

## **Activities for Kicking a Ball**

Kicking a ball is an important gross motor skill that develops during the preschool years. It requires balance, coordination, strength and body awareness. Kicking builds on earlier skills such as standing balance and weight shifting and supports participation in active play and games.

Kicking a ball can help support:

**Gross motor development** - Strengthening the muscles of the legs and hips to support controlled movement and force production.

**Balance and postural control** - Balancing on one leg while the other leg moves, supporting single-leg stability.

**Coordination** - Coordinating leg movements with visual attention to make contact with the ball.

**Weight shifting** - Transferring weight onto the standing leg before kicking.

**Confidence and participation** - Supporting participation in games and playground activities, helping to build confidence and social interaction.

### **Safety**

To ensure kicking activities are completed safely, the following should be considered:

#### **Footwear**

- Children should wear well-fitting, closed-toe shoes with good grip
- Shoes should provide ankle and heel support
- Avoid kicking activities in socks only

#### **Supervision**

- Kicking activities should always be supervised by an adult
- Clear demonstrations should be provided to encourage safe and controlled movement

#### **Environment**

- Use a clear, open space free from obstacles
- Use soft, lightweight balls
- Ensure other children are at a safe distance

### **Standing foot taps on a ball**

- Helps with weight shifting, balance and foot control.
- Place a ball on the floor in front of your child.
- Encourage them to tap the top of the ball with one foot while keeping the other foot on the floor.
- Progress this by alternating feet or increasing the number of taps.

### **Kicking with support**

- Helps children practise kicking while maintaining balance.
- Allow the child to hold an adult's hand or a stable surface while kicking a stationary ball.
- Gradually reduce support as balance improves.

### **Stepping to kick**

- Helps to develop weight transfer onto the standing leg.
- Position the ball slightly in front of the child.
- Encourage them to step forward and kick the ball.

### **Kicking a stationary ball**

- Helps to practise controlled kicking movements.
- Place a ball on the floor.
- Encourage your child to kick the ball forwards or towards a large target.

### **Balloon kicking**

- Helps to develop coordination, balance, weight shifting and foot control.
- Encourage your child to keep the balloon in the air using only their feet.
- This can be done individually or in pairs.
- Progress by counting how many kicks they can do before it touches the floor.

### **Rolling and kicking**

- Helps to develop timing and coordination.
- Roll the ball slowly towards your child
- Encourage them to stop it with their foot or pass it back.
- Progress by gradually increasing the speed of the roll.

### **Kicking towards a target**

- Helps to improve coordination and accuracy.
- Encourage the child to kick the ball towards a large target such as a box or goal.
- Progress by making the target smaller or moving it further away.

### **Drop and kick**

- Helps develop coordination between hands and feet.
- Encourage your child to hold, drop and kick the ball.

### **Dribbling on the move**

- Helps develop ball control and balance while moving.
- Encourage your child to dribble the ball around an area.

### **Dribbling around cones**

- Helps develop coordination and control during changes of direction.
- Place cones or objects spaced apart on the floor.
- Encourage your child to dribble the ball around the cones or objects.

