

Bean Bags

Bean bags are a handy piece of equipment that can be used for a variety of activities. They are also super easy to make. The beauty of using bean bags rather than balls when children are learning to catch, or dribble a ball with their foot is that they fall heavily and children don't have to spend so much time chasing their ball every time they drop it or kick it.



Beanbag Activities (Under 5s)

Here are some activities for under 5s to help develop their throwing and catching, dribbling, locomotion, both static and rotational balance and crossing the midline.

Throwing and Catching

- Throw a beanbag in the air, turn around, and catch it again.
- Throw the beanbag up and backwards over your head and try to catch it behind your back.
- Throw the beanbag in the air, clap your hands once, and catch it. Now try clapping your hands twice, then three times, and so on. How high can you go?
- Throw the beanbag in the air and clap your hands under your right leg before catching it. Now try with your left leg. Now clap behind your back. Invent some more challenges.
- Throw the beanbag up, jump, and try to catch it. Jump twice. Jump three times!
- Throw it up, kneel down and try to catch it.
- Throw and catch with just your right hand, then with just your left.
- Try throwing it up and catching it with your eyes closed!
- Balance the beanbag on your right foot, then throw it up and catch it from there. Can you do it with your left foot too?
- Can you throw the beanbag up and catch it on your left foot?
- Sing one of your favourite songs or rhymes while you throw the beanbag up and catch it, or pass it round a circle of children.
- Set up a variety of hoops, containers and targets and have some throwing practice. How far can you throw the beanbag? Does it make a difference if you throw over-arm or underarm?

Dribbling

- Practice dribbling the beanbag around on the ground- using both feet, inside and outside of feet.
- Set up cones/rope as a pathway to dribble the beanbag through.
- Set up cones to dribble the beanbag around.

Locomotion

- Beanbag relay- place hoops about 5 metres apart. Put all the beanbags in one hoop. Ask the children to pick up one beanbag at a time, run and drop into the other hoop, then return and pick up another. Try different locomotor movements such as skipping, jumping, animals walks etc.
- Chasing Rainbows- Put different coloured or shaped beanbags in the middle of the floor. Get the children to run around the outside. Call a colour or a shape and the children have to go and pick that beanbag up (or just touch it if you prefer) and then continue running.

Static Balance

- Bean bag balances - Put bean bag on head and go for a walk with the aim to not let it fall off. Try walking forwards, backwards, sideways, on tippy toes and down low. Try running, jumping, hopping, spinning with it on your head. Now try balancing on other body parts.
- Fishing Trip balance circuit – put out balance equipment to make a circuit. Beams, rope, chalk lines, elevated equipment. Beanbags are spread around- children have to balance and lean down to ‘fish’ up a beanbag, then drop it off somewhere else.

Rotational Balance

- Lowering head below knees – Standing on their feet get children to lower their heads and bend down to look between their legs. Get them to throw beanbags into a hoop through their legs.

Crossing the Midline

- Bean bag toss: place target containers to the left and to the right; instruct the child to use the same hand for a full round, may switch to the other hand for alternating rounds if desired.
- Reach for bean bags, balls, stuffed animals, or other objects across midline, then throw at a target.
- Use an animal grabber, salad tongs or snow ball maker to pick up bean bags placed on the dominant side and have the child reach across midline to drop the objects into a container on the other side of the body.