Bouncing

Bouncing requires your child to track the up and down movement of a ball, and to push it downward firmly so that it will rebound. Bouncing can be done on the spot (stationary), or on the move.

The challenge this skill presents for your young child is the short time lag between the up-down motion of the ball, requiring him to react fast enough to keep up with the repetitive movement pattern. Bouncing, needed in games like basketball, develops hand-eye coordination and responses to rebounding objects.
Developmental Phases

Bouncing

Initial

- Holds ball with palms facing each other.
- Body weight is on both feet.
- Arms drop ball downward and palm attempts to slap at ball as it rebounds.
- Ball bounces close to body. Height of bounce decreases with each unsuccessful slap at ball.
- Eyes focus on the ball.

Transition

- Holds ball with one hand on top and the other near bottom of ball.
- Body leans forward slightly with body weight on both feet.
- Top hand and arm push ball downward with an inconsistent force.
- For subsequent bounces, elbow extends and palm slaps at ball.
- Unable to control ball after the first two to three bounces.
- Eyes focus on the ball looking up occasionally.

Mature

- One foot behind the other, with foot opposite bouncing hand in front.
- Body leans forward slightly, with ball maintained at or near waist level.
- Ball is pushed towards ground by finger-tip pads with flexion at wrist.
- Arm straightens during follow-through, with good control of ball.
- Able to apply consistent force for continuous bounces, and bounce with either hand.
- Able to look up occasionally while bouncing.

Approximate Age of Development (in years)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Transition</th>
<th>Mature</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
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<td>10</td>
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Teaching Strategies

Bouncing

What to do if your child...

... tends to slap at ball?
- Get your child to sit and practise “drop, catch” a few times, slowly at first and building up speed progressively.
- Ensure his fingers are spread out on top of ball during the catch.

... is unable to bounce continuously?
- Get your child to “drop, push, catch”; “drop, push, push, catch”.
- Place your hand on top of your child’s hand to guide and help him experience the pushing action.

... needs reminder to bounce with finger pads?
- Get your child to stand with his feet shoulder-width apart, and with knees slightly bent.
- Give cues to “drop catch”, followed by “drop, push, catch”, then “drop push, push, catch” and so on.
- Increase “push” cues progressively for continuous bounce.

... tends to bounce only with one dominant hand?
- Get your child to bounce with alternate hands (e.g. right, left, right, left).
### Variations

**“Can your child bounce...?”**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How the body moves</th>
<th>Force/Effort</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Flow</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• forcefully with fingers straightened out</td>
<td>• quickly/slowly</td>
<td>• three times and then catch the ball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• a small/medium-sized ball</td>
<td>• in alternating quick-slow rhythm</td>
<td>• and catch accordingly to odd/even counts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• gently as if the ball were fragile</td>
<td>• and hold the ball for three seconds before bouncing again</td>
<td>• as many times in 30 seconds</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Direction/Pathways</th>
<th>Levels/Extensions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• while seated/standing</td>
<td>• against the wall and catch the ball when it rebounds</td>
<td>• below the hip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• on the spot</td>
<td>• to one side</td>
<td>• above shoulder level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• with the ball near/far from the body</td>
<td>• in a circle on the spot</td>
<td>• at alternating low-high levels</td>
</tr>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self (body parts)/People</th>
<th>Objects</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• with his fingers spread out on ball</td>
<td>• to land the ball on a flat marker/chalk mark</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• with his left/right hand</td>
<td>• inside a hoop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• five times and then pass ball to you standing nearby/far away</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

### COMBINATIONS

- A medium-sized ball as quietly as possible and call out the number of fingers held up by you
- Below the hip, alternating between the left and right hand
Activity 1

Bouncing

WHAT YOU NEED

• A ball

HOW TO PLAY

• Ask your child to drop a ball once and try catching it (Drop-catch).
• Gradually increase the number of drops. Drop-drop-catch, drop-drop-drop-catch, etc.
• Add in variations to the drop-catch activity.

Ways to drop-catch a ball
- While kneeling on one knee
- While kneeling on both knees
- In a wide sitting position
- With each consecutive bounce, alternate between standing and kneeling positions
- While walking in a circle

Do the drop-catch in a static position.

• Your child must look up and shout out the number of fingers you hold up. He must simultaneously bounce to the number.

BE AWARE

• Remind your child to keep the ball at waist level. This is for better control of the ball.
• Train your child to look up and shout out the number of fingers you hold up, while he is bouncing the ball. This will help prevent collisions when he plays team sports in the future.
Activity 2
Bouncing

OBJECT CONTROL SKILLS

WHAT YOU NEED
• A hula hoop or tape
• A ball

HOW TO PLAY
• Place a hula hoop between you and your child, or use the tape to form a circle on the floor.
• Stand two giant steps away from the hula hoop, opposite to each other.
• Bounce a ball to each other. With each bounce, the ball must hit the floor inside the hula hoop or circle.

BE AWARE
• Encourage your child to tap the ball with greater strength. This will help the ball bounce in the centre of the hula hoop, and then out to the catcher.
• Make sure he spreads his fingers and pushes down on the ball with consistent force.
• This activity will train your child to straighten his arms and have good control of the ball.