

Physical Activity Cards

Each physical activity card includes fun activities that can be incorporated throughout the day to provide the opportunity for preschool age children to be active and practice motor skills.



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

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The physical activity cards were adapted from the "Healthy Snacks and Physical Activities" card set developed by Iowa Department of Education's Team Nutrition Program



Materials:

One crushed newspaper ball per child.

Several foam or playground or beach balls.

Two 4X4 foot areas marked off on each end of play area.



Baby Handball

- Arrange the children in 1 line facing long open area.
- The objective of this activity is to practice and develop striking skills, striking begins with the hand. Later children can strike with an extension (a racquet or bat). With the ball resting on the ground, hit the ball with either hand. Move the ball from one side of the area to the opposite side and back. Repeat several times.
- Arrange the children in a scatter formation with balls scattered on the floor. Ask the children to put the balls in one area by striking the ball(s) with the hand. When all the balls are in that area, ask them to move the balls to the other area. Repeat.



Materials:

Bean bags

8.5" foam balls

Polyspots or other markers

1 cone



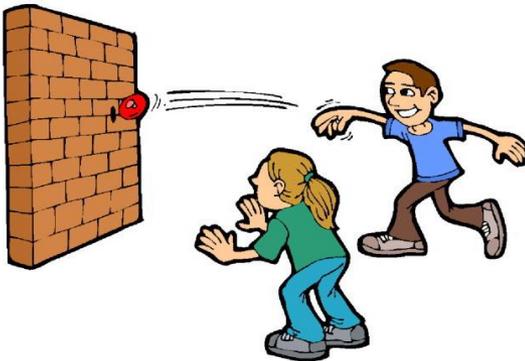
Ball Stations

- The objective is independent practice of manipulative skills.
 - Station 1: Kicking for distance.
 - Station 2: Throwing the bean bag for distance.
 - Station 3: Striking the ball with the hand from a cone.
 - Station 4: Catching—teacher tosses to child.
- Describe and demonstrate stations.
- Divide children among stations.
- Have children practice at a station.
- Rotate children among all stations.



Materials:

1 bean bag per child



Flying Bean Bags

- Arrange the children in 1 line facing long open area.
- The objective of this activity is to practice and develop an efficient overarm throwing pattern. The best way to do this is to encourage children to throw hard or far. Do Not use a target.
- Hold the bean bag in the preferred hand, throw as far as possible. Retrieve the bean bags after the signal and repeat.
- Look for and encourage children to:
 - Take a big step
 - Step on the opposite foot from throwing arm
 - Shoulders move parallel to target, then perpendicular, then parallel, then perpendicular opposite
 - Begin by taking the bean bag in a backward and downward circle.

Throwing is important in many activities, provide as much practice as possible.



Materials:

1 bean bag

8.5" foam ball

8.5" playground ball



Fun with Catching

- Arrange the children in 1 line facing long open area.
- The purpose of this activity is to practice and develop catching skills. Catching progresses in the following order:
 - Sitting with legs spread, stop a rolled ball
 - While standing, stop a rolled ball (roll the ball slowly, directly to the child)
 - While standing with arms extended, palms up, capture a foam ball tossed (in an arch) directly to the hands from a distance of 10 feet.
 - Repeat above using a bean bag.
 - Stand watching a spot on the floor, catch a bounced ball (toss the ball so it bounces on the spot the child is watching).
 - Catch a foam ball tossed in the general direction of the child (progress to bean bag).

Hint: Practice each skill, once that skill before moving on to the next skill.



Materials:

1 tennis or other small ball per child.

Markers for spots (polyspots, chalk).



Roly Poly

- Arrange the children in 1 long line, facing an open area.
- Present the following challenges to the children:
 - Sit, rolling the ball forward using one or two hand to push the ball.
 - While standing, make the ball move on the ground sloooowly (demonstrate).
 - Walk forward and roll the ball—the ball should be on the ground as it rolls.
 - Roll the ball over a spot.
 - Roll the ball at a spot, try to make it stop on the spot.
 - Toss the ball up and let it bounce.
 - Toss the ball and catch it (start with very small tosses).
 - Toss the ball from hand to hand.
 - Toss the ball to a partner.
- As each skill is mastered, move to the next skill.



Materials:

15-20 plastic red apples or balls
Basket



Find the Apple

Find the Apple is a fun scavenger hunt for toddlers.

Children will walk and search the classroom for hidden apples.

Directions:

- Hide apples or balls in various places around the room.
- Children will walk, hop, or crawl around the room looking for the hidden apples. Walk, crawl, and hop with the children, encouraging them to look for the missing apples.
- As children find the apples, ask them to place them in the basket.
- This activity could be used with other plastic fruits and vegetables to teach children about healthy foods.



Materials:

1 bean bag



Zig Zag

- Arrange the children in two lines facing each other.
- The first child tosses the bean bag to the child across from them. That child tosses it to the next child in the opposite line, this continues until the bean bag gets to the end of the line.
- The last child runs to the first position in his/her line (if the lines are uneven in number have the child go to the end of the opposite line) and start the tossing again.
- Repeat.
- Hint: Say the name of the child tossing and catching so they are both ready before a toss. "Chris you are going to toss to Alex. Alex get ready to catch."



Materials:

Pool noodles



Row, Row, Row Your Boat

- Children sit in pairs facing each other and hold onto the same noodle.
- Children pretend to “row the boat” by pulling back and forth.
- Increase the challenge of this activity by sitting on big balls. This will challenge stability and engage more core (trunk) muscle strength.



Materials:

Pool noodles



Noodle Limbo

- Two adults hold ends of the noodle, starting up high over their heads.
- Children walk under the noodle. The holders lower the noodle in increments (i.e. shoulder height, chest, belly button, hip, thigh, knee, shin) so that children need to get down lower to move under the noodle.
- Let all children continue as the noodle gets lower without eliminating anyone.
- Children learn to move their bodies through space at different levels-high, medium and low.



Materials:

Pool noodles



Ride 'Em Cowboy!

- Put on your imaginary cowboy hat and spurs. Children pretend the pool noodle is a horse and gallop.
- Add some fun by giving signals to go fast/slow or start/stop.
- Get creative. What other animals might they like to ride? How do those animals move—walk, crawl, run, waddle, etc.
- Children can experience a variety of locomotor patterns such as sliding from side to side; twisting back and forth; walking in straight, curved or zig zag paths.



Materials:

Lightweight scarves



Ghost Buddies

- Students sit in a circle while you introduce your friend for the day-- "ghost buddy." Demonstrate various tricks and have student do them with you:
 - "Ghost, Ghost fly up high... BOOOOO catch" (Throw scarf into air and catch).
 - "Ghost, Ghost fly to my other hand catch" (Throw with one hand, catch with the other).
 - "Ghost, Ghost fly, twirl catch" (Throw scarf into air, turn around and catch).
 - "Ghost, Ghost, fly, touch my head catch."
- Children must be able to track the scarf with their eyes before moving on to more challenging tricks.
- **Teaching Suggestions:** If children are having trouble throwing the scarf into the air, ask that they hold one corner of the scarf and hold the scarf down low by their knees, raise their hand quickly overhead and release the scarf.



Materials:

1 36" ribbon, plastic or crepe paper streamer per child

Music-optional



Streamers

- Arrange children in a circle each with a streamer.
- Demonstrate and have the children practice the following movements:
 - Circles: to the side, in front, overhead, to the other side.
 - Squiggles: quickly wiggle the streamer, try it high and low.
 - Figure 8: connect two circles, using a smooth motion.
 - Snapping to the beat: moving the wrist, snap the streamer in a hammering motion.
- Combine the various movements, do them while you walk, follow-the-leader, or put them to music.



Materials:

Parachute

Small balls



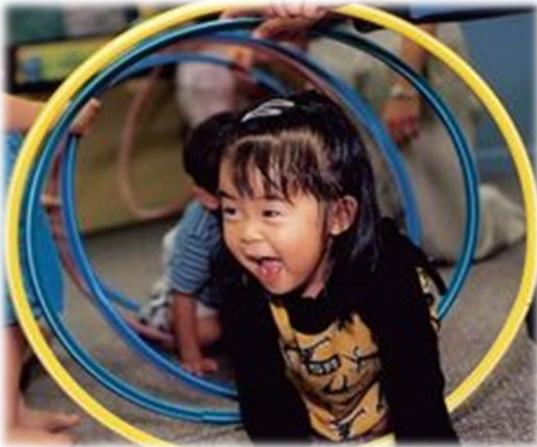
Parachute Games

- Wiggle the parachute using small arm and hand movements for 30 seconds.
- Try big arm wiggles by moving the arm and shoulders up and down for 30 seconds.
- All children stop, hold on to parachute with both hands, and on count of 3, everyone raises their arms and makes the parachute go into the air. Pull edges to the ground to make a mushroom.
- Place balls on parachute and children shake the parachute and try to keep all the balls on top of the parachute.
- Make an igloo by sitting down inside the parachute after lifting it and still holding on to the parachute.
- Raise the parachute above the head and then bring down to waist height. When the parachute is raised high have a child run under and then back to his original position. Repeat until all children have had a turn.
- Expand by having the child run around the outside and back to his/her own place.



Materials:

1 hoop per child



Hoops

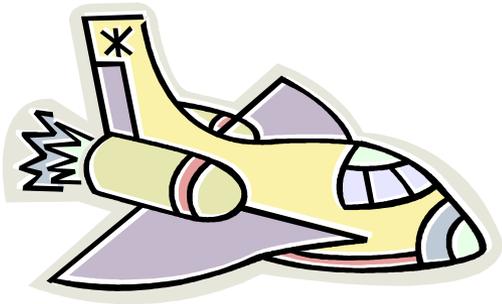
- Arrange the children in scatter formation with a hoop.
- Present the following challenges:
 - Jump into your hoop, now out. Repeat
 - Balance with 1 leg in the hoop and 1 out of the hoop.
 - Balance with 2 feet out and 2 hands in the hoop.
 - Stand under your hoop, beside your hoop, in front, behind.
 - Go through your hoop.
 - Roll your hoop.

Carpet squares can be used for many of these if you don't have hoops



Materials:

Carpet squares or other floor markings (tape, newspaper)



Airplanes

- Arrange half the children in scatter formation on the carpet squares.
- The remaining children will be scattered among the carpet squares. The children on the carpet squares are “skyscrapers”. Explain this to them (e.g., tall buildings). They can sway but can’t move their feet. Arms must be at their sides or above their heads.
- The children scattered among the skyscrapers are airplanes. They move carefully among the buildings with wings spread. The airplanes can’t stop moving and must not touch the buildings or each other. Airplanes should fly (run or jog).
- Repeat, reversing roles of skyscrapers and buildings.



Materials:

Mats, carpet squares or a soft surface



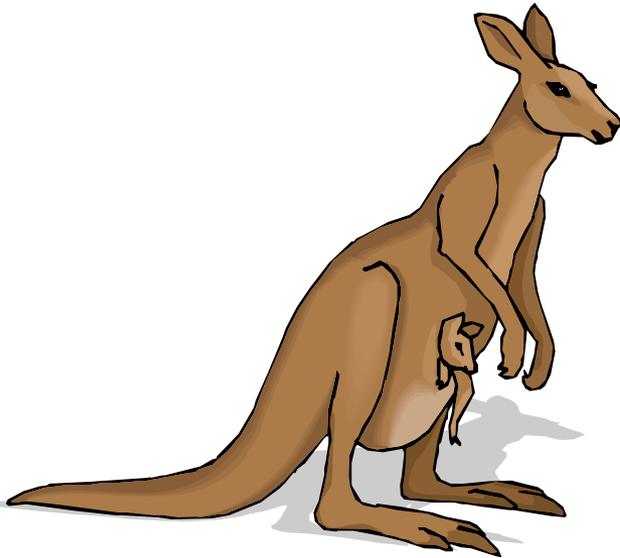
Circus Elephants

- Arrange the children in a scatter formation on a soft surface.
- Ask them to balance on:
 - One foot
 - The other foot
 - One hand and one foot
 - Two hands and one foot
 - Switch to the other foot and two hands
 - Knees (no feet)
 - One knee
 - Seat (bottom)
- Hint to challenge older children, ask “can you think of other ways to balance?” or switch quickly from one to another of the challenges. Repeat.



Animal Walks

- Arrange the children in a long line facing you. Ask the children “how does (insert animal name) walk?”
- Have the children demonstrate. Repeat with each child selecting their favorite, adding their own animals and so forth.
 - Kangaroo (jumping while holding hands near chest with fingers forward).
 - Monkey (walking with hands on ground).
 - Bear (lumbering so that hand and foot on the same side go forward together).
 - Pony (galloping or trotting with all fours).
 - Giraffe (lift arms above head pretending this is the neck and head, then slide to move across the area).
 - Squirrel (running, darting and dodging, quick head movements during short stops).

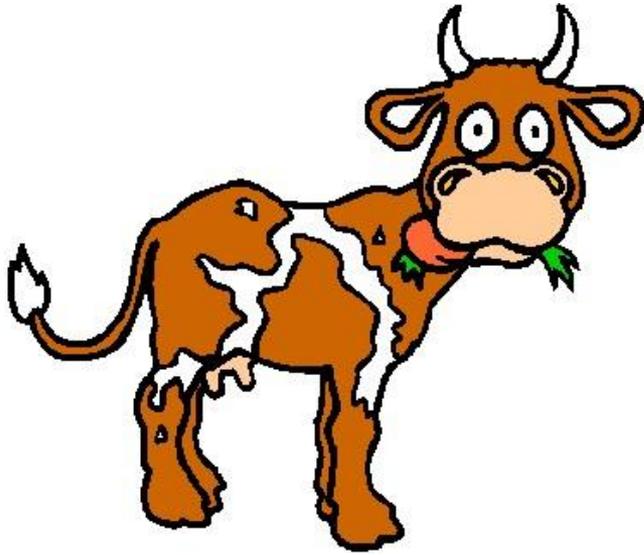




Materials:

Book - *Barnyard Dance!*

By: Sandra Boynton



Barnyard Dance

- Read book and act out story.
- Make up your own Barnyard Dance!
- Create your own moves to other books





Blast Off

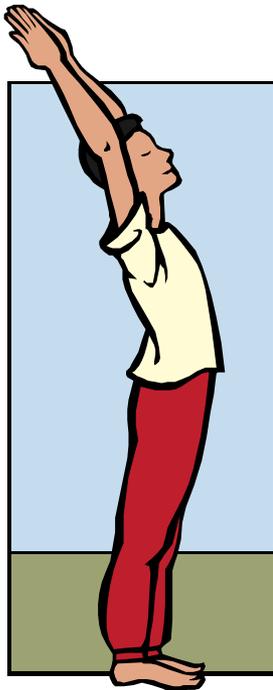
- Arrange the children in a line on one side of a rectangle facing the other side of the rectangle.
- The first child in line is the rocket. Have everyone count backward, “5, 4, 3, 2, 1, blast-off!”
- “Blast-off” is the signal for the rocket to run as quickly as possible to the other side. An adult should be the first rocket to show children how.
- Go through the line until every child has been the rocket.





Materials:

Four markers for each stop on the course.



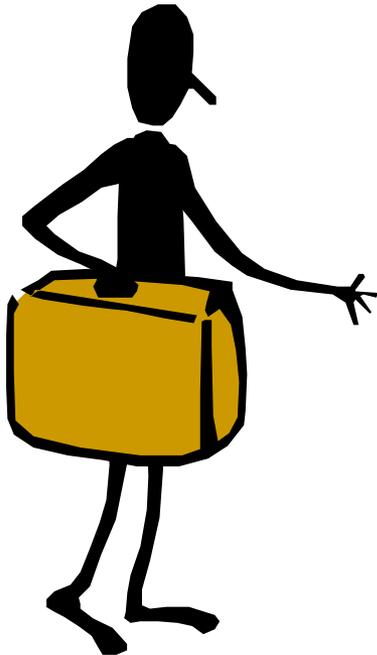
Fitness Course

- Stop 1: Bend and stretch- touch toes then stand tall and stretch with arms over head (repeat as time allows).
- Stop 2: Crunches- laying on back, arms crossed on chest, roll upward until the shoulders are off the floor, slowly roll back to start (repeat).
- Stop 3: Twister- standing with feet shoulder distance apart, turn upper body as far as possible in each direction, hands on waist (repeat).
- Stop 4: Seal walk- support body weight with arms (lying on stomach) while legs are extended with tops of feet on floor (repeat)
 - Begin with all children traveling with you around fitness course.
 - Describe and demonstrate each stop, have them practice.
 - Jog from one stop to the next.
 - Divide the children into 4 groups, one group begins at each stop.
 - Groups rotate around stops on your signal.



Materials:

Route Markers: Cones, carpet squares, plastic milk bottles filled with sand or water.



Going on a Trip

- Create a route with markers (see materials list).
- For each part of our “trip” we will use a different movement.
- One child goes at a time, so you and the other children can “cue” or coach which skill should be done on each segment of the trip.
- At the end, you and the children can go together forming a “train” by doing the movements in a line. You can substitute other movements.
- Suggested movements:
 - Gallop
 - Walk
 - Hop
 - Run
 - Crawl
- Have the children help dream up where you are going on your trip.



Materials:

Marching music



Fitness March

- Have children line up in 2 equal lines.
- Play the music and march. Encourage high steps with the knees lifted up on each step. Encourage moving the arms vigorously in a pattern opposite to the legs.
- Begin with an adult as the leader. March around the area in different patterns (lines, zig-zag, circles, etc.)
- Then allow a child to be the leader. Switch leaders often.



Locomotor Challenges

- Arrange the children in scatter formation.
- Present the following challenges:
 - Walk under control, do not bump or touch anyone else.
 - Walk forward, stop, backward, stop, backward, stop, forward, stop, backward.
 - Walk and balance on one foot (repeat).
 - Hop on one foot, now the other foot.
 - Walk (allow them to walk several steps), hop (again several steps), Walk backward.
 - Run slowly, now hop, walk backward, hop.
 - Walk and jump.
 - Run and jump.
 - Walk and hop.
 - Jump backward, then forward (repeat).
 - Step (walk), then hop, step-hop, step-hop.
- As children master a challenge, move to the next challenge. Challenges should be repeated.





Non-Locomotor Skills

- Arrange the children in scatter formation.
- Remind the children to stay in their special spot (where they are). Non-locomotor skills are movements which are done without changing locations. Generally, feet are still. Non-locomotor skills can usually be done with one body part (the arm) or the whole body. Ask the children to do the following movements, if they do not know what to do, demonstrate.

- Twist Swing
- Balance Sway
- Lean Wiggle
- Curl Bend
- Shake Stretch

Vary the movement by asking them to move only one arm or leg instead of the whole body.

- Hint: Chalk lines, tape marks, carpet squares or polyspots (plastic spots, available at school supply stores) help children find and stay in their spot.