

ESSEX CRICKET IN THE COMMUNITY



Activities to Play with Early Years Children

The ideas on this page are designed to build on your child's gross motor skills. All important skills for developing our cricketers of the future. Try out some of these activities.



Rolling Skills. Rolling a ball is early target practice. Use a large ball and give your child different challenges. Can we roll the ball towards the tree? Can we hit the park bench with a roll? Is there a ramp in the playground that we can roll the ball down? Can you roll the ball through your legs? Can we roll the ball behind us? What's the longest roll we can manage? Roll a ball along a line. Can we chase the rolling ball? Have a competition: who can stop the rolling ball first?



Throwing a Ball. Encourage your child to throw a ball at a target on a wall when outside. Can your child throw a ball into the ground and make it bounce? Can you catch the ball that your child has thrown towards you? Find a space to encourage your child to throw as far as they can and as high as they can. Create some throwing competitions: who can throw the ball closest to the chosen target, can your child throw the ball between 2 posts and you be the "goalkeeper"?



Make it harder! Make it easier! A smaller ball makes it harder, a larger ball makes it easier. A smaller distance makes it easier, a larger distance makes it harder. A bigger target to aim at is easier, a smaller target that is further away is harder. Working with a partner can make it easier. Change the ball used to learn more about how different types of ball react differently.

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• **Striking Skills.** Learning to hit a ball starts with learning to hit a ball along the floor. The ball should be still to make it easier, then, with practise, roll the ball towards your child for them to strike. The hand makes a great bat if you haven't got a bat or racket of any type. Can your child aim to strike a ball through 2 targets- can you be the "goalkeeper"? Can you see a target a bit further away and play a "mini-golf" game: how many hits until we reach the target? You could take it in turns with your child to make it a team effort. Can you hit the ball against a wall and watch it rebound? Can you dribble the ball along a line or through some objects (like a hockey player)? Play balance the ball on the hand or bat. Can you stand on one leg and keep the ball balanced? Can you travel and balance the ball?



• **Stepping, Striding & Jumping.** Young children need to practise lots of movement skills. Give the children challenges when walking to the shops... travel along the lines, jump over the cracks etc. Play chasing games in the park: changing direction and changing speed are important skills. Be creative... travel like your favourite animals or favourite book characters. Play "follow the leader" to encourage stops and starts, changes in direction, swerving, travelling sideways, backwards etc.



• **Make it harder! Make it easier!** A smaller distance makes it easier, a larger distance makes it harder. A bigger target to aim at is easier, a smaller target that is further away is harder. Working with a partner can make it easier. When hitting a ball, start with a still ball, then a ball that is rolling, then possibly, a ball that is bounced towards the batter.

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Catching a Ball. Use a large ball to practise catching. Start by catching a ball that has bounced 2 or 3 times. Then decrease the number of bounces needed. Always reinforce having “ready hands”: that means having hands close together, out in front of the body ready for the catch. Play together and count up your successful catches. Children can play catch against a wall or throw up in the air when working on their own. Can your child drop the ball and catch it?



Stopping the ball. Practise stopping a moving ball. Roll the ball to your child or hit the ball towards them. Encourage them to stop it with their hands. Also, encourage them to try to stay on their feet. Make them a “goal” to defend the ball from passing through.



Make it harder! Make it easier! A smaller ball makes it harder, a larger ball makes it easier. A smaller distance makes it easier, a larger distance makes it harder. A bigger target to aim at is easier, a smaller target that is further away is harder. Working with a partner can make it easier. Change the ball used to learn more about how different types of ball react differently.