocket ship  
And get there SOON!  
(stomp when you say the word SOON)  
- Anonymous



**DOWN ON THE LAUNCH PAD**  
(to the tune of *Down by the Station*)

Down on the launch pad  
Early in the morning  
See the big rocket, ready to go  
Hear the launch director  
Check for any problems  
3, 2, 1, and it's off they go.

- Anonymous

Zoom Zoom Zoom!  
We're going to the moon  
We'll hop into our rocket ship  
And get there SOON!

by Simi



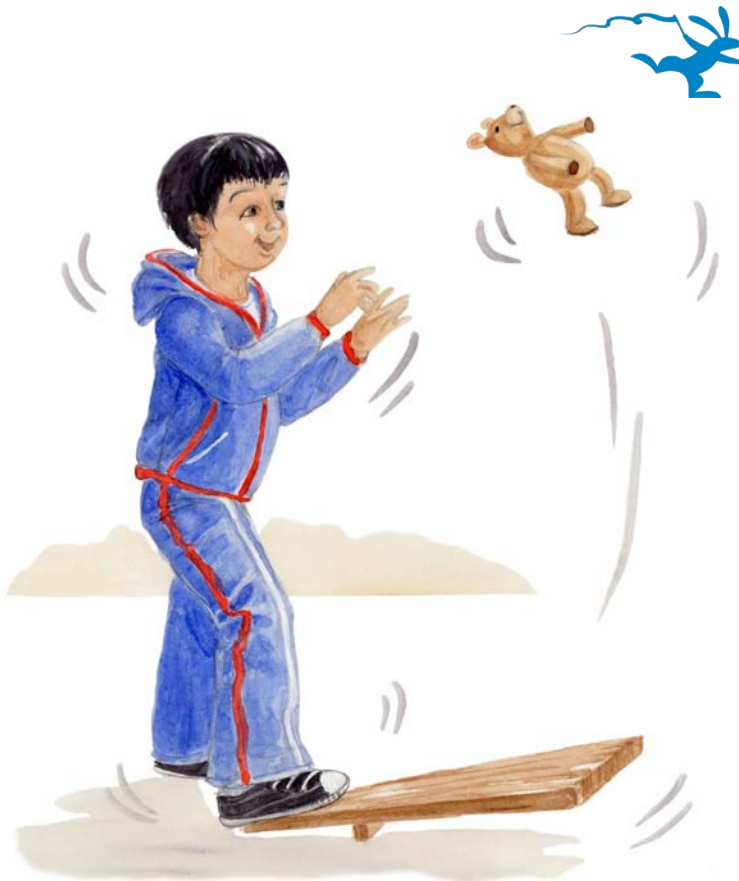
## Try this way

- ❖ Launch a hat and challenge your child try to catch it on his head!
- ❖ Launch two or three bean bags of different colours or patterns together; call out which one to catch ("green," "checkered," "polkadot"); have your child call out the colour of the one he intends to catch, or the one he wants you to catch.
- ❖ Before launching sing "Down on the Launch Pad."
- ❖ Vary the count downs:

*Forwards (1, 2, 3, 4, 5! Blast off!)*

*Backwards (5, 4, 3, 2, 1! Done!)*

*By twos ("2, 4, 6, 8, 10 - off to the moon and back again!")*



### HOW TO CATCH

*Hands together;  
fingers wide;  
watch it land right inside.*



# Simon says shape shifting

**Physical activity links:** Playing with your child; creativity and self-expression; developing body control skills

**Language/literacy links:** Support play with talk and sign (e.g. interpreting instructions to apply rules of the game; discussion); pretend play

**Equipment:** None

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Book links:** *Simon Says!* by Shen Roddie; *Animachines* by Debora Pearson

## Let's play

- ❖ Read the "Can You" poem together and invite your child to copy the movements of the animals, adding the sounds each animal makes. Think of different animals and together, move as they do.
- ❖ Use some of these movements and sounds in a game of Simon Says. Move only when the leader begins by saying "Simon Says" - otherwise stay still. For example, if you say "Simon Says be a bear," your child should move like a bear, but if you say "Be a bear" he shouldn't move a muscle. Take turns being Simon.
  - If children with hearing impairments are playing, sign and/or show cards illustrating the animals and another card showing "Simon says."





## Try this way

- ❖ Move like different machines. Read *Animachines* for some ideas. For example, move like a pump, a wheel, a crane, a cement mixer, a washing machine, etc. Use machine movements in Simon Says.
- ❖ Invite your child to pretend he is using: skates, skis, stilts, a scooter, a bike, etc. — and move on these at different speeds and in different directions (e.g. "Zig-zag on roller-blades").
- ❖ Read *Simon Says!* and invite your child to tell you if he thinks the animals were playing the game fairly or not, and why.

### CAN YOU

Can you...

Snap like a crocodile

Curl up like a snail

Stretch out like a starfish

To the tips of your nails?

- Margaret Mayo





# Snow play: Tricky tracks

**Physical activity links:** Vigorous play (building muscles and cardiovascular fitness)

**Language/literacy links:** Pretend play; vocabulary: movement words (slide, glide, roll, pitch); direction words (right, left, sideways, backwards, forwards); support play with talk

**Equipment:** Snow!!

**Where:** Outdoors

**Book link:** *Stella, Queen of the Snow* by Marie-Lousie Gay

## Let's play

- ❖ Read "Tracks in the Snow" and then outside, take turns making a pathway for the others to "follow in the footsteps." Have fun making the path change direction and crisscross itself. Change the distance between the footprints so that some are close together and some need a jump to reach.
- ❖ Read "First Snow" and talk about how snow makes things look different.
- ❖ Write letters and numbers and names in the snow.





## Try this way

- ❖ Introduce the many ways of playing in the snow by reading *Stella, Queen of the Snow* with your child. Talk about things you used to do in the snow when you were little. Investigate the way snow feels and looks, and the sounds you can make as you scrunch through it.
- ❖ See if you can find animal tracks, or look in a book to see what the tracks of different animals look like. Try to copy these in the snow.
- ❖ Have fun inventing creatures (e.g. animals, machines) with extraordinary tracks. Make the tracks and challenge each other to imagine and describe the creature that made them.

### TRACKS IN THE SNOW

*Tracks in the snow  
Tracks in the snow  
Who made the tracks?  
Where do they go?*

- Wong Herbert Yee

### FIRST SNOW

*Snow makes whiteness where it falls.  
The bushes look like popcorn-balls.  
The places where I always play  
Look like somewhere else today.*

- Marie Louise Allen





# Special deliveries

**Physical activity links:** Vigorous play, creativity and self-expression

**Language/literacy links:** Pretend play; writing, counting, mapping

**Equipment:** Tricycle, wagon, or bag, "parcels" for delivery

**Where:** Outdoors or indoors

**Book link:** *The Jolly Postman* by Janet and Allan Ahlberg

## Let's play

- ❖ Have your child imagine their tricycle or wagon is a delivery truck or their bag is a mail carrier bag. Invite him to design a delivery and pick up route. He rides or walks around his route, picking up and delivering packages.

- Invite him to describe the route to you.
- ❖ Read "My Bike" and invite your child to do the actions.



### MY BIKE

*One wheel, two wheels (make circles with arms)*

*On the ground,*

*My feet make the pedals (pretend to pedal bike)*

*Go round and round.*

*The handlebars help me (pretend to steer)*

*Steer so straight,*

*Down the sidewalk (shade eyes as if looking at something in the distance)*

*And through the gate.*

- Anonymous





## Try this way

- ❖ Have your child add a parking bay, so he needs to reverse and park. Ask him what else he could add to his route (e.g. traffic lights so he needs to stop and go).
- ❖ Help your child make signs (e.g. words or pictures or both) for the stops along the route: perhaps a gas station; library; lumberyard; restaurant; car dealership; hardware, shoe, grocery, pet, or toy store; doctor's or dentist's office.
- ❖ Before setting off, get him to count the packages to make sure there are enough for each stop on the route.
- ❖ Have your child draw a picture or a map of his route and his customers.
- ❖ Create signs for the route that *The Jolly Postman* took: the bear's cottage, the witch's home, the beanstalk giant's house, etc. Encourage him to pretend to be the Jolly Postman and make all the deliveries; you play the different characters receiving their letters.





# Stilt walking

**Physical activity links:** Playing with your child; developing balance

**Language/literacy links:** Vocabulary: describing words (tight, taught, wobble, sway); pretend play

**Equipment:** 2 small cans or blocks per child; thin smooth rope

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Let's make:** Stilts (see pages 107-108)

## Let's play

- ❖ With your child helping, make a pair of stilts. Make a pair for yourself.
- ❖ Show your child how to pull the rope tight to keep the cans in contact with his feet. Practice standing up straight when walking on the stilts.



### ELEPHANT

*Right foot, left foot, see me go  
I am grey and big and slow  
I come walking down the street  
With my trunk and my four big feet*

- Anonymous





## Try this way

- ❖ Encourage your child to:
  - Step sideways, walk in a circle.
  - Respond to poems while using his stilts. For example:
    - ❖ Read the "Elephant" poem together, and pretend to be an elephant and sway slowly, majestically.
    - ❖ Stretch tall after sharing "The Yellow Giraffe."
    - ❖ Read "Skyscraper," then encourage his to imagine what being tall would let her do.

### THE YELLOW GIRAFFE

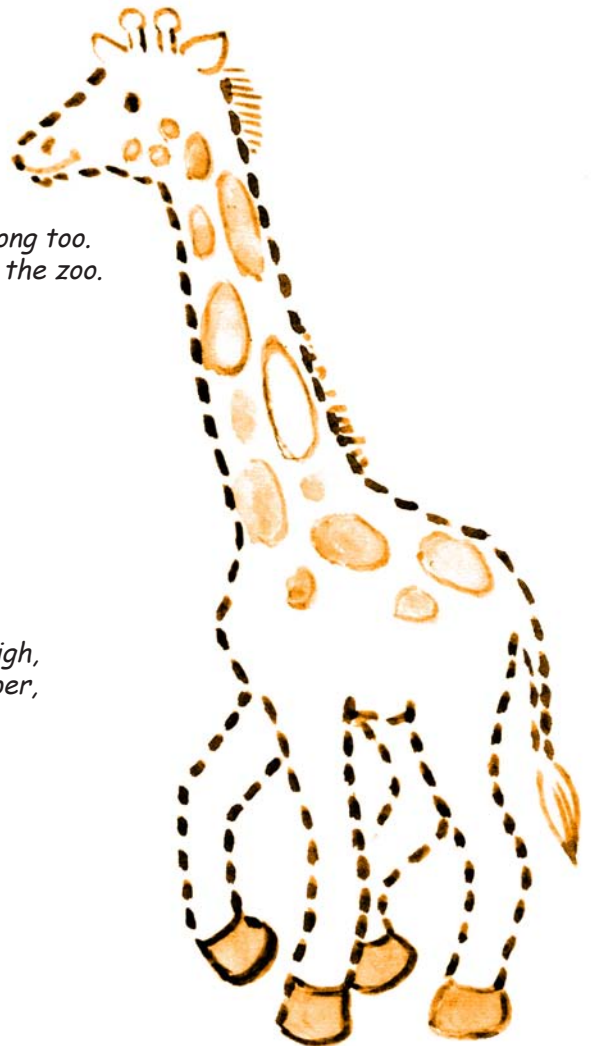
*The yellow giraffe is as tall as can be.  
His lunch is a bunch of leaves off a tree.  
He has a very long neck and his legs are long too.  
And he can run faster than his friends in the zoo.*

- Anonymous

### SKYSCRAPER

*Skyscraper, skyscraper  
Scrape me some sky,  
Tickle the sun  
While the stars go by.  
  
Tickle the stars  
While the sun's climbing high,  
Then skyscraper, skyscraper,  
Scrape me some sky.*

- Dennis Lee





# Swoop and scoop

**Physical activity links:** Vigorous play; playing actively; developing spatial awareness and body control skills

**Language/literacy links:** Counting; vocabulary (number recognition, direction words); graphing

**Equipment:** Bottle scoop, paper scrunched up into balls and a bucket or basket

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Let's make:** Bottle scoops (see page 109)

## Let's play

- ❖ Scatter the balls on the floor and place the bucket nearby.
- ❖ Use the scoop to lift balls and place them gently in the basket.
- ❖ Make a trail of paper balls and scoop them up in order.
- ❖ Change hands — try with the scoop in the other hand.





## Try this way

- ❖ Scoop two balls before placing any in the basket (e.g. try for three, and even four).
- ❖ Hide the balls; provide clues (e.g. behind something big, next to something you sit on); take turns hiding and giving clues.
- ❖ Move quickly; time how many seconds it takes to collect all the balls. Help your child write down how long it takes.
- ❖ Introduce a challenge (e.g. "How many can you scoop in 10 seconds, 20 seconds, 30 seconds"). Help your child draw a graph of the results. If more than one child is playing have them see how many they can scoop up together in the given time.





# Up and over

**Physical activity links:** Playing with your child, developing movement skills (bouncing, eye-hand coordination), developing social skills (taking turns)

**Language/literacy links:** Play with the sounds of the language (e.g. rhythm, rhyme); counting

**Equipment:** 1 ball that will bounce, 2 chairs, 1 rope, tea towel, balloon

**Where:** Outdoors or large indoor area

**Where:** Balloon cover (see page 113)

## Let's play

- ❖ Tie the ends of the rope to chairs.
- ❖ Begin with the rope close to the ground.
- ❖ Bounce the ball on the near side of the rope so that it goes over the rope. Let it bounce on the other side before collecting or catching it.
- ❖ Play with a partner - rally the ball back and forth and use a chant to keep count.

*One, two, three, O'Leary  
Four, five, six, O'Leary  
Seven, eight, nine, O'Leary  
Make it ten,  
Start over again.*

*- Anonymous*



*One - two -  
Over to you.  
Three - four  
Try for more!*

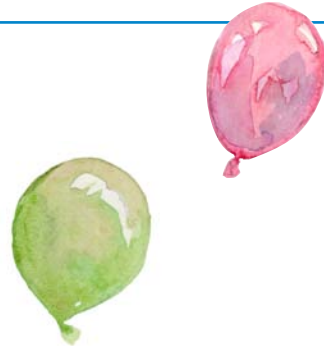


## Try this way

- ❖ Move further away from the rope.
- ❖ Before bouncing the ball over the rope, have your child bounce and catch the ball to herself once (1x). Next turn, she bounces and catches 2x before sending over the rope. Then 3x, 4x — increasing one with each turn.
- ❖ Place a tea towel on the opposite side of the rope. Bounce the ball over the rope and try to make it land on the tea towel.
- ❖ Instead of bouncing, keep a balloon in the air, as you rally it back and forth across the rope.

## Safety tip

- ❖ Dispose of balloons and balloon debris after use as it is a choking hazard. A homemade balloon cover can be used to help with safety (see the Let's Make section page 113).





# Walk and talk

**Physical activity links:** Building physical activity into every day

**Language/literacy links:** Supporting activity with talk (e.g. observing and discussing, speculating); counting

**Equipment:** None

**Where:** Outdoors

**Book link:** *1001 Things to Spot in the Town* by Anna Milbourne

## Let's play

- ❖ Take a walk to carry out an everyday task and use this time for talking. Point out to your child what you notice on your walk. For example, "Oh, look over there, a cement mixer with the pouring chutes operating... what do you think they're building?" Encourage your child to tell you about what she sees.

## Try this way

- ❖ Choose some pages from *1001 Things to Spot in the Town* and together find and count the objects in the different scenes. Follow this with a walk in your own neighbourhood. Before starting out, and along the way, decide on some of the things that you might see and make a game out of finding them.
- ❖ Play "I spy" using colour, shape, letter, or number cues, e.g. "I spy with my little eye something that is orange."









# Wriggly ribbons

**Physical activity links:** Developing movement skills (body and spatial awareness, rhythm, timing); creativity; social skills (leading)

**Language/literacy links:** Support play with talk and sign (e.g. describing movement in words, interpreting words with movement); pretend play

**Equipment:** 1 ribbon stick or canning ring for each child

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Let's make:** Ribbons (see page 110)

**Book link:** *Baby Beluga* by Raffi

## Let's play

- ❖ With your child, hold the end of the ribbon stick or the canning ring and practice making patterns (e.g. figure 8, waves, rainbow, spiral, circle).
  - Show your child how to use the whole arm, the lower arm (from the elbow) or just the wrist to make the ribbon move. Change hands.
- ❖ Invite your child to act out ideas using his ribbon (e.g. pretend it's a windshield wiper, a tornado, a bicycle wheel, a wiggly snake, etc.).



FIGURE 8



WIGGLE



CIRCLE



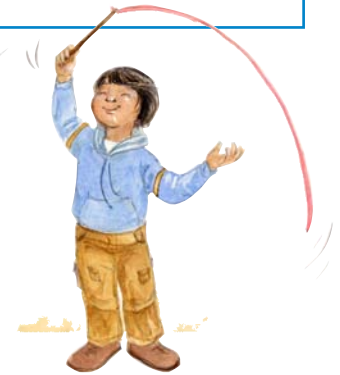
## Try this way

- ❖ Read "Washing Machine" out loud and together create the movements described in the poem.
- ❖ Make up actions to a favourite book or song. For example, a wave action could be used to show "Swim so wild and swim so free" and a spiral above the head could be "the water squirtin' out of your spout" in the *Baby Beluga* story.
- ❖ Play "Copy Cat." Make a pattern with your ribbon and invite your child to copy it. Next, it's your child's turn to invent a new pattern for you to copy.
- ❖ Pretend the ribbon has magic powers, but only if it never touches the ground, or never stops moving, or if the person holding it always stays on tiptoe, or always holds one hand behind her back, etc. Take turns deciding on "the rule."

### THE WASHING MACHINE

*Washing in the washing machine, going round and round.  
Washing in the washing machine moving up and down.  
Round and round and up and down, it makes a noisy sound.  
Faster, faster, faster, round and round and round.*

- Anonymous



RAINBOW



SPIRAL



WAVE



# Chef for a day

**Language/literacy links:** Writing (making a list), vocabulary (ingredients and utensils); measuring; support activity with talk and sign

**Healthy eating links:** Involving children in cooking; making time to eat together; trying new foods

**Equipment:** Cooking utensils

**Book links:** *Salad People and More Real Recipes* by Mollie Katzen;  
*Fast Food* by Saxton Freymann

## Let's play

- ❖ Read the "Let's Make a Salad" poem and talk about different things you like to cook and eat.
- ❖ Invite your child to be "Chef for a Day":
  - First your child chooses something to make for dinner. You might want to look through cookbooks together to find an easy recipe.
  - Together make a grocery list to read and follow. Invite your child to draw small pictures beside the words to identify the items.
  - At the store, have your child locate the items on the list and cross each one off once it's in the basket. Before you get to the checkout, help him count the number of items to be scanned and see if it matches the number of items on the list.
  - Help your child gather the utensils needed, and wash, scrub, and prepare the food. If any part of the process is unsafe or too hard, have your child — as Head Chef! — direct *you* through those steps.
  - Check the recipe as each ingredient is added. Take turns measuring, mixing or stirring. If cooking is needed, have him help set and monitor the timer, and note the oven temperature.
  - Once dinner is ready have the "Chef" help serve.



## Try this way

- ❖ Make "Salad People" as described in *Salad People and More Real Recipes*. Let imagination guide the creations. Read *Fast Food* for lots of ideas.
  - Have your child rename the recipe so it becomes his own creation.
- ❖ Together, start a book of your child's favourite recipes; encourage him to write and illustrate what he can.

### LET'S MAKE A SALAD

First you wash the lettuce  
 Then you spin it dry  
 Chop a lot of onions  
 till they make you cry  
 If you want a salad  
 that's the best you've had  
 all you have to do is

ADD

pepper and lime  
 parsley and thyme  
 a dash of salt too  
 makes dressing for you

THEN

Slice in a tomato  
 Add a bit of cheese  
 Salad in a bowl  
 Serve it  
 if you please!

- Sonja Dunn





# Cooking together

**Language/literacy links:** Playing with the letters and sounds of the language (rhyming words; letter sounds); vocabulary (cooking words); sequencing and measuring

**Healthy eating links:** Involving your child in cooking

**Equipment:** Kitchen and baking utensils

**Where:** Indoors

**Let's make:** Gingerbread Cookie People (see pages 111-112)

**Book links:** *My Pop Pop and Me* by Irene Smalls; *Salad People and More Real Recipes* by Mollie Katzen

## Let's play

- ❖ Have your child help collect the ingredients and utensils to make the Gingerbread People. Use this as an opportunity to identify the letters and numbers on the labels and in the recipe.
- ❖ Follow the recipe together and involve your child in measuring. Talk about all the actions as you do them.
- ❖ Chant the poems as you mix, stir, roll, and decorate the gingerbread people.

### GINGERBREAD MAN

*Mix and stir and pat in the pan,  
I'm going to make a gingerbread man  
With a nose so neat  
And a smile so sweet  
And gingerbread shoes on his gingerbread feet.*

- From "Mother Goose, A Canadian Sampler"





## Try this way

- ❖ Read and enjoy *My Pop Pop and Me* or a similar book that involves cooking; or flip through cookbooks together.
- ❖ Use other children's recipe books, such as *Salad People and More Real Recipes*, and do some cooking together.



*Run, run,  
As fast as you can...  
You can't catch me...  
I'm the gingerbread man!*

- Anonymous



### CHILDREN CAN:

**Wash and scrub** fruit and vegetables

**Tear** lettuce

**Break** ends off green beans

**Mix** salad ingredients using a large spoon or freshly washed hands

**Slice** soft foods such as banana with a dull knife

**Stir and mix** batter

**Mash** soft foods such as boiled potatoes or pumpkin

**Spread** nut butter or cream cheese on celery sticks, toast or crackers

**Knead** bread or pizza dough

**Measure** portions and ingredients

**Roll** out cookie dough



# Taste adventures

**Language/literacy links:** Vocabulary (sensory words: touch, smell, taste), support play with words; recording; categorizing

**Healthy eating links:** Making time to eat together; helping your child develop eating skills; tasting new foods

**Equipment:** Cutting board; kitchen utensils

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Book links:** *My Mom Loves Me More Than Sushi* by Filomena Gomes;  
*I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato* by Lauren Child

## Let's play

- ❖ When you go shopping, invite your child to choose a new fruit or vegetable to taste at home. Encourage her to try "at least one bite."
- ❖ Have your child describe the colour, shape, feel, smell, sound and taste of the new food. Ask - How does this food:
  - **Look?** Tiny, round, skinny, shiny, curly, green, orange, purple, yellow, white, red, pink, brown.
  - **Feel to touch?** Soft, hard, fuzzy, smooth, bumpy, prickly, hot, icy, velvety, wrinkled, firm, fleshy, slick.
  - **Smell?** Sweet, fragrant, flowery, fruity.
  - **Feel in your mouth?** Sticky, warm, juicy, dry, fleshy, mushy, gooey, chunky, crumbly.
  - **Sound in your mouth?** Crunch, slurp, crackle, pop.
  - **Taste?** Sweet, salty, bitter, spicy, sour, peppery, bland, savoury, tangy, meaty.





## Try this way

- ❖ Set the stage for exploring new foods by reading *I Will Never Not Ever Eat a Tomato*.
- ❖ Read *My Mom Loves Me More Than Sushi* and try to identify foods in your kitchen that come from different parts of the world.
- ❖ Help your child print the name and draw a picture of each new food on an "I tried it" chart.
  - Organize the chart using different categories. For example:
    - ✧ Crunchy, slippery, sweet, etc.
    - ✧ Fruits, vegetables, grains, etc.





# Green thumbs

**Physical activity links:** Vigorous play (building strong bones, muscles, cardiovascular fitness); building activity into your day

**Language/literacy links:** Measuring; charting; numbers; writing

**Healthy eating links:** Involving children in gardening

**Equipment:** Trowels, spoons, flowerpots, cut-down milk containers or recycled plant containers

**Where:** Outdoors; indoors with plant pots or window box

**Book link:** *A Seed Grows* by Pamela Hickman

## Let's play

- ❖ With your child, look through local nursery or seed catalogues to select several flowers and vegetables to plant. Let your child choose what to plant.
- ❖ Visit a nursery or store together to buy the seeds.
- ❖ Outside: your child can dig a small plot of ground. Inside: your child can fill a container with soil. This would be a good time to read the poem "Maytime Magic."
- ❖ Together, carefully count the number of seeds in each pot or row, and write this number on a chart. Encourage your child to predict how many days it will be before the plants peek through the soil. Later, check and record how many seeds sprouted, and how many days it took.
- ❖ Help your child label the pots or rows by drawing pictures or copying the name onto a popsicle stick.
- ❖ Have your child mark on a calendar when the seeds were planted, when they were watered, and when they sprouted. Together, measure and mark the growth of the plant.



## Try this way

- ❖ Plant a "scent garden" — mint, lemon balm and sage are easy. Later, go on a scent tour together, rubbing leaves and enjoying the fragrance.
- ❖ Read *A Seed Grows* and talk about all the steps of growing a plant.

### MAYTIME MAGIC

*A little seed  
For me to sow...*

*A little earth  
To make it grow...  
A little hole,  
A little pat...  
A little wish,  
And that is that.*

*A little sun,  
A little shower...  
A little while,  
And then - a flower!*

- Mabel Watts



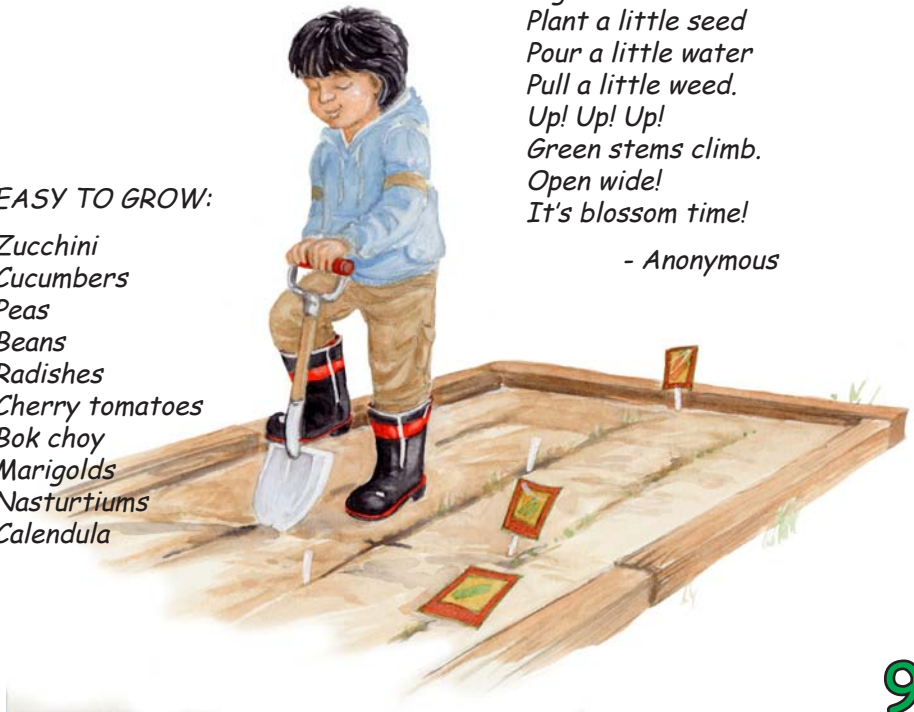
*Dig a little hole  
Plant a little seed  
Pour a little water  
Pull a little weed.  
Up! Up! Up!  
Green stems climb.  
Open wide!  
It's blossom time!*

- Anonymous



### EASY TO GROW:

*Zucchini  
Cucumbers  
Peas  
Beans  
Radishes  
Cherry tomatoes  
Bok choy  
Marigolds  
Nasturtiums  
Calendula*





# Hot potato

**Physical activity links:** Playing with your child; developing movement skills (eye-hand coordination)

**Language/literacy links:** Counting; vocabulary development (opposites: hard and soft, high and low); being a role model

**Healthy eating links:** Involving your child in cooking

**Equipment:** 1 balloon per child; a paddle per child

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Let's make:** A paddle bat (see page 113); balloon cover (see page 113); oven-roasted potato wedges (see page 114)

## Let's play

- ❖ Use hands to keep the balloon in the air by tapping it upward.
- ❖ Use one hand, the other hand, and then both hands.
- ❖ Hit soft, hit hard, hit high, and hit low.

*ONE POTATO, TWO POTATO...*

*One potato,  
Two potato,  
Three potato, Four,  
Five potatoes,  
Six potatoes,  
Seven potatoes, More!*

*- Anonymous*





## Try this way

- ❖ Use a paddle bat to tap the balloon up.
- ❖ Work in pairs to tap the balloon back and forth.
- ❖ Count how many taps you can do while keeping the balloon off the ground. Keep count with Potato Rhymes.
  - Involve your child in the preparation of potato wedges (see page 114).

## Safety tip

- ❖ Dispose of balloons and balloon debris after use as it is a choking hazard. A homemade balloon cover can be used to help with safety (see the Let's Make section page 113).

### POTATO RHYME

*Boiled potato,  
mashed potato,  
baked potato,  
**raw.***

*Scalloped potato,  
roast potato,  
stuffed potato,  
**more.***

- Anonymous





# Pizza pizzazz

**Physical activity links:** Vigorous play (cardiovascular fitness); developing movement skills

**Language/literacy links:** Support activity with talk or sign (describe as you go); classification; writing and drawing (e.g. listing, recording)

**Healthy eating links:** Cooking with your child

**Equipment:** 1 hoop per child, variety of objects (e.g. bean bags, cards, toys), something to mark a start line

**Where:** Outdoors or indoors

**Let's make:** Pizza recipes (see pages 115-116)

**Book link:** *Pete's a Pizza* by William Steig

## Let's play

- ❖ Mark a line several metres from a hoop (pizza base) and place a variety of objects (e.g. bean bags, playing cards, small balls or toys) behind the line. Have one hoop for each child playing.
- ❖ Carrying one item at a time, have your child move quickly back and forth decorating their pizza base with toppings (e.g. bean bags, cards, toys).





## Try this way

- ❖ Change the type of movement. Try skipping, running, jumping, galloping or crawling.
- ❖ Read *Pete's a Pizza* — and together act out the pizza making, with your child as the "pizza."
- ❖ Ideas for discussion:
  - Have some fun imagining what would - and would not - be a delicious/healthy topping on a pizza.
  - Make a *Preposterous Pizza!* with all sorts of nonsensical toppings — give the imagination free reign.
- ❖ Create and write out a recipe for a favourite pizza; invite your child to draw and (with your help) label pictures of the ingredients.
- ❖ Make a pizza... or mini-pizzas.





# Teddy bear's picnic

**Physical activity links:** Physical activity as a part of every day

**Language/literacy links:** Planning; counting; measuring; writing (list, invitations); pretend play

**Healthy eating links:** Involving children in shopping; preparing food; serving; making time to eat together; tasting new foods

**Equipment:** Picnic "basket"; stuffed animals

**Where:** Indoors or outdoors

**Book links:** *Bears in the Park* by Gwenda Turner; *Fast Food* by Saxton Freymann

## Let's play

- ❖ Invite your child to plan a special picnic for teddy bears and favourite stuffed toys. Have him create, decorate and deliver invitations to the picnic to the teddy bears.
- ❖ Together, decide on the food to take along, and how much will be needed: food for people (real), and food for bears (pretend). Make lists for both... and menus.
- ❖ Help your child prepare and pack some snacks, sandwiches, fruit and drinks into a cooler. Encourage pretend play by having your child fill a special bear's bucket, box or basket with imaginary snacks guaranteed to delight bears.
- ❖ Have your child select the picnic spot, lay out the tablecloth, count out enough napkins, plates, and spoons for everyone, and arrange the teddy bear guests.





## Try this way

- ❖ Using the ideas in *Fast Food* as inspiration, create some edible "picnic creatures" from fruits and vegetables, letting creativity run free. Name the creatures.
- ❖ Read the poem "Three Bears Walking" slowly, making the rhythm match the lumbering pace of the bears.
- ❖ Find out what foods bears really like to eat (e.g. Owl magazine, Internet, library).
- ❖ Take *Bears in the Park* with you and read it on your picnic.

### THREE BEARS WALKING

Three bears walking  
down the lane, down the lane.  
Three bears talking,  
"Do you think it's going to rain?"  
Three bears walking  
to the wood, to the wood.  
Three bears talking,  
"Pretty day!" "Pretty good!"  
Three bears walking  
under trees, under trees.  
Three bears talking,

"Do you know where there are bees?"  
Three bears walking  
by a stream, by a stream.  
Three bears talking,  
"Pass the berries." "Pass the cream".  
Three bears walking  
To their den, to their den.  
Three bears talking,  
"Great to be back home again".

- Jane Yolen





# Tread lightly, look closely

**Physical activity links:** Building physical activity into your day; playing actively

**Language/literacy links:** Support activity with talk; being a role model (tread lightly); vocabulary (plants, colours, textures, berries, numbers, letters, sounds)

**Healthy eating links:** Offer new foods; preparing food with your child

**Where:** Outdoors

**Let's make:** Berry Smoothie; Very-Berry-Stack (see page 117)

**Book links:** *Look Closer* by Brian and Rebecca Wildsmith; *The Butterfly Alphabet* by Kjell B. Sandved; *Green Fun: Plants as Play* by Marianne Haug Gjersvik

## Let's play

- ❖ Get ready for a nature walk through a field, park, patch of woods, or backyard by reading *Look Closer*, *The Butterfly Alphabet* and/or the "New Sounds" poem. Explain that on the walk you will stop and look closely at interesting things you notice.
- ❖ Talk about the saying "Take only memories, leave only footprints" and explain that on the walk we will be looking with our eyes, but leaving everything just as we find it.
- ❖ On your walk you could:
  - Look closely at plants; insects; different colours; shapes; or textures.
  - Listen for sounds made by: birds, animals, machines and people.
  - Take turns pointing out and describing interesting things to each other.
  - Make a game of finding patterns that make the shapes of alphabet letters and numbers.



## Try this way

- ❖ When berries are ripe, go out together to gather enough to make a smoothie or berry parfait. Chant the "Blackberries" poem as you pick (change the berry name if picking a different berry: blueberries, strawberries, raspberries, etc.).
- ❖ At home, have your child help wash and sort the berries and follow the recipe to make Berry Smoothie or Very-Berry-Stacks. Share and enjoy.



### NEW SOUNDS

*New sounds to  
walk on  
today -*

*dry  
leaves,  
talking  
in hoarse  
whispers,  
under bare trees.*

*- Lilian Moore*

### BLACKBERRIES

*Blackberries, blackberries on the hill.  
How many pails can you fill?  
Briers are thick and briers scratch,  
But we'll pick all the berries in the blackberry patch.*

*- Anonymous*



# Let's make

## Bubble recipe

You will need (to make 2.5 L [10 cups]):

- ❖ 2.5 L (10 cups) of water
- ❖ 250 ml (1 cup) of soap detergent
- ❖ 30 ml (2 tablespoons) glycerine (purchase at pharmacy)

How to:

1. Put water in pail or bucket and add the detergent and glycerine.
2. Stir slowly to avoid bubbling.
3. For best results let the mixture sit overnight.

## Bubble wand

### Yogurt lid bubble wand

You will need:

- ❖ A plastic lid (e.g. yogurt, margarine container)
- ❖ Thumb tack
- ❖ Wooden chopstick

How to:

1. Cut the centre out of a plastic lid and thumb tack it to a wooden chopstick.



## Fly swat bubble wand

You will need:

- ❖ A plastic fly swatter

How to:

1. Dip the fly swatter into a plate of bubble mix and wave it around for lots and lots of tiny bubbles.

## Pipe cleaner bubble wand

You will need:

- ❖ A pipe cleaner

How to:

1. Shape a pipe cleaner into a circle, leaving an end to hold.





# Balloon drum

You will need:

- ❖ Juice can, oatmeal box, or empty round food container
- ❖ 2 large balloons
- ❖ 2 heavy rubber bands
- ❖ 2 unsharpened pencils with erasers

How to:

1. Open both ends of the container to make the drum body.
2. Cut the small end off the balloons: this is the drum skin.
3. Stretch the closed end of the balloon over the drum body.
4. Hold the balloon in place with the rubber band and smooth out any wrinkles.
5. Repeat the previous steps to make the opposite end of the drum.
6. Use the pencils as drum sticks.
7. Use the eraser end of the pencil on the drum (Note: Do not sharpen the pencils).





# Jingle stick

You will need:

- ❖ A 30 cm (14 inch) stick, a wooden spoon or some straws taped together
- ❖ Ribbon, string cotton or tape
- ❖ Bells, things that jingle and jangle

How to:

1. Attach bells to top of stick with ribbon, string, cotton or tape.
2. Jingle and jangle.

# Maracas

You will need:

- ❖ Plastic containers with lid (screw top is best)
- ❖ Rice, beans, sand, lentils\*
- ❖ Strong tape
- ❖ Ribbon decorations

How to:

1. Fill plastic container a third full with one of the above fillings.
2. Tape firmly.
3. Decorate and shake.

\* Use different fillings for different sounds.



# Tambourines

You will need:

- ❖ Two paper plates per tambourine
- ❖ Rice, beans, lentils
- ❖ Stapler and tape
- ❖ Decorations



How to:

1. Staple (or tape) paper plates together leaving a small opening.
2. Fill with rice, beans or lentils.
3. Tape opening closed.
4. Decorate and shake.

# Ankle bells

You will need:

- ❖ Two-sided Velcro tape available from garden or sewing suppliers
- ❖ Small bells available from craft or dollar stores
- ❖ Needle and thread

How to:

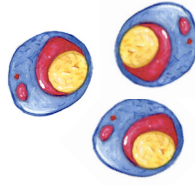
1. Cut a length of two sided Velcro tape about 15 cm (6 inches) long.
2. Attach 2 or 3 bells to the tape using a needle and thread.
3. Attach around your child's ankle.

IDEA: If you are unable to find two-sided Velcro tape, sew two 8 cm (3½ inch) pieces of Velcro together, putting the hook and furry sides opposite.





# Bean bags



You will need:

- ❖ Birdseed, dried beans, shell grit, or popcorn
- ❖ Funnel or 500-600 ml plastic bottle
- ❖ Balloons
- ❖ Scissors

How to:

1. Use the funnel (see IDEA below) to fill the balloon with birdseed (this can be a slow process).
2. Cut the neck off the balloon and place a second balloon over the hole, completely covering the ball so that no birdseed can come out (add a second balloon base if you want the bean bag to be stronger).
3. Cut the neck off another balloon, open it up and place it over the ball; repeat the process, adding several layers of balloons (try to ensure that the original birdseed hole is always covered by several layers of balloon).
4. Cut holes in successive layers of balloons to create coloured patterns.

IDEA: To make a funnel, cut a 500-600 ml plastic bottle in half. Cover the cut end with tape. The neck end of the bottle acts as a funnel.





# Rocket launcher

You will need:

- ❖ 1 metre (3 feet) length of wood plank
- ❖ Halved section of a round wood post the same width as wood plank

How to:

1. Position the halved wood post section a third of the way down the plank with the flat side of the post against the plank.
2. Secure the plank to the round post section with 2.25 cm (1 inch) nails or large screws, making sure the nails and screws run from the plank through to the post section. Check for any sharp ends and round off or hammer back.
3. The rocket launcher is now ready to be used on any firm surface.
4. Place the launcher with plank up, post section down. Place a bean bag or soft toy at one end. Stomp on the other end and watch the bean bag fly up.
5. To help keep items on the launch-pad, attach an ice-cream container lid to the launch end.





# Walking stilts

You can use tin cans or blocks of wood to make stilts. Wood block stilts will carry heavier weight (e.g. grown ups).

## Tin can stilts

You will need:

- ❖ 2 strong tin cans (preferably juice, soup, or milk cans so you don't have to remove the lid - this will keep the can strong)
- ❖ Rope or cord, about 2 metres (6 feet) for each can
- ❖ Toilet paper roll or small sections of garden hose pipe (or something similar)
- ❖ A triangle-head can opener

How to:

1. Pierce the can making a hole on each side near the top (rather than on the top itself).
2. Drain out the liquid and rinse inside with soapy water.
3. Thread rope through the holes and the toilet paper roll then join rope ends together.
4. Children hold onto the ropes using the toilet paper roll to cushion the rope as they walk on the cans.
5. Decorate the cans with strips of coloured electrical tape, stickers or paint.

## Wood block stilts

You will need:

- ❖ Two blocks of wood about 12-15 cm high (5-6 inches) and wide enough for the stilt walker's foot



- ❖ Rope or cord, about 2-3 metres (4-6 feet) for each block (depending on the stilt walker's height)
- ❖ Toilet paper roll or small sections of garden hose pipe (or something similar)
- ❖ Drill

How to:

1. Drill a hole from one side of the block to the other.
2. Thread rope through the holes and the toilet paper roll then join rope ends together.
3. Stilt walker holds onto the ropes using the toilet paper roll to cushion the rope as he walks on the blocks.
4. Decorate the blocks with paint.





# Bottle scoop

You will need:

- ❖ An old plastic bottle, well washed (plastic milk bottles with handles are good)

How to:

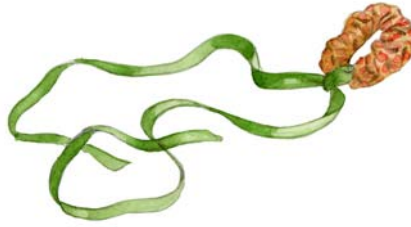
1. Using a pair of scissors, cut off the bottom of the bottle.
2. Make an opening slanting back toward the handle or top.
3. Cover the cut edges with duct tape so the edges are not sharp.





# Ribbons

## Simple



You will need:

- ❖ 1-3 metres (3-9 feet) of ribbon or surveyor's tape (i.e. depending on the size of the child).
- ❖ A canning ring, a hair elastic, or a lid from a yogurt container with the middle cut out.

How to:

1. Tie the ribbon to the canning ring, hair elastic, or lid.

## Harder to make



You will need:

- ❖ 20-30 cm (9-14 inch) length of 15 mm ( $\frac{3}{4}$  inch) wooden dowel rod
- ❖ 1-3 metres (3-9 feet) of ribbon (i.e. depending on the size of the child)
- ❖ 1 eye bolt
- ❖ Fishing line snap swivel (Note: number 12 size works well)
- ❖ Drill

How to:

1. Drill a hole down into the end of the dowel.
2. Screw the eye bolt into the drilled hole.
3. Attach the snap swivel to the eye bolt.
4. Fold the ribbon in half and feed it through the end of the swivel.



# Gingerbread cookie people recipe

You will need:

- ❖ 125 ml ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup) margarine (no trans fats if possible)
- ❖ 180 ml ( $\frac{3}{4}$  cup) lightly packed brown sugar
- ❖ 15 ml (1 tbsp) blackstrap molasses
- ❖ 2 eggs
- ❖ 750 ml (3 cups) all-purpose flour\*
- ❖ 15 ml (1 tsp) baking soda
- ❖ 5 ml ( $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp) salt
- ❖ 7.5 ml ( $1\frac{1}{2}$  tsp) ground ginger
- ❖ 10 ml (2 tsp) cinnamon
- ❖ 5 ml (1 tsp) allspice
- ❖ 60 ml ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) milk
- ❖ Cooking spray



Makes about 24 cookies

\* Use  $\frac{1}{2}$  whole wheat flour

How to:

1. In a large bowl, use an electric mixer to cream margarine and sugar together. Blend in molasses until light and fluffy. Gradually beat in eggs, one at a time.
2. In another bowl, combine flour, baking soda, salt, and spices.
3. Gradually add dry ingredients to creamed sugar, alternating with milk (about 250 ml [1 cup] flour mixture and 15 ml [1 tbsp] milk). Mix until well combined and dough forms.
4. Cover and chill for 1 hour.
5. Preheat oven to 180 °C (350 °F). Spray cookie sheets with cooking spray.
6. Roll out dough on lightly floured surface to 1 cm ( $\frac{1}{4}$  inch)



thickness. Use gingerbread people or cookie cutters to cut out cookies.

7. Decorate cookies with dried fruit such as currants or raisins.
8. Bake cookies for 8 to 10 minutes until golden brown.





# Paddle bat

You will need:

- ❖ Knee high stocking
- ❖ Masking or duct tape
- ❖ Coat hanger (metal)



How to:

1. Bend a coat hanger into a diamond or circular shape.
2. Squash the hanger hook closed a little.
3. Insert the hanger into the stocking.
4. Pull the stocking tight around the hanger.
5. Tape stocking onto the hanger just above the handle.
6. Rap tape around the bottom to create a handle.

# Balloon cover

You will need:

- ❖ A balloon
- ❖ A knee high stocking



How to:

1. Place the balloon inside the stocking, with both openings at the same end.
2. Blow up and tie off the balloon inside the stocking.
3. Tie off the stocking and cut off any excess.



# Oven-roasted potato wedges

You will need (makes 6-8 child-size servings):

- ❖ 4 large potatoes\*
- ❖ 15 ml (1 tbsp) vegetable oil
- ❖ 10 ml (2 tsp) mixed herbs or 30 ml (2 tbsp) fresh herbs finely chopped
- ❖ Sealable plastic container

\* Russet, Yukon Gold or sweet potatoes work well.

How to:

1. Preheat oven to 200 °C (400 °F).
2. Cut the potatoes into wedges.
3. Put oil into the plastic container with the herbs.
4. Add the potato wedges.
5. Close tightly and shake.
6. Put potatoes onto baking tray to go into the hot oven.
7. Bake for 15 minutes, turn over and bake another 15 minutes until brown and crisp on the outside.



# Pizza

You will need (makes 6-8 child-size servings):

- ❖ A pie tin per child
- ❖ A small round of pizza or bread dough per child (approximately 125 ml [ $\frac{1}{2}$  cup])
- ❖ One plate per child with 60 ml ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) mozzarella cheese and toppings (see below) in separate piles
- ❖ A cup or small bowl per child with tomato sauce (60 ml [ $\frac{1}{4}$  cup]) and a pastry brush to paint the pizza (or use fingers)

How to:

1. Demonstrate each step below, so your child will make their own pizza:
  - flatten the dough round
  - put it in the pie pan
  - paint the dough with sauce
  - arrange the toppings (see below) on the pizza
  - sprinkle it with cheese
2. Bake pizza in very hot oven (as close to 220 °C [425 °F]) as possible); usually 10-15 minutes is sufficient.
3. Eat pizza when cool enough to be safe.

**Tomato sauce** (makes 500 ml [2 cups])

- ❖ 250 ml (1 cup) tomato paste
- ❖ 250 ml (1 cup) tomato sauce
- ❖ 5 ml (1 tsp) oregano or thyme
- ❖ 5 ml (1 tsp) salt
- ❖ 5 ml (1 tsp) chili powder
- ❖ Dash ground cumin





## Different pizza toppings

### Pineapple Medley

- ❖ 60 ml ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) total of mushrooms, bell peppers and onion
- ❖ 1 slice ham
- ❖ Pineapple pieces

### Ham and Zucchini

- ❖ 60 ml ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) chopped ham
- ❖ 8 thin slices zucchini, diced

### Chicken and Corn

- ❖ 60 ml ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) cooked chicken breast, chopped
- ❖ 60 ml ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) canned corn, drained

### Mexican pizza

- ❖ 60 ml ( $\frac{1}{4}$  cup) refried beans mixed with 5-10 ml (1-2 tsp) taco seasoning mix
- ❖  $\frac{1}{4}$  avocado, diced
- ❖ 6 cherry tomatoes - cut in halves
- ❖ Use cheddar cheese in place of mozzarella

### Pesto pizza

- ❖ Substitute pesto for tomato sauce



# Berry smoothies for two

You will need:

- ❖ 1 banana - sliced
- ❖ 250 ml (1 cup) of yogurt
- ❖ 250 ml (1 cup) of berries
- ❖ Dash of cinnamon

How to:

1. Put the ingredients into a bowl and whip by hand, or put them into a blender and puree.
2. Pour into two glasses... sprinkle a few berries on top.

# Very-berry-stacks

You will need:

- ❖ 125 ml ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup) of yogurt
- ❖ 125 ml ( $\frac{1}{2}$  cup) of berries (all the same kind... or different types)

How to:

1. In a tall, narrow glass (plastic for younger children), have your child place a layer of berries as thick as her thumb, then a layer of yogurt, then another layer of berries, and one more of yogurt, and one more of berries, until the berries and yogurt are stacked to the top. Make the last layer yogurt and have your child decorate the top with the first letter of the person it's for, written in berries.



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