

Activity Guide #10 – Catching and Throwing

Book: *My Hands* by Aliko

Introduction

A child's mind and body develop together in an interrelated way. From the time they are born, children use their bodies to learn, making physical development vitally important in all areas of development and learning.

However, today there are a number of challenges to supporting a child's physical development, including gross motor skills. Children have easy access to screens (television, cell phones, tablets) and many live in areas where there may not be space and/or safe opportunities for them to engage in physical activities. Therefore it is important that children enrolled in child care programs have daily opportunities to develop their gross motor skills.

Although gross motor skills will largely develop on their own, there are ways in which early childhood professionals can encourage these skills to help children play confidently, engage in fun physical activities, and develop a strong foundation for a healthy, active lifestyle that carries into adulthood. This includes both opportunities for children's free exploration and practice of gross motor skills and through planned experiences that are featured in the guides included in the supplemental curriculum, **B.A.M.M.M.!**

Begin by providing time each day for outside play (weather permitting). Make sure there is sufficient indoor and outdoor space for children to safely practice and refine their gross motor skills.

In this **B.A.M.M.M.!** guide, children are introduced to catching and throwing during the reading of the story, *My Hands*, followed by activities that involve them in teacher-guided catching and throwing activities that support the **Physical Development and Health Domain**, plus additional activities that support the **Language Development** and **Emergent Literacy** and other **Domains** as well.

Teacher Note: *Information for this introduction was adapted from the introduction to the **Physical Development and Health Domain** in the Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 months (April 2016). The developers of **B.A.M.M.M.!** recommend that everyone using these guides review the entire introduction.*

Arkansas Child Development and Early Learning Standards: Birth through 60 Months

Domain: Physical Development and Health

Domain Component: Gross Motor

Learning Goal (with Strands and Skills or Indicators)

PH1.3 Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills (*catching and throwing*)

- Catches medium-to-large size balls and similar objects by trapping ball against body with straight arms, showing increased ability to visually track objects in space
- Catches ball or other objects of any size with both hands, with arms bent
- Tosses or throws balls or other objects (e.g., beanbag) with increasing control of direction, aim, and speed
- Tosses or throws ball or other objects with increasing accuracy and force, stepping forward with the leg opposite the throwing arm and following through.

Materials to Collect and Make

- ✓ Book: *My Hands* by Alik
- ✓ Scarves stored in a basket
- ✓ Balls in a variety of sizes and textures
- ✓ Beanbags, yarn balls
- ✓ Cones, short-handled paddle, pool noodle
- ✓ Catching and Throwing Pictures – See Attachment: [Catching and Throwing Pictures](#)

Introduce the Activity

Learning Goals:

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child’s home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*print knowledge*)

Directions:

- Write on a chart sheet or marker board the following: My Hands Can.
- Invite children to tell you all the things their hands can do and write on a chart sheet what they say.
- Show pictures of people catching and throwing balls if children have not said this and invite children to discuss what is happening in the picture and then add the words “catching” and “throwing” to the chart. See Attachment: [Catching and Throwing Pictures](#)
- Explain to children that you will now read to them a story about all the things hands can do.

Present the Story

Learning Goals:

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child’s home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension*)

EL1.1 Shows interest in literacy experiences (*engagement in language experiences, variety of experiences*)

EL3.1 Responds to features of books and print (*book knowledge, print knowledge*)

Book: *My Hands* by Alik

- Take a basket of scarves to the reading area. Keep basket out of children’s sight until it is time to extend the activity. Prepare to read the book, *My Hands*.
- Show cover, give title, author and illustrator. (Explain that the author is the person who writes the book (in this book the author and illustrator are the same.)
- Say to children, “Let’s read and find out how your list compares to what the story tells us about things hands can do.”
- Read story so all children can see the pictures in the book.
- Involve children in imitating some of the actions in the book; for example playing peek-a-boo, counting fingers, naming the fingers, and putting hands together
- Pause on page 21 after reading about people who are ambidextrous and what that means. Invite children to repeat the word with you.
- Continue reading the story to the end.
- Review the list that children dictated to you.
- Begin on page 24 and review each page and compare it to the children’s list. If an activity is in the book that is not on the list, add it.
- Read the revised list with the children. Run your fingers under the words as you read them.

My Hands Can

Draw a picture

Throw a ball

Extend the Story

Learning Goals:

PH1.3 Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills (*catching*)

LD1.1 Understands and responds to language (in child's home language) (*vocabulary and language comprehension, follows directions*)

Directions:

- Explain to children that they will now have an opportunity to use their hands to throw and catch scarves.
- Invite two children at a time to select a scarf from the basket.
- Ask children to hold hands and form a circle, then drop hands and take two steps back.
- Demonstrate and explain throwing and catching a scarf.
"Hold the scarf in your hand and down to your side."
"With an underhand motion, raise your arm and throw the scarf into the air."
"Throw hard so your scarf goes high."
"Now reach out and catch the scarf."
- Allow children to practice throwing and catching scarves.
- Assist children who may be having difficulty throwing the scarf.
- Ask children, two at a time, to return scarves to the basket.



Conclude the Session

Directions:

- Introduce the following short poem, "My Hands" to the children:

My Hands

*I have two hands that belong to me.
They can do many things, just wait and see.
But one of my favorite things I know,
Is when my hands help me catch and throw.*

- Repeat the poem and invite children to say it with you.

Try these additional activities

Learning Goal:

PH1.3 Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills (*catching*)

Tossing and Catching Beanbags

- Consider having children throw a beanbag in the air and catch it if you think they can do this in a safe way.
- Have the beanbags in a basket and invite children to select one.
- Ask children to hold hands and form a circle, drop hands, and move back two steps.
- Explain to them that they will be tossing their beanbags in the air and catching their own beanbags.
- Model and explain that beanbags are heavier than scarves so “Toss them gently in the air, not too high, not too hard, and not to anyone else.”
- Allow children time to practice tossing and catching so they will understand limits on height, velocity, and to toss and catch their own beanbag.
- Make this an outdoor activity, especially if there is not sufficient room indoors for each child to have a space to toss and catch a beanbag.

Teacher Note: *Indoors, yarn balls or scouring pads can be substituted for beanbags.*

Catching Beanbags Tossed By You

- Involve children in catching beanbags thrown underhand by you.
- Have children stand in a circle with you in the middle or do one-on-one with a child.
- Say, “Javier, I’m tossing the beanbag to you. Hold your hands out and catch the beanbag with both hands.”
- Continue this activity, giving each child a turn to catch the beanbag.

Catching Beanbags Tossed by Children

- Involve children in catching bean bags tossed to them by another child.
- Have children form two lines with each child directly facing another child.
- Start off having children who are facing each other stand close to each other (about three feet apart), then increase the distance between children as they become more skilled in tossing and catching.
- Make sure there is space between the children in each line so they can adjust themselves to catch the beanbag.
- Say to children, “The person across you is your partner. You and your partner are to practice tossing and catching the beanbag.”
- Give each child in one line a beanbag.
- Demonstrate tossing to a child.
- Say to children, “Toss the beanbag to your partner. Partner, catch the beanbag and toss it back to your partner.”

Additional Learning Goal:

SE1.2 Interact with peers (*social skills*)

Catching Balls Thrown By You

- Provide large rubber or beach balls for catching.
- Have children stand in a circle with you in the middle or one-on-one with a child.
- Say, “Jessie, I’m throwing the ball to you. Watch the ball with your eyes. Bring the ball toward your body and catch it.”
- Progress to guiding children to catch the ball with both hands, with arms bent.

Bouncing and Catching

- Provide 10-inch rubber balls for this activity.
- Say to a child, “Hold the ball out in front of your body. Drop the ball and catch it.”
- Allow children to practice dropping and catching the ball.
- Ask them, “Can you bounce the ball hard and catch it?”

Teacher Notes:

- *Ball can be bounced on floor or ground.*
- *Children need lots of practice dropping and catching the ball before they are ready to begin dribbling.*
- *Allow children to dribble the ball if they are ready for this. Some may be able to dribble while moving.*

Bouncing a Ball to a Child

- Stand about eight feet from the child and give him or her the following instructions:
“Watch the ball.
“Get your hands and arms ready to catch the ball.
“Reach for the ball as it bounces to you.
“Now bounce the ball back to me.”

Bouncing a Ball to Each Other

- Provide one ball for two children who will be “bouncing buddies.”
- Give the following instructions about bouncing:
“One good bounce to your buddy, but not over your buddy’s head. You want your buddy to catch the ball.”

Additional Learning Goal:

SE1.2 Interacts with peers (*social skills*)

Catching Beanbags from a Beanbag Launch Board

- Involve children in using a beanbag launch board to practice catching.
- Demonstrate for children by putting a beanbag on the lower end of the launch board and stepping hard on the other end. This will launch the beanbag into the air and you catch it.

Teacher Note:

- *In this activity children are practicing manipulative skills with hands and feet and they are tracking with their eyes the beanbag as it is being launched from the board into the air.*

Learning Goal:

PH1.3 Demonstrates gross-motor manipulative skills (*throwing*)

Throwing Beanbags into a Basket

- Establish a line on which children are to stand.
- Give children turns throwing three or four beanbags.
- Invite one child at a time to stand on the line and toss the beanbags into the basket.
- Make sure that each child is successful in this activity.
- Move the line forward for children who seem to need this and backward for children who need more challenge.
- Allow a child in a wheelchair to throw the beanbag while sitting.

Throwing Beanbags into a Hoop

- Join children in sitting on the floor in a circle and give each child a beanbag.
- Place a hoop in the middle of the circle and explain to children that this is a pond.
- Chant the following: “Freddie the Frog tried to jump on a log and SPLASH he fell into the pond.”
- Explain that each child, in turn, will throw his or her beanbag into the pond when you say the word “SPLASH!”
- Repeat the chant, giving each child a turn to throw a beanbag into the pond.

Throwing Balls at a Target

- Tape a target on a wall or on a tree.
- Invite children to throw a small or medium-size ball and hit the target.
- Suggest that children move closer to the target if they are having difficulty hitting it.

Throwing Balls through a Hoop

- Suspend a hoop so that it is low enough for children to throw a ball through it.
- Invite children to throw a small or medium-size ball through the hoop.

Knocking Over Objects

- Create targets with cones or empty two-liter bottles weighted down with sand or rocks.
- Place the targets on a low bench.
- Invite children to throw a ball and knock over the targets.

Teacher Note:

- *As children become more skilled at throwing, demonstrate stepping forward with the leg opposite the throwing arm and following through.*

Learning Goal:

PH1.3 Demonstrates gross motor manipulative skills (*striking*)

Striking a Stationary Ball With Hands

- Place a beach ball on a table or on a cone.
- Demonstrate and describe to children what they are going to do. *“We’re going to see if you can hit the ball off the table/cone.”*
- Invite a child to use his or her hands to hit the ball off the table or cone.
- Allow children to practice this skill before moving on to hitting the ball with a short-handled paddle or pool noodle.

Striking a Stationary Ball With a Short-handled Paddle or Pool Noodle

- Place a beach ball on a cone.
- Demonstrate and describe to children what they are going to do. *“We’re going to hit the ball with the paddle.”*
- Invite children to use the paddle or pool noodle to hit the ball.
- Allow children to practice this skill.

Teacher Note: *Make sure that other children keep a safe distance away when a child is using a paddle or pool noodle to hit the ball.*

Additional Books

- ❑ *Here Are My Hands* by Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault, illustrated by Ted Rand
- ❑ *Hands Can* by Cheryl Willis Hudson, illustrated by John-Francis Bourke
- ❑ *I Got It!* by David Wiesner

Teacher Notes:

- *Children need to hear the same story read to them several times.*
- *Children also need frequent opportunities to repeat and practice movement activities.*
- *Plan to reread the book, *My Hands* by Alike, and include a variety of the suggested movement activities.*
- *It is important that stories and activities be repeated with children at different times during the year.*