

BOUNCING BALLS

DISCOVERY PLAY ACTIVITIES WITH YOUR YOUNG CHILD

Every child is different, and these are only suggested adaptations and activities. Do what works best for encouraging your child's independent exploration during this suggested play activity. Consult your pediatrician, physical therapist (PT), and/or occupational therapist (OT) first.



STEM Concept(s): Force & Motion, Structure & Properties of Materials

Infants love playing with balls. Ball play is not just a motor learning activity, but a STEM learning opportunity. During ball play, help your child learn about the balls' **properties** with a variety of **textures and sizes** and discover how different **textured balls can move in different ways (roll, throw, bounce, drop)**.

STEM IDEAS/WORDS

- Textures
- Colors
- Force & Motion
- Size
- Explore with senses

MATERIALS

- Variety of balls (size, color, texture, material)

OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

- *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?*



BOUNCING BALLS ADAPTATIONS

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ENVIRONMENT

- If possible, limit background noise & 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/grasping needs, consider using tools/assistive devices (e.g., grabber, reacher)

INSTRUCTION

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



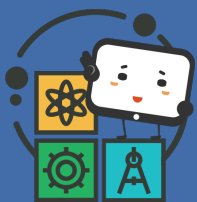
Follow your child's lead and interests. Enthusiastically ask your child questions about what they are doing and what they like.



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.



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ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

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- 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/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

