



BOUNCING BALLS

DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD



ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY:

Encourage your child to use different kinds of balls by rolling, dropping, and tossing them on different surfaces (like carpet, grass, or a ramp).

Help your child notice with their senses how balls move or stop by using more or less force and explore how texture, material, size, and weight changes how the balls roll, bounce, or collide on different surfaces.

As your child plays with the different balls, they begin to understand that what a ball is made of can affect how it behaves and where it moves on different surfaces.

STEM LEARNING AREAS:

Physical Science: Concepts related to objects or things, what they do, and how they move

- **Forces & Motion:** Concepts related to objects moving, how they move, and how to make them move
- **Structure & Properties of Materials:** Understanding characteristics of things and how those characteristics impact what things do

WHAT DO I NEED?:

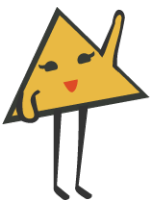
- Variety of balls: Size, Color, Texture, Material
- Different surfaces: Floor, Carpet, Grass, Ramp

WHAT CAN I TALK ABOUT?:

- Textures and Materials: Smooth/Bumpy/Spikey, Wood, Plastic, Cloth, Rubber
- Colors
- Forces and Motion: Roll, Bounce, Throw, Drop
- Size: Small/Big
- Weight: Light/Heavy
- Senses: Feel, See

WHAT CAN I ASK?:

- What is the same about these balls? Different?
- What colors do you see? What textures do you feel?
- What would happen if we ____ this ball? What about that ball?





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ADAPTATIONS FOR DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this suggested playtime activity. These are only suggested activity adaptations. Consider consulting your child's care team first.



Follow your child's lead and interests. Enthusiastically ask your child questions about what they are doing and what they like.



Answer your child's questions. If you do not know the answer, work together with your child to discover the answer.



Encourage your child to participate in the activity as much as possible. Praise your child's efforts and successes.

ENVIRONMENT

- If possible, limit background noise and distractions
- Place balls within reach
- Cover items that you will not use during the activity
- Make sure your child has a comfortable place to sit or stand while engaging in the ball activity
- If you are planning to roll balls, lay out "paths" made of tape or another material for the balls to follow

MATERIALS

- Have child's assistive technology ready and available, including augmentative & alternative communication (AAC) device
- Have a container or tray your child can toss balls into
- Provide a variety of balls with different textures (rough, smooth, bumpy, knobby, hard, soft), sizes (big, small), and colors
- For children with physical disabilities with fine motor or grasping needs, consider using tools or assistive devices (like a grabber or reacher)

INSTRUCTION

- Use a variety of methods of communication (sign language, gestures) to meaningfully engage children
- Model and demonstrate how to interact with balls. Try doing one action at a time with one ball, then build one or two more actions into the activity
- Have visuals ready to represent different actions your child might do with the ball
- Allow longer waiting time for child to respond or process this activity



Need visual cues?

Visit [STEMIE's Visual Cue Library](#) or check out STEMIE's tips for creating and using visual supports with [A Guide to Visual Supports](#).



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ACTIVITY IDEAS FOR DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS:

- Bring something stackable into the activity (blocks or boxes), then encourage the child to build small structures and use the blocks to knock them down.
- Encourage your child to predict what will happen with each ball and action and then test it and record what happened.
- Find other round objects that are not breakable and try the actions with those. Child can also predict, test, and record during this activity.
- Sort out the balls by characteristics or properties.
- Check out these great books about balls:
 - *Ball* by Mary Sullivan
 - *Balls* by Busy Hands Books
 - *Rosa Plays Ball* by Jessica Spanyol

