

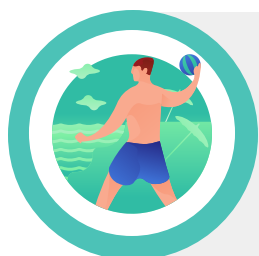
The benefits of ball play

Whether in a ball pit, as part of a game or just for children to access if they need, balls can provide a great deal of learning opportunities. The more types of balls the greater the benefit to exploration and building understanding through play.



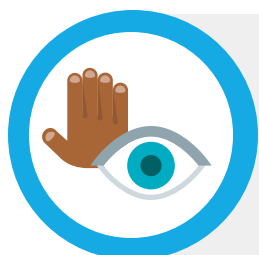
Research

Balls behave in many different ways. If you drop one they bounce in different ways, roll in different directions, stay still, fall at different speeds, make noises, light up etc. Children look for patterns of behaviour in their play, so they need more research to learn how to understand balls.



Fundamental Movement Skills

Fundamental Movement Skills provide children with a physical activity vocabulary that they can pull from to help them handle different aspects of life. Ball skills make up many of these skills with kicking, throwing, catching, bouncing, dodging and striking.



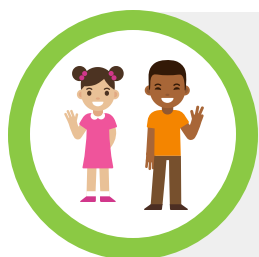
Hand-eye coordination

Children develop their hand-eye coordination as they play with balls because they need to track a moving object (rolling, bouncing, thrown) and move their body accordingly to get their hands to the ball. This should be in response to the child's current skills and not too challenging.



Confidence

By developing the children's skills with balls, and introducing them in safe and appropriate ways, children feel confident in their ability to manage items being thrown in their vicinity. Use softer and lighter balls first and then move to heavier and firmer balls to support confidence developing.



Social skills

Balls invite social play whether this is just exploring and enjoying balls in a ball pit with peers, simple games children create, and onto formal ball games. Each of these levels require children to understand, or establish, the rules of the play.