

# Play with me!



Fun moves for

0 to  
3 yrs



## How to use the resource

This booklet provides a snapshot of some activities to promote physical development in children aged 0–3 years and may complement existing resources and knowledge of Early Childhood Educators.

The booklet is divided into approximate age groups based on developmental milestones however; **many activities are relevant across all age groups.**

### 0–8 months

Tummy Time and Floor based play: lifting head, rolling, learning to crawl

### 8–12 months

Starting to move: rolling, crawling, climbing, standing, cruising

### 1–2 years

Moving more: walking, learning to catch, throw and jump

### 2–3 years

Introducing Fundamental Movement Skills:  
Stability – balance, vestibular stimulation  
Locomotor - climb, swing, run, jump  
Manipulative - roll, catch, throw, kick



8 to 12

1 to 2

0 to 8

2 to 3

## Why plan daily movement activities?

By helping children move each day, they are more likely to reach each developmental milestone required for healthy growth and development.

A child's physical development generally progresses in a sequence, which coincides with and assists in maturation of the brain. The order in which developmental milestones are reached is more important than the age at which the development occurs.

Children should follow the progression of skills as below:

Lift head > roll > crawl  
> climb > cruise > walk  
> run > hang > jump

These lay the foundations for the Fundamental Movement Skills:

- Stability skills - stretch, balance, bend, twist
- Locomotor skills - crawl, walk, run, jump, leap, hop, skip
- Manipulative skills - throw, catch, kick.

## Key activities to include each day for ALL age groups

### 1. Floor play

Floor play includes tummy time, crawling and cruising. These movements help to strengthen the neck and back muscles, to develop muscle tone, vision, spatial awareness, balance and overcome primitive reflexes.

**Remember:** Floor play, particularly crawling, is important for all ages, even if the child is walking.

Planning  
Movement  
Activities

# Key activities to include each day for ALL age groups

## 2. Massage

Massage provides body awareness, develops a body map and improves muscle tone. It helps with cold and pain, and also emotional tone and attention span.

**Some of the different ways to massage include - brushing, circles, chopping, tapping, patting, rubbing, squeezing, light touch, deep touch.**

This can be done any time for only a few minutes e.g. whilst carrying a child, during tummy time, at nappy change time, before rest time.

## 3. Vestibular stimulation

The vestibular system lies within the inner ear. It helps us to know where our body is in space by sending messages from the inner ear to our brain and muscles. It measures gravity, movement, speed and vibration. Through this system we are able to integrate all the senses, and understand and respond to our environment. It is important not only for muscle tone and posture, but also for eye movements, vision and overcoming primitive reflexes.

**Some movements to stimulate the vestibular system are - rocking, swinging, swaying, spinning, rolling, jumping, hopping, bouncing, sliding, balancing, upside down.**

#### 4. Strength

Strength is important equally for the upper and lower body. Strength and elasticity of muscles are needed to hold our body in a position, for correct posture, balance and repetitive movement.

**Some strengthening exercises could include - push and pull activities, climbing, weight bearing activities and dancing. Some movements need to be done slowly at first to allow time for messages to be sent to the brain and back to the body parts.**

## Planning and documenting activities into the daily program

This resource can be used to assist educators towards meeting the Early Years Learning Framework (EYLF) learning outcomes and National Quality Standard (NQS) quality areas relevant to physical activity:

**EYLF outcome 3:** Children have a strong sense of wellbeing - children take increasing responsibility for their own health and physical wellbeing.

**NQS areas: 1, 2, 3, 6** (Educational program and practice; Children's health and safety; Physical environment; Collaborative partnerships with families and communities)



The resource can also help educators ensure that children 0–3 years are progressing through the developmental milestones and begin practicing fundamental movement skills (FMS).

## National Quality Standards

Physical activity experiences can be planned based on guidance provided in the National Quality Standards under element 2.1.3:

**NQS element 2.1.3:** : Healthy eating and physical activity are promoted and appropriate for each child.

### Services with babies and toddlers:

- Provide safe areas and encouragement for babies to practice rolling over, sitting, crawling, standing, walking and climbing
- Provide support for toddlers to develop co-ordinated movement through planned experiences, such as action songs, dancing, and throwing and kicking balls

- Maintain a balance between spontaneous and planned physical activity, and passive and active experiences, for all children
- Have indoor and outdoor areas set up in ways to promote safe physical play and activity for children of different age groups and capabilities.

### The planned program:

- Incorporates physical activity that meets each child's capabilities and extends their development, including a balance of quiet/passive play times with more energetic outdoor play.



### **Educators and co-ordinators:**

- Implement physical games and activities as part of the program and encourage each child's participation
- Encourage and provide appropriate support to children to participate in new or unfamiliar physical experiences
- Become involved and demonstrate enjoyment in children's physical activity
- Communicate to families about the importance of physical activity to children's health and development.

### **Children:**

- Are encouraged and supported to use increasingly complex sensory motor skills and movement patterns that combine gross and fine motor movement and balance, increase their spatial awareness and use their problem-solving skills
- Have frequent opportunities to engage in active play
- Help to plan and set up physical play activities and equipment.

## **Documenting physical activity examples**

Try incorporating the activities in this resource each day into:

- Transition times e.g. moving like an animal or slide-slide to the bathroom or to lunch
- Nappy changing e.g. massage, learning to roll
- Indoor play e.g. obstacle courses, dancing, yoga
- Outdoor play e.g. obstacle courses, active games, painting with water on cement
- Group times e.g. drawing BIG circles on paper on the wall encourages children to squat down to pick up crayons and uses big upper body movements to draw circles
- Story time e.g. doing actions of words or rhymes
- Indoor and outdoor play, by setting up equipment or using the natural environment for children to explore.

## Examples

Activity	Age Group	Early Years Learning Framework	National Quality Standard	Example:
<b>Massage</b>	0-8 months	3	2.1.3	Grace discovered her feet today! She enjoyed having them massaged with a spikey ball and a feather during floor time. This helps develop awareness of her body.
	1 – 2 years	3	2.1.3	Today before rest time, we pretended to wash ourselves all over, singing the “washing song”. This helped the children develop their body map by using different forms of touch.
<b>Crawling</b>	8 – 12 months	3	2.1.3 3.2 – The service environment is inclusive, promotes competence and supports exploration and play-based learning.	Today we created a crawling maze. The babies enjoyed practicing their crawling through tunnels, up slopes and over cushions. The children are strengthening their muscles and balancing skills.
	2-3 years	3	2.1.3	Jake had fun practicing crawling to improve his coordination skills. We have created a path to follow from indoor to outdoors so we all crawled like bears each time we transitioned from indoor to outdoor play areas.

### 0-8 months – Tummy time

**Developmental milestones** - Lift head, roll, learning to crawl and to sit

- For young babies, try placing a rolled up towel under their chest



- Join the babies on the floor and talk to them
- Put a toy in front of baby to look at or play with
- Lie baby on your chest whilst you are lying down
- Gently massage their head and back
- Lie baby on their front on a large or medium sized ball. Hold baby's chest and gently roll forwards, backwards and side to side.

- Also encourage families to engage children who are not yet mobile, in tummy time. The Australian 24-hour Movement Guidelines recommend at least 30 minutes of tummy time, which includes reaching and grasping, pushing and pulling, spread throughout the day while awake.



**Remember:** Try tummy time when:

- I am happy and awake
- At nappy change time
- Whilst carrying me around
- You can try tummy time from birth
- Start with 10 seconds and build up to 10 minutes.

## Tummy Time

- Lie baby on their front on a scooter board. Roll the board forward, backwards, spin left then right, SLOWLY. You can also lie baby on their back (You can make a scooter board from a piece of board and 4 free wheel casters.)
- Lie baby their on tummy across your lap. Swap to the other side



- Lie baby on their tummy on a trampoline or a springy mattress or cushion and gently bounce up and down



- Hold baby across your arm whilst you are carrying them around. Gently rock or sway and sing a song. Turn baby to the other side so their neck muscles get stronger on both sides.



### Other Tummy Time ideas:

- Use (unbreakable) mirrors so that baby can see themselves – this encourages them to get their head up
- Roll a ball towards them or from side to side for them to look at
- Lie them on different textures – rugs, carpet, hard floor, grass
- Use various toys and objects to attract attention – different colours, shapes and sizes (ensure size of toy is too big to fit in the baby's mouth) e.g. scarves, tissue paper, baking tray, cardboard box
- Use bubbles to get baby's attention
- Encourage grasping, reaching, pulling and pushing.

### Remember:

- If I cry, stop and try again later
- Stay with me when I am on my tummy
- Support my head and neck if I cannot do this by myself
- Always put me to sleep on my back
- Give me lots of little tummy time sessions every day!



### Massage

- Use different textures to massage with: feathers, sponge, spikey balls, scarves, a soft brush
- Sing "head, shoulders, knees and toes" and gently squeeze each part
- Count baby's fingers and toes and rub hands and feet
- Slowly bend and straighten baby's legs together and individually
- Slowly move baby's arms in and out, up and down
- Touch baby's right foot with their left hand. Do the opposite.



## Massage

*Incy Wincy Spider* – For babies who can sit up, have them sitting between your legs. Lie younger babies on their back and do all actions on their front.

- *Incy wincy spider climbed up the water spout* - walk fingers up baby's back
- *Down came the rain* – wiggle fingers down head and front of body
- *And washed poor Incy out* – swish hands from side to side across baby's chest or legs
- *Out came the sun shine and dried up all the rain* – make large circles with arms or legs
- *So, Incy Wincy spider climbed up the spout again.* – walk fingers up baby's back.

## Sitting

When baby is able to sit up:

- Encourage baby to clap hands
- Assist with circular movements of arms and legs
- Assist with shaking hands and feet
- Play tug of war with a hula hoop
- Assist with clapping sticks
- Roll a ball between you and the baby and show them how to roll the ball back – this forms the basis for catching.

## Vestibular Activities

– (See “Planning movement activities” for a definition)

Gentle rocking, swinging, swaying, spinning, rolling, jumping, hopping, bouncing, sliding, balancing and going upside down.

- Try different carrying positions – Lying baby across your arms face down, carry baby on your hip facing you (both sides), then facing away from you, hold baby over your shoulder, cradle baby in your arms
- Try a mixture of movements – gently swaying, bobbing, slow spin one way then the other. Dance to music



- Spinning – lie baby on a rug either face up or on tummy. Take one end of rug and slowly spin around one way, then the other
- Upside down - Hold baby in your arms, lie baby facing upwards or on tummy. Gently lower baby’s head and back up again. Sing a flying song.



### Remember:

- I need movements every day in small amounts
- Always start off slowly and gently
- If I don’t like it, stop and try again later
- Support my head and neck if I cannot do it myself.

## Rolling

### How:

- Practice for rolling - lift leg 90 degrees and gently move it across the body to touch the floor. Do the other side
- Cross leg over the body and roll from back to front
- Put a toy out of reach near the side they are rolling to



- Set up a cushioned slope and assist baby to roll down. Start rolling from left side, then right side.



## Learning to crawl

- Help crawling by massaging feet and hands at nappy change time and before going to sleep. Use different texture; wool, cotton, fine sand paper, satin, fur and sand
- Sit or lie behind baby who is on tummy. Place your hands gently against baby's feet – baby's legs should be slightly bent. The baby will push away from your hands, moving forwards



- Help baby crawl down a slope or wedge.

### Remember:

I need to practice things over and over!  
It helps my brain and body grow stronger!

## 8-12 months – crawling, standing

### Developmental Milestones likely:

Crawling (on all fours), climbing, standing, cruising.

### Crawling

- When just starting out, place child on all fours and place your thumbs behind their knees to prompt bending



- Children may crawl backwards at first. This is okay. Encourage forward movement by holding one hand and the opposite foot and moving them together



- Help child crawl down a slope or wedge by supporting them around the waist. Make it harder by placing a toy at the top of the slope for child to crawl up to.



8<sup>to</sup>  
12  
MONTHS

Crawling  
Standing

## Crawling (continued)

- Place objects out of reach to encourage crawling
- Encourage crawling on different surfaces such as grass, carpet and sand
- Use tunnels for child to crawl through
- Crawl under outstretched arm
- Pretend to be different animals that crawl on the ground
- Chase child around or let them chase you
- Let child crawl through your legs or over you
- Create a crawling obstacle course,
  - cushions, low soft foam shapes, tunnel, ball, bubble blower, squeaky toy, up stairs
- Hold child around ankles to guide feet up steps or ladders.



## Standing

- Encourage child to pull themselves up to stand using stable low lying furniture (balance beam, table, lounge, soft foam shapes)



- Encourage standing to play – table with toys on it e.g. cars with a car track print or elevated sand pit.



## Cruising

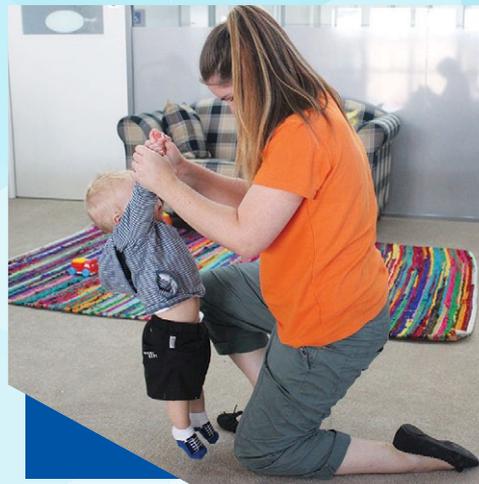
Cruising is not walking. Discourage holding onto their hands and walking them if they are not walking on own. Rather, hold child around the hips. Provide the environment for cruising, and still encourage crawling.



**Remember:** Even if I am cruising, I still need crawling practice each day. Try some activities in the 0 – 8 months section.

## Upper body strength

- Help develop child's upper body strength by facing the child and gently holding child's hands. Lift until feet are slightly off the floor and hold for 2-3 seconds



- Practice wheelbarrow walking on the floor. Child places hands on the floor. Hold around child's waist and lift their legs parallel off the floor.

8<sup>to</sup>  
12  
MONTHS

Cruising,  
Upper body,  
Vestibular  
Activities

- Lie child over a medium sized ball.  
Child places their hands on the floor.  
Hold around their waist for balance.  
Place a toy out of their reach so they  
have to walk their hands towards the toy.

## Vestibular Activities

– (See “Planning movement activities”  
for a definition)

- Rocking from side to side and back and forth in your arms
- Rolling child from tummy to back and back to tummy on floor
- Holding child against your body. Try variations of jiggling, gentle stamping, running, swaying, bouncing, rocking
- Bouncing up and down on adult’s knees. “Giddy up horse”
- Holding child chest to chest and slowly spin one way then the other
- Rolling down adult’s leg when adult is sitting on the floor with legs out straight

- Bouncing on a trampoline
- Sitting on a ball. Gently roll side to side, backwards, forwards, bouncing up and down.



# 1-2 years - walking, jumping, vestibular activities

**Developmental Milestones:** Walking, learning to throw, catch and jump

## Walking

- Provide different objects to walk with such as wagons, block carts, boxes and balls
- Encourage by various toys set up around play area
- Try having children walk with bare feet on different surfaces – grass, concrete, sand, pillows, soft blocks. Practice walking up and down slopes (natural or man-made).



## Walking Games

### Parachute

Have the children and educators stand around a parachute or sheet. Raise it high overhead and say, “Up, up, up.” Bring the parachute down low and say, “Down, down, down.” Repeat several times. Lift the parachute up high again, and say, “Under, under, under,” then have everyone crawl or walk under the dome of the parachute or sheet, whilst educators hold onto the parachute.

### Looking for Dolly

Take a roll of streamers and create a trail for your children to follow. Tie a doll at the end for your toddlers to find. You can also use ribbon or scarves tied together.

### Balancing act

Place a strip of masking tape on the floor and show the children how to walk along it without falling off.

1 to  
2  
YEARS

Walking,  
Jumping,  
Vestibular  
Activities

## Musical statues

Children will enjoy balancing on one leg and in different yoga positions.

## Animal Hokey Pokey

Children pretend to be a dog or cat on all fours. "Put your paws in, paws out ... "Wag your tail in, wag your tail out, Wag your tail in and shake it all about ..."

## Jumping

- Have child sit on a ball and bounce up and down – Sing, "everybody bouncing" ... or "Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall ..."



## Vestibular Activities

- Pencil rolls on the floor (arms above head) Sing "roly poly ever so slowly" rolling one way. Roll back the opposite way "roly poly ever so fast"
- Have one child sit in a box, or lie on a rug. Spin them around slowly one way then the other
- Upside down - Have a child lie on a soft surface on their back. Place each thumb in the soles of each foot and wrap your fingers around the top of each foot. Gently lift upside down, then gently lower back down.

**TIP:** Make sure their head is not resting on the ground!

## Copy Cat Sequence

Try the following actions with a group of children as a sequence or individually:

### Star jumps – (*jumping and coordination skills*)

1. Jump in and out with both arms and legs
2. Jump in and out just with legs
3. Just move arms out and in

### Scare crow (*balance*)

1. Stand with arms stretched out, legs apart  
Rock from one foot to the other. Sing “I’m a jingle jangle scare crow with a floppy floppy hat”
2. Shake hands and sing, “I can shake my hands like this”
3. Shake one leg at a time. Sing “and shake my feet like that”.



### Jack in the Box - (*getting children ready to jump*)

1. Crouch down
2. Sing “Jack is quiet down in his box until somebody opens the lid”
3. On the word “Lid” get children to jump up and reach for the stars

**TIP:** Bobbing is the action they need to develop before being able to jump. Older children will be able to jump.

### Upside down – (*vestibular*)

1. Stand with legs slightly apart
2. Sing “we’re going up, we’re going up as high as we can go”. Reach up to the sky with arms.
3. Sing “we’re going down... We’re going way down low”. Touch your toes and look between your legs
4. Repeat actions for “Up, up, up, up, up, down, down, down, down, down”

**TIP:** Place a bean bag between each child’s legs and get them to reach between their legs to pick it up.

## Copy Cat (continued)

**Balance on a line** - Walk on a straight line or rope, forward, backward, sideways

**Bean bag balance** – Balance a bean bag on child's head, shoulder, foot

**Angels in the Sand** – For coordination of left and right sides of body

1. Have children lie on their backs
2. Slide their arms and legs out wide like a star fish or angel. Say "Out"
3. Slide arms and legs back to body Say "In"
4. Repeat 3 times
5. Only slide arms out and in
6. Only slide legs out and in
7. For older children, slide left arm and leg out/in, then repeat on right side.



## Learning to throw and catch

Try the following to increase children's confidence:

- Catching scarves, balloon, bubbles
- Spin a hoop and have the children catch it whilst it is still spinning
- Have child sitting down. Roll a ball to them and have them roll it back
- Have children hold a beanbag near their ear and throw it to the ground. Get them to hold it in one hand then the other.



## 2-3 years - Warm ups, stability and vestibular activities

**Developmental Milestones:** Run, swing, jump, catch, throw, kick

### Warm Ups

- Songs from the Munch and Move CD
- If you're happy and you know it
- Heads, Shoulders, Knees and Toes
- Hokey Pokey
- Chicken Dance
- Hot Potato
- Wombat Wobble.



### Stability activities

Stability skills include stretching, bending, twisting and balancing.

**When:** These could be used as a morning stretch routine, post sleep routine or during transition times.

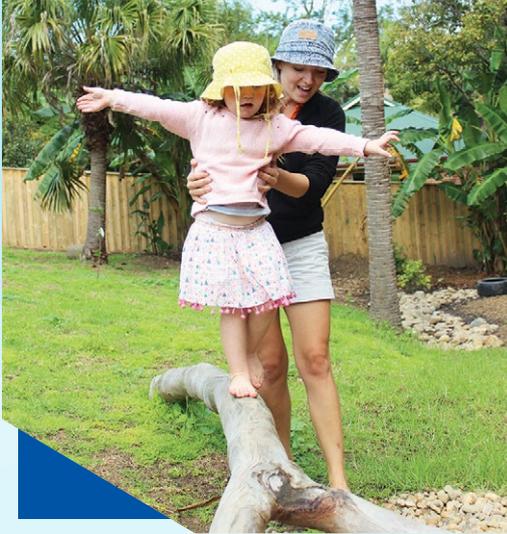
- Balance
  - Single leg
  - Eyes open/closed
  - Knee taps
- Stretching/Bending
  - Cat stretch
  - Toe touch & sky reach
  - Downward dog
  - Shoulder shrugs

Relate stretching to movements of animals, nature etc. E.g. stretch up high to the clouds, stretch your arms out like a bird spreading out its big wings etc.

- Twisting
  - Belly button circles.

**Warm Ups,  
Stability,  
Vestibular  
Activities**

**Remember:** I can balance better if you hold me under my upper arms or around my waist



## Vestibular Activities

- Slow spinning, child either sitting down spinning on bottom or standing up
- Dancing – use actions that changes the child’s position i.e. up and down, bending over front and back, side to side

- Bean bags – child sits on floor and holds bean bag between feet, slowly lifts legs over head and puts it on the floor above their head
- Humpty Dumpty – child sits on floor and holds knees to chest. Rocks back and forwards, singing “Humpty Dumpty” child rocks to the side and falls when Humpty “had a great fall”
- Balancing on a low beam, or along a rope or ribbon on the floor
- Forward rolls (start on a grassy slope, wedge or make your own slope out of cushions).



## Manipulative activities

Toddlers are not at the developmental stage to be able to learn fundamental movement skills like catching and throwing properly.

These activities can assist in the development of these skills later on:

- Place small balls or balloons in the middle of a parachute or sheet. Shake up and down like popcorn
- Skittles/ten pin bowling
- Stacking objects
- Trampoline jumping
- Bean bag throwing targets e.g. land inside hula hoops
- Mini golf
- Kicking games
- Try using bubbles, bean bags, balloons, soft toys, beach balls and balls of differing sizes for catching and throwing
- Draw on butcher's paper or cardboard on a wall or fence with crayons or paint. This helps promote squatting and BIG upper body movements.



**Remember:** Hanging and climbing help build my upper body strength for catching and throwing, as well as pencil grip!



## Manipulative Games

### Fetch

Equipment: Different coloured and sized balls, one for each child.

Have children stand in a line. Throw the balls. The children have to run and grab their colour, then bring it back to you.

### Umbrella

Equipment: Parachute or large sheet.  
A few adults.

Have the children hold the edges of the parachute or sheet. Say, "I hear thunder! I think it's going to rain!" while helping them shake the parachute/ sheet. Lift the parachute /sheet high and let it fall, while calling the children, one at a time, to run under the parachute or sheet. ("Sarah! It's raining! Run under the umbrella!") When everyone is under, play again. This time, have everyone get under the umbrella at once.

If someone doesn't want to run under the parachute, you can say, "Josh likes the rain. He's going to help hold our umbrella!"

### Basketball

Equipment: A bin or bucket, rolled up balls of newspaper or recycled paper.

The children try and get the 'balls' in the bin.



## Locomotor Games

Change the games below to include one or more locomotor movements such as crawling, walking, running, galloping, hopping, side sliding, jumping, skipping. For example:

- Hide and seek, Follow the leader, Simon Says, Tip/tag games, What's the time Mr Wolf?, Stuck in the mud, Jump from low step or over low objects, The Hokey Pokey
- Monster mash freeze game – dance to the music, when it stops, children must freeze
- Red light / green light (children move when you say 'green light'; then stop when you say 'red light')
- Jungle safari – children move around to music (hopping, walking, crawling etc). When the music stops you call out the name of an animal and children have to pretend to be that animal (e.g. bear, monkey, snake)
- Dancing to music. Try dancing with streamers, ribbons or balloons.

## Crawling games

- Have ping pong balls for children to blow along the floor whilst they are crawling
- Use transition times to crawl like a dog, bear, cat, elephant or other animals
- Make a crawling obstacle course outside or inside, with cushions, slopes, tunnels, boxes, low balance beams
- In story time, have children crawl around like the animals in the story
- Give each child a different picture of an object or number. Stick the same pictures or numbers on the underside of chairs. Spread the chairs around. Each child has to crawl around to each chair looking for a match for their particular number or picture.

**Remember:** We still need some crawling games to help improve our coordination and our vision.



## Locomotor Games

### Monster

No equipment. All the children stand against one wall. If you shout '1 jump!', the children can take 1 jump towards the winning wall. If you shout '1 step!', then they can take one big step towards the wall. You can vary up the number of steps or jumps they are allowed to take.

If you say the word 'monster' then all the children have to run back and touch the wall where they started from originally. You try and chase the children back to the line.

### Walking, Walking

To the tune of "Frère Jacques", sing and do the following actions:

Walking, walking, *(Repeat)*

Hop, hop, hop! *(Repeat)*

Running, running, running, *(Repeat)*

Now we stop. *(Repeat)*

### Walk Walk Run

Equipment: A clear space for running either indoors or outdoors.

Have children at one side of the room or wall outside. Start walking to the other side of the room or yard saying 'Walk, walk, walk', then at a certain point shout 'RUN!' Everyone runs to the other side and touches the wall opposite.



## Touch Something

Say 'touch something...'. E.g. 'Touch something blue, touch something big, touch something with leaves'.

## Hoop Run

Equipment: Plastic hoops of different colours.

Scatter hoops on the floor. Shout a colour and the children have to run and stand in the hoop that is the same colour. Try hopping, skipping or jumping to the hoop.



## Catch Me

Choose a child to use in the verse below. Before each verse, ask the child what they would like to catch, e.g. a tiger. The verse is repeated with each child's name and chosen animal until everyone has had a turn.

- Lucy over the water  
*(Move one hand across the body like a rippling wave.)*
- Lucy over the sea  
*(Move the other hand across the body in same way.)*
- Lucy catch a tiger  
*(Grab in front of you to "catch" the animal.)*
- You can't catch me! *(Point at self and let the children chase you.)*

## Leaping Lily Pads

Place cushions around the room and get the children to leap like a frog from one to the other.

## More Games

### River Jump

Equipment: Some sticks or lines drawn on the ground with chalk.

Put two sticks or masking tape or chalk draw a line on the floor about 10cm apart. Tell the children this is a river, and they have to jump from one side to the other. Move the sticks a little further apart. They may just do a little jump on the spot, then step over the sticks!



### Kicking

- Practice kicking with different sizes of balls and balloons
- Have a stocking with a ball in it. Have the child hold the stocking and try and kick the ball.



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