



## Motor Skills Basics “On the ball” For Preschool and Kindergarten

**KidBuilders** is a comprehensive, year-long motor skills program written by Marilyn Bitsis and Margaret Schafer. It is designed to meet the needs of motor skills teachers of young children.

Motor Skills Basics “On the Ball” for Preschool and Kindergarten is just a small sampling of some of our sequential skills and activities. Today’s session is prepared especially for teachers of preschool and kindergarten children ages **two 1/2 to six** years old.

### Motor Skills Basics “On the Ball”

Realizing the importance of motor development to later learning, these are fourteen basic skills, or fundamentals, you can work on during the school year. While the basics remain constant, we have added balls for variety and creativity. The following is a list of basic skill areas we believe to be essential to healthy gross motor development.

**#1: NON-LOCOMOTOR MOVEMENT:** The most basic of body movements done while remaining stationary—no locomotor movement. The body stays in one place.

- *Suggested activity:* wiggling, stretching, jumping in place, twisting while on a spot or in a hoop; head rolls and nods; clap hands on knees, head, floor, etc.
  - **Add a ball:** As a warm up pass around the circle interesting balls, such as a “hairy” ball or a weighted ball. Use as a name game where each child takes the ball, says his/her name before passing it to the next person.

**#2: LOCOMOTOR MOVEMENT:** The basic body movements used to transport one’s body from one point to another. The body moves in different ways to go somewhere.

- *Suggested activity:* Walking, jogging, skipping, hopping, walking backwards, or crawling from one point to another. Have the **children** suggest new and different ways to move from one side of the room to the other, now using a ball.
  - **Add a ball:** Walk from one point to another while dribbling a paper “soccer” ball around a course; tuck a tennis or sock ball under their chin while walking, tiptoeing, galloping, or jumping to music.

**#3: BILATERAL MOVEMENT:** Using both sides of the body simultaneously or in parallel movement. (*Most Locomotor Movement is bilateral*)

- *Suggested activity:* Baby bunny, sand crab, or bear walk.
  - **Add a ball:** Use animal imagery as the children pretend they are various animals while in transition from one station to another or as they go from one end of the room to the other. Adapt these favorites by adding a ball: bear walk with a 10” ball between the knees; kangaroo jump with a 4” ball between the knees; baby bunny with an 8” ball in their hands; sand crab with a sock ball on their tummy; elephant walk with a weighted ball in their hands; puppy and horse.

**#4: LATERAL (SIDE) ROLLING:** Movement in both directions from back to front to back again while lying flat.

- *Suggested activity:* Log rolls on the floor or incline.
  - **Add a ball:** Place a yarn ball between their feet and/or knees as they roll laterally. Try it in the hands, too.

**#5: BODY IMAGE/POSITION AWARENESS:** The concept and knowledge of one’s body and its parts; the structure of body parts, their movement and functions, and the position in relation to one another and other objects.

- *Suggested activity:* “Head, Shoulders, Knees & Toes” song, Body Parts Squares game
  - **Add a ball:** Give each child a “Sticky Ball” to place on different body parts.

**#6: BALANCE:** The ability to gain and maintain a body position against the force of gravity by working the muscles to keep the body on its base.

**Dynamic Balance:** Balance during locomotion

- *Suggested activity:* Walking on the balance beam
  - **Add a ball:** “Seal Walk” back and forth with a 10” playground ball under the tummy

**Static Balance:** Balance while remaining still

- *Suggested activity:* Balance on one foot; “V” sit

- **Add a ball:** Have each child balance in different positions on a large gymnastic ball (with supervision) or each sit on an individual ball. Try this in circle time for older children.

**# 7: JUMPING/HOPPING:** To spring from the ground or other base by the muscular action of feet and legs (jumping) or one leg and foot (hopping).

- *Suggested activity: Kangaroo jumps as part of animal imitation*
  - **Add a ball:** Try Kangaroo jumps with various sized balls (small, medium, large) between the knees, then ankles.

**#8: DIRECTIONALITY:** The projection of one's self in space and the understanding and knowledge of the direction (behind, in front-of, up, down, over, under) needed to achieve the desired movement.

- *Suggested activity: Obstacle course, scooters around cones in a pattern*
  - **Add a ball:** Go through a course dribbling a paper "soccer" ball with the feet or bouncing a rubber ball.

**#9: PUSH/PULL:**

**Push:** to press against with force.

- *Suggested activity: With palms together push hands together as hard as possible.*
  - **Add a ball:** Line up the children, each with a ball, against the wall and ask them to push (using the ball) as hard as they can with different body parts. Roll the ball up and down, side to side on the wall.

**Pull:** To exert force upon so as to cause motion toward the force.

- *Suggested activity: Sit in a circle with a large piece of stretch fabric and have the children pull back and forth.*
  - **Add a ball:** Place a Gertie Ball, or other lightweight ball, on the fabric. Let the group experiment with making the ball roll all around the fabric, then gently toss it in the air **without** tossing it off the fabric.

**#10: UNILATERAL MOVEMENT:** Movement using and isolating only one side of the body.

- *Suggested activity: One-sided angel; hop on one foot*
  - **Add a ball:** Toss and catch a sock ball with one hand, then the other (with the non-working hand behind their back). Work with a partner to toss and catch gently back and forth. See who can catch the most before without dropping the ball. Toss a sock ball at a target or into a basket, first using the "favorite hand", then the other.

**#11: TRACKING (Ocular Pursuit):** The ability and use of the eyes to follow a moving object

- *Suggested activity: "Follow the Scarf" game; Bubbles*
  - **Add a ball:** Using a straw cut approximately 4 inches have the children lie on their tummies holding the straw in their mouths while blowing through it to make a ping-pong ball (or cotton ball) move across the room, or across a table with a partner.

**#12: EYE-HAND COORDINATION:** Use of the eyes and hands together to accomplish a skill

- *Suggested activity: Bounce-catch (two-handed catch) a ball*
  - **Add a ball:** Use a Wubble Ball in a group. Wubble balls are like a large bubble and wobble when tossed or rolled. Play a volleyball-style game where the group tries to keep the Wubble from touching the floor, or give pairs of children a Wubble and let the pair see how long they can keep it from hitting the ground.

**#13: EYE-FOOT COORDINATION:** Use of the eyes and foot or feet together to accomplish a skill

- *Suggested activity: Standing or walking kick of a ball or kicking jug*
  - **Add a ball:** Play "scooter soccer" with two children as goalies guarding one goal and the other children sitting on scooters trying to kick a paper soccer ball into the goal. As a goal is scored, rotate children through the goalie position so everyone has a chance to play that position. (This is not a team competition). For younger children simply sit in a circle (in a sand crab position) and have the group kick a paper soccer ball around trying to keep it in the circle. (Note: the children will enjoy first making their paper soccer balls before playing the game).

**#14: CROSS-LATERAL MOVEMENT:** Movement when both sides of the body are working in opposition to one another (walking with left foot forward and right arm forward), or crossing the mid-line of the body (right foot crosses over the left to step).

- *Suggested activity: Zigzag walk over rope or on a grid*
  - **Add a ball:** As a group, sit in a large circle facing outward. Pass a large beach ball around the circle so that each child must cross his/her mid line in order to reach from one child to the next. Repeat with a smaller ball.

**Types of balls needed for activities above:** "Hairy" ball, weighted ball, paper soccer ball, sock ball, 10" rubber ball, 8" rubber ball, yarn ball, sticky ball, Gertie ball, Ping-Pong ball, cotton ball, Wubble Ball, beach ball.