

## Throw and Catch a Ball: 24-36 months

### Throwing and catching a ball helps your child:

- Help his eyes and hands to work together
- Improve his balance
- Learn to look at a person and then at the object

### Ideas to try with your child:

- Use beach balls or fabric balls to introduce catching and then move on to other balls. Start with big balls and move to smaller balls for all activities.
- When first learning to catch, teach your child to put his arms out in front of him to trap the ball between his arms and body. Stand only a couple of feet away from him and throw the ball to his open arms. Tell him to close his arms to catch the ball. After several times of being successful, move farther away from your child and gently toss the ball.
- To practice throwing indoors you can use soft foam balls, small beach balls, bean bags or rolled socks that you toss into a basket.
- Make “snowballs” by crushing or crunching up pieces of paper and toss at a picture hanging on the wall or into laundry basket.

### If your child is struggling:

- Practice catching with two people helping the child: one to softly toss the ball and the other person to help the child catch. The person helping the child will hold out his arms and help them squeeze the ball to his chest.
- Bounce the ball to your child. After chasing it a bit, he will pick it up and throw it back to you. Encourage his growing ability.

### Going further:

- Have your child use just his hands to catch the ball and not his body.
- Standing 10 feet way from the target, say “Let’s see if we can hit that tree with our ball!” or “Let’s try and hit the door handle with our socks!”

The WA State Department of Early Learning and the Richland School District believes that parents, families, and caregivers are young children’s best teachers. This resource guide, part of *Strong Foundations for School: Resource Guides for Parents of Young Children*, highlights a key developmental skill for **children ages 24-36 months** that parents can help improve at home.

Adapted from *WA State Early Learning and Development Guidelines, 2012*: “Throw a ball or beanbag. Catch a large, bounced ball against the body.” Touching, Seeing, Hearing and Moving Around, Ages-16-36 months, pg. 46

