



Why Young Athletes?



Special Olympics
Young Athletes

Why Young Athletes?



Builds healthy habits and key skills through play



Teaches taking turns, sharing and following directions



Helps children achieve their personal best



Brings together children of different abilities

Fun for the whole family!



How to Start

How to Start

- At playtime, pick 2 or 3 activities
- Let children look at the pictures and choose what to play
- Pick different color cards to build different skills
- Invite friends and family to play
- Choose activities that match the number of people playing
- If playing with a group, let children take turns
- Practice for 20-30 minutes at least twice a week



Visit [SpecialOlympics.com/YoungAthletes](https://www.specialolympics.com/YoungAthletes) for more resources

Have fun!

What to Use

Play using items you have at home.



Balance beam

Or



Tape or rope



Foam Ball

Or



Small ball or
tennis ball



Beanbags

Or



Soft toys or bags
of rice or sand

What to Use

Play using items you have at home.



Cones

Or



Cups or empty plastic bottles



Blocks

Or



Boxes



Plastic dowels

Or



Paper towel rolls
or sticks

What to Use

Play using items you have at home.



Paddle

Or



Bat



Floor markers

Or



Tape or stickers



Hoops

Or



Hula hoops, bicycle tubes or tires

What to Use

Play using items you have at home.



Scarf

Or



Dish towel or
small cloth



Lightweight ball

Or



Beach ball or
balloon



Where
to Play



Special Olympics
Young Athletes

Where to Play

Find a flat surface clear of any obstacles

If Inside

- Choose a space big enough to play safely
- Keep lighting and temperature comfortable for children

If Outside

- Play within fencing or defined borders
- Adjust play space to match the activity
- Mark boundaries and show them to children

You can play anywhere!



What to Say While You Play



Special Olympics
Young Athletes

What to Say While You Play

Say things like “Good job!” often

Be specific: “You did well at...”

Celebrate and congratulate successes

Focus on abilities and accomplishments

Stay positive and be encouraging

*There are no failures in
Young Athletes*



How to Have Healthy Play Every Day



Special Olympics
Young Athletes

How to Have Healthy Play Every Day

- **Stay active**—dance, go outside or play a game
- **Be screen-free**—have active playtime instead
- **Sing a song** while you wash your hands
- Make teeth-brushing into a **game**
- **Eat healthy foods** during the day
- **Drink water and milk** instead of soda or juice

Count your healthy play activities using the Make Way for Healthy Play Every Day poster.

Scarf Games



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Scarf Games

Materials: Scarf or small towel

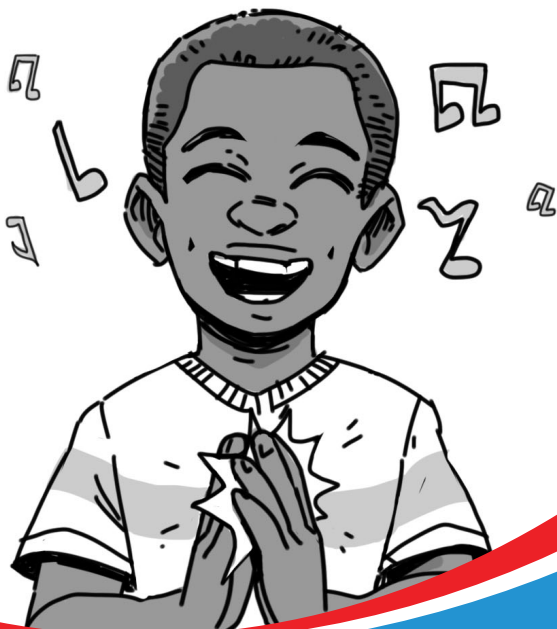
Swing a scarf through the air by moving it up and down and side to side. Let your Young Athlete follow it with their head and eyes.

Drop the scarf and let them “catch” it with their hand, head, foot or a body part they choose.

More Ways to Play

Let children toss scarves to each other. For extra delicious fun, ask them to call out the name of a healthy food every time they throw and catch.

Children's Songs



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Children's Songs

Materials: None

Sing your heart out to songs like *Wheels on the Bus* or *If You're Happy and You Know It*. Act out the words you sing. Ask your Young Athlete how they want to move and groove.

Be Creative

Make up your own songs to teach healthy habits, like this one:

(To the tune of *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*)
Wash, wash, wash your hands
Wash the dirt away
Before you eat, before you sleep
And after outdoor play

I Spy



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



I Spy

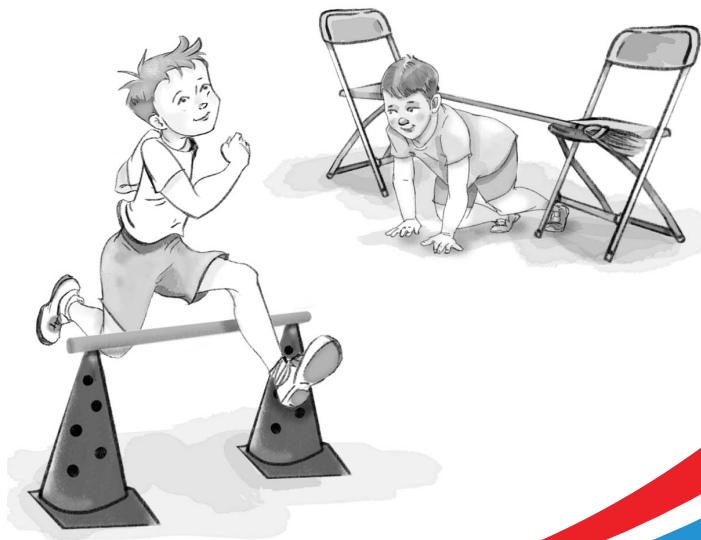
Materials: Toys and books or other items

One by one, name items in your play space such as favorite toys and books. Let your Young Athlete look around and find each one and then run, walk or crawl to it.

More Ways to Play

If your Young Athlete is learning colors or shapes, ask them to use these new words to describe the items. If you have more than one Young Athlete, they can work in pairs or groups.

Beginning Obstacle Course



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Beginning Obstacle Course

Materials: Toys, blocks and hoops or boxes

Nothing gets in the way of fun—not even this obstacle course! Build your own (let kids help if they want to), and then teach new terms as your Young Athlete:

Climbs **on** or **off** of an object

Goes **over** or **under** an object

Moves **fast** then moves **slow**

More Ways to Play

Add more items to the obstacle course to make it more challenging.

Musical Markers



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Musical Markers

Materials: Floor markers and hoop

Place a hoop on the floor, then lay out some floor markers around it.

Play music while your Young Athlete moves around your play space. Try different movements like running, walking backwards, crawling or twisting. When the music stops, “freeze” by standing still on a floor marker.

Take away one floor marker and restart the music. Keep playing until everyone is standing in the center hoop.

Be Social

Encourage children to share floor markers when they “freeze.”

Tunnels and Bridges



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Tunnels and Bridges

Materials: None

Build “tunnels” by touching the ground with hands and feet, and sending hips up into the air. Or, make “bridges” by getting down onto hands and knees.

Let your Young Athlete crawl through the tunnels and over the bridges.

Switch it Up

Change places. See if you can crawl under the tunnel and climb over the bridges your Young Athlete makes.

Animal Games



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Animal Games

Materials: Ball

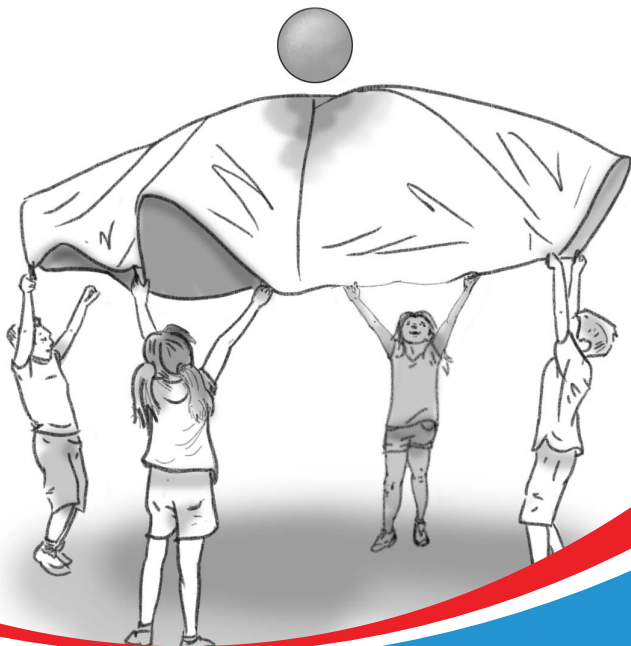
Play zoo with your Young Athlete. Crawl like a bear by not letting your knees touch the ground. Growl for extra fun.

Crab walk with your back towards the ground, feet and hands on the ground, knees bent and hips lifted.

More Ways to Play

Pretend a ball is a fish and roll it under your Young Athlete as they crab walk. Help the fish swim by pushing or kicking the ball.

Parachute Games



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Parachute Games

Materials: Flat sheet and ball

Hold the edge of a sheet while your Young Athlete holds another one. Move the sheet up and down.

Then, place a ball on the sheet. Together, move the sheet up and down...but don't let the ball roll off!

Group Play Tip

This game is great for groups. Invite brothers, sisters, friends and family members to play with you.

Magic Carpet Ride



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Magic Carpet Ride

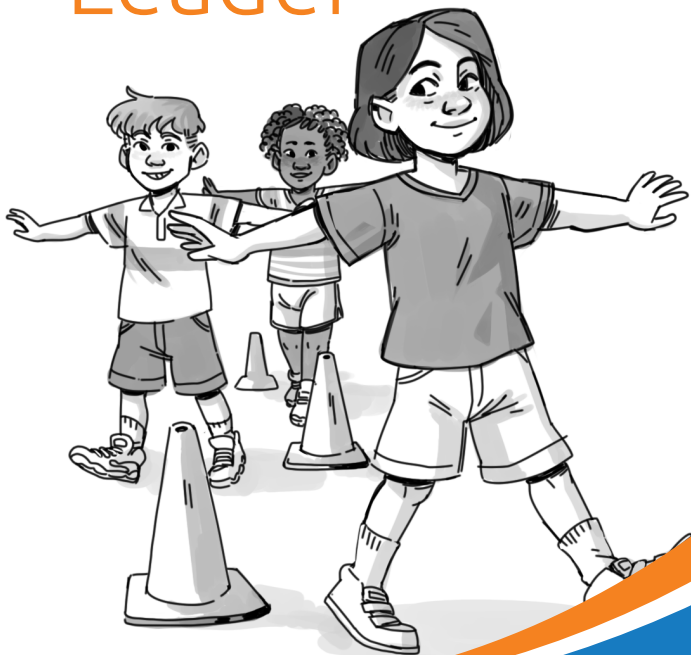
Materials: Blanket or flat sheet

Up, up and away! Hold the edges of a blanket while your Young Athlete sits on it. Pull so that they slide along the floor. Go faster as they get more comfortable.

Safety Tip

Make sure magic carpet riders hold on to the blanket tightly to keep from falling off.

Follow the Leader



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Follow the Leader

Materials: None

Let your Young Athlete copy your movements as you walk slow, fast or march. Get creative! Move your arms and legs up, down, out and all around.

Switch it Up

Change places. Follow your Young Athlete as they move around the room.

Walk Tall



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Walk Tall

Materials: Floor markers and beanbag

Put down two floor markers. Balance a beanbag on your Young Athlete's head. Let them walk from one marker to the other. Try not to let the beanbag fall.

More Ways to Play

As your Young Athlete's balance improves, let them jog or run between the floor markers. Make sure the beanbag stays put!

Side Stepping



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Side Stepping

Materials: Floor markers and toys or beanbags

Put down floor markers. Have your Young Athlete face forward and step to the left or the right onto the floor markers.

Skill Building Tip

As your Young Athlete's balance improves, add beanbags on top of the floor markers. Challenge your Young Athlete to pick them up and move them to different markers while stepping left and right.

Run and Carry



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Run and Carry

Materials: Soft toys or other items

Place an item such as a stuffed animal, favorite toy or family picture on the ground.

Let your Young Athlete run to it, pick it up and bring it back to you.

Play again by placing different toys in different places.

Everyday Healthy Play

Cut out pictures of healthy foods (let your Young Athlete help), and place these on the ground. Or, use stickers or magnets that show healthy foods. Let your Young Athlete run to pick them up, then place them in a basket or bag.

Ask your Young Athlete what their favorite healthy foods are.

Hidden Treasure



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Hidden Treasure

Materials: Toys and cups or boxes

Stow a few of your Young Athlete's favorite toys in "treasure chests" under upside-down cups, boxes or cones. Let your Young Athlete walk or run to them to find the treasures.

Challenge your Young Athlete to find them all and collect them in their own treasure box.

Everyday Healthy Play

Put healthy, wrapped snacks in hiding places. After the game, enjoy a snack with your Young Athlete. Add a glass of water or milk, too.

Sticky Arms



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Sticky Arms

Materials: Floor markers or soft toys

Set up a row of floor markers. When you call out, “Sticky arms,” encourage your Young Athlete to zigzag between the markers with their arms glued to their sides.

When you call out or indicate, “Running arms,” encourage your Young Athlete to run back to you with arms loose and swinging back to front.

Be Creative

Think of other ways to show sticky and running arms. Let your Young Athlete help you come up with new terms (like gluey arms or noodle arms) or ways of moving their body.

Heavy Feet, Light Feet



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Heavy Feet, Light Feet

Materials: None

Let your Young Athlete make some noise. Have them run with **heavy feet** (stomp) from one end of your play space to the other. Then, have them run back with **light feet** (run on their toes as quietly as possible).

Skill Building Tip

Encourage your Young Athlete to look where they are going and to keep their hips and feet facing forward.

Obstacle Course



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Obstacle Course

Materials: Floor markers, hoops, rope and blocks or boxes

Use the items in your play space to build an obstacle course. Let your Young Athlete help decide what to put in the course.

When it's ready, let them walk, crawl, climb or jump through it.

As your Young Athlete gets more comfortable with this activity, include new movements like zigzags and going in reverse.

Skill Building Tip

Demonstrate different types of running (like slow, fast, backward and forward) to your Young Athlete. Let them practice new movements in the obstacle course.

Fire Drill



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Fire Drill

Materials: Ball or beanbag

Line up all Young Athletes elbow to elbow. Hand a ball to the Young Athlete at the start of the line. They will pass the ball towards the end of the line.

Let the Young Athlete at the end of the line run to the starting point and try to reach it before the ball gets to the end.

Play until everyone has a chance to run.

Be Creative

If runners need more time, pass the ball behind your back or through your legs as you move it down the line.

Future Skaters



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Future Skaters

Materials: Paper plates and cardboard boxes or shoeboxes

Make “skates” out of paper plates or boxes. Challenge your Young Athlete to slide and glide around your play space. Remind them to try not to lift their feet.

More Ways to Play

Play music while your Young Athlete skates. Show each other your dance moves.

Balance Beam



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Balance Beam

Materials: Rope and tape or chalk

Place a rope or strip of tape on the ground. Or, draw a line in chalk. Let your Young Athlete practice walking heel-to-toe beside it.

More Ways to Play

When your Young Athlete feels confident about this activity, progress to tightrope walking. Let your Athlete walk heel-to-toe on top of the line.

Follow the Coach



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Follow the Coach

Materials: None

It's drill time! Let your Young Athlete choose a start signal, such as a clap or a bell, and copy your movements as you stand on tiptoes or on heels, with one foot in front of the other and then on one foot.

Everyday Healthy Play

Let your Young Athlete practice balancing on heels and toes during healthy activities like washing hands and brushing teeth.

Step, Jump and Grab



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Step, Jump and Grab

Materials: Block, floor markers and scarf or beanbag

Place a block on the floor. Make sure it's solid enough for your Young Athlete to stand on.

Let your Young Athlete step up onto the block, then jump down from it. As your Young Athlete gets more confident, progress to:

- Jumping from the block to a floor marker
- Jumping high to grab a scarf while jumping off the block
- Jumping down from higher surfaces

Safety Tip

Boxes and blocks can slide on slippery floors. Make sure to stabilize yours with something solid to keep your Young Athlete safe.

Rock Hop



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Rock Hop

Materials: Blocks or floor markers

Set up blocks or floor markers. Pretend they are rocks in a river. Tell your Young Athlete to walk on the rocks to avoid falling in the river.

Have fun with make-believe by pretending there are crocodiles in the river.

More Ways to Play

Play “high tide” by moving blocks farther apart or by taking some away. Or, challenge your Young Athlete to cross the river by walking on only some blocks or blocks of one color.

Trees in the Forest



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Trees in the Forest

Materials: Floor markers and scarf

Let your Young Athlete pretend to be a tree by standing with feet on two floor markers, or planted on the ground.

Pretend to be the wind by walking around and fanning your Young Athlete with a scarf. Encourage them to bend and sway in the breeze.

Switch it Up

Change places. Let your Young Athlete be the breeze while you be the tree.

Leaping Lizards



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Leaping Lizards

Materials: Floor markers

Ask your Young Athlete to name animals that leap, such as lizards, frogs, crickets and kangaroos. Then let them pretend to be their favorite leaping animal as they leap forward from one floor marker to the next.

Skill Building Tip

As your Young Athlete gets more confident, encourage them to run forward and leap into the air over or onto a floor marker.

Jumping High



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Jumping High

Materials: Rope or floor marker and block or cone

Set down a rope or floor marker, then pretend it is a crack in the pavement or a hole in the ground. Tell your Young Athlete to jump over it to get to the other side.

As your Young Athlete gets more confident about jumping, raise the floor marker by placing it on a block or cone. You can pretend it is a hill or a mountain.

Skill Building Tip

If your Young Athlete is new to jumping, they may push off or land with one foot. Over time, encourage them to jump and land with both feet at the same time.

Rolling and Trapping



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Rolling and Trapping

Materials: Ball

Sit facing your Young Athlete with your legs stretched wide so that they form a diamond.

Roll a ball towards your Young Athlete and let them practice catching it or stopping it with their hands. Then, let them roll the ball back to you.

Skill Building Tip

Try using different-sized balls and rolling the ball faster as your Young Athlete gets more confident. They can also kneel to make this activity more challenging.

Goalie Drill



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Goalie Drill

Materials: Cones and ball

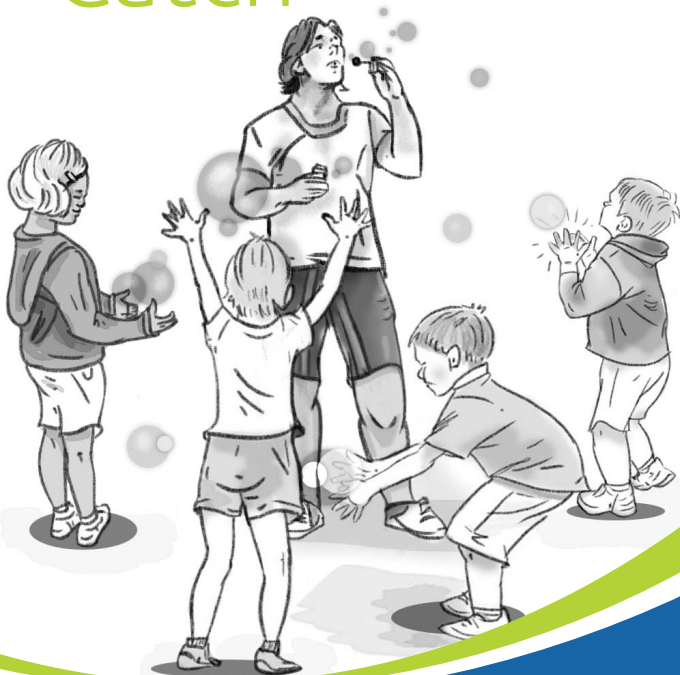
Create a goal by setting up two plastic bottles or cones. Ask your Young Athlete to stand between them.

Let your Young Athlete play goalie as you roll a ball towards them and they stop it with their hands before it rolls between the bottles or cones.

Skill Building Tip

Move the bottles or cones farther apart to make the goal bigger.

Bubble Catch



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Bubble Catch

Materials: Bubbles

Blow bubbles towards your Young Athlete. See how many they can catch using one or two hands.

You can also add verbal cues like “Pop!” when a bubble pops or “Splat!” if it touches the ground.

Group Play Tip

This activity is fun for groups. Invite family members and friends to play.

Big Ball Catch



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Big Ball Catch

Materials: Ball or balloon

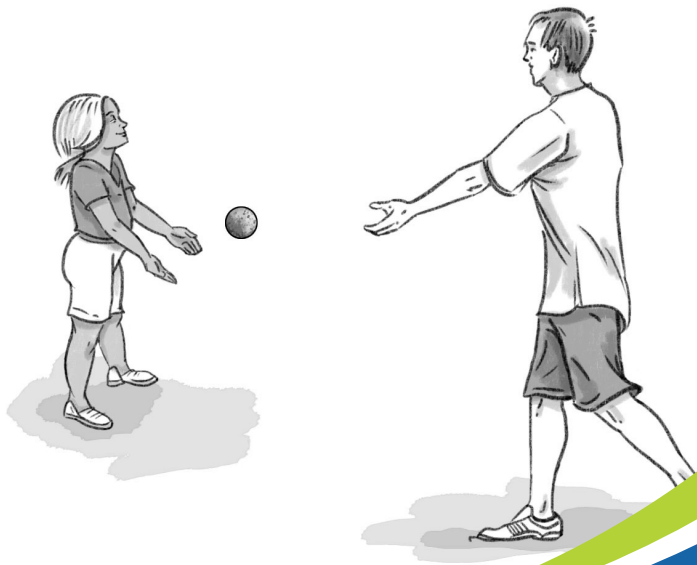
Stand facing your Young Athlete. Hold a ball with your arms outstretched. Slowly move the ball down until it reaches your Young Athlete's waist, then back up.

Repeat several times, moving the ball faster each time. Drop the ball before it reaches your Young Athlete's hands, and let them catch it before it touches the ground.

Group Play Tip

Invite children who are older or have higher skill levels to join or demonstrate activities. It's a great chance for them to learn about communication, leadership and friendship.

Low Ball Catch



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Low Ball Catch

Materials: Ball or Balloon

Stand facing your Young Athlete, then take three medium-sized steps back.

Gently toss the ball to your Young Athlete at their waist level or lower. Encourage them to catch the ball with their fingers pointing down.

Skill Building Tip

Make this game more challenging by stepping further away.

High Ball Catch



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



High Ball Catch

Materials: Ball or Balloon

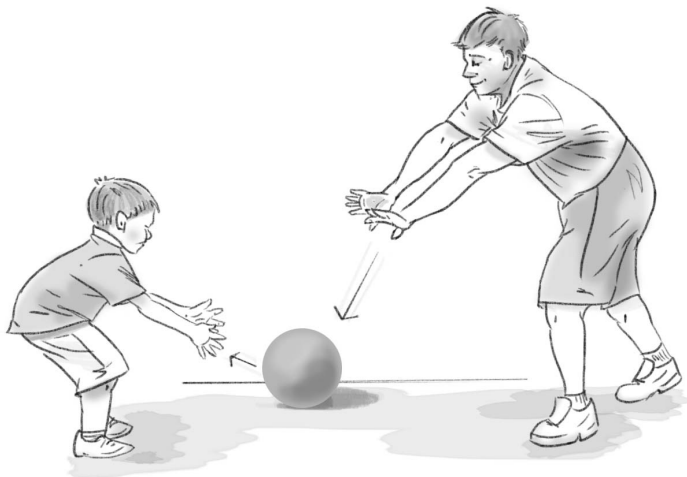
Stand facing your Young Athlete. Take about three medium-sized steps away from them and kneel.

Gently toss the ball to them at their chest level or higher. Encourage them to catch the ball with their fingers pointing up.

Skill Building Tip

Move farther away from your Young Athlete and toss the ball higher.

Bounce Catch



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Bounce Catch

Materials: Ball or balloon

Stand facing your Young Athlete. Bounce a ball towards them so that they can catch it without moving their feet.

Ask them to bounce the ball back to you. See if you can catch it without moving your feet.

Group Play Tip

Invite friends or family members to play with you and your Young Athlete. Stand in a circle and bounce-to-pass the ball to one another.

Circle Ball



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Circle Ball

Materials: Ball or balloon

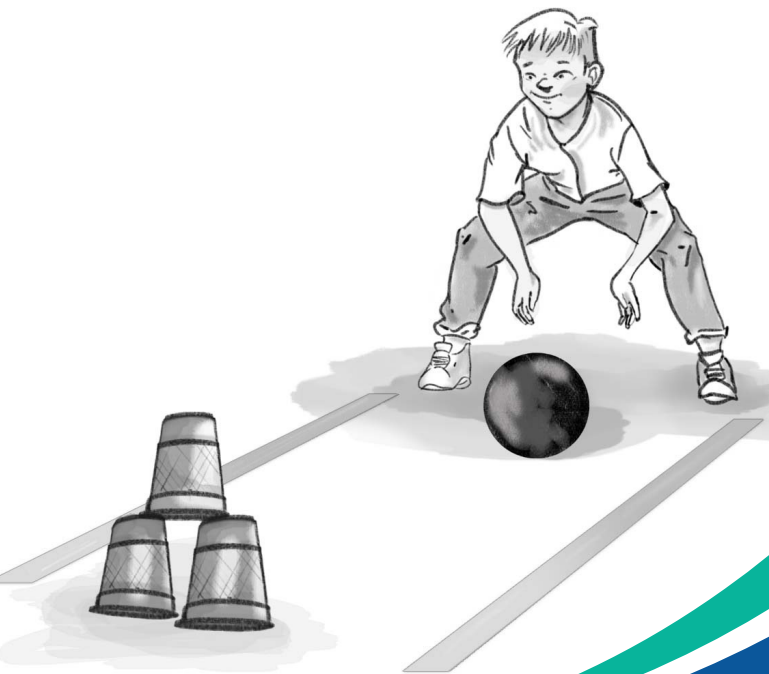
Stand in a circle. Toss the ball to the person beside you. Keep the ball moving around the circle in one direction as long as you can. Then, switch directions and go back the other way.

For a challenge, have everyone take a step back to make the circle bigger.

Group Play Tip

If playing with a big group, add a second ball when the first ball gets halfway around the circle.

Bowling



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Bowling

Materials: Ropes or sticks, cups or plastic bottles and ball

Build a bowling lane out of two ropes, strips of tape or sticks. Stack three or more empty cups or plastic bottles at the end of the lane.

Let your child roll a ball towards the stack and try to knock them all down.

Skill Building Tip

Make the lane longer or use a smaller ball.

Train Tunnel



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Train Tunnel

Materials: Ball

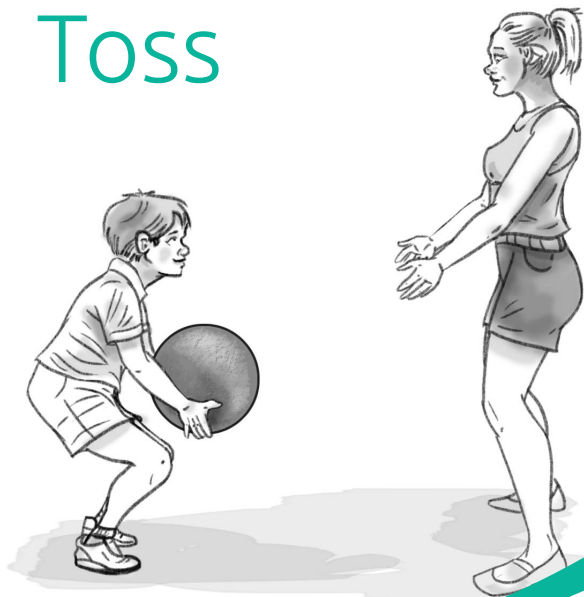
Transform your play space into a train station. Have everybody playing stand one in front of the other with their legs apart, forming a “tunnel.”

Give the “train conductor” at the end of the line a ball to roll through the tunnel, pretending it is a train.

More Ways to Play

If the “train” stops in the “tunnel” to “pick up passengers,” the person closest to the ball should pick it up. Everybody else can line up in front of them, and the game can start over.

Two-Handed Underhand Toss



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Two-Handed Underhand Toss

Materials: Ball or beanbag and basket or hoop

Stand facing your Young Athlete. Encourage them to bend their knees and hold a ball with two hands.

Ask your Young Athlete to look at your hands as they toss the ball underhand to you.

More Ways to Play

Let your Young Athlete choose a target, such as a basket or a hoop. Let them practice tossing the ball underhand with two hands towards the target.

One-Handed Underhand Toss



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



One-Handed Underhand Toss

Materials: Ball or beanbag and basket or hoop

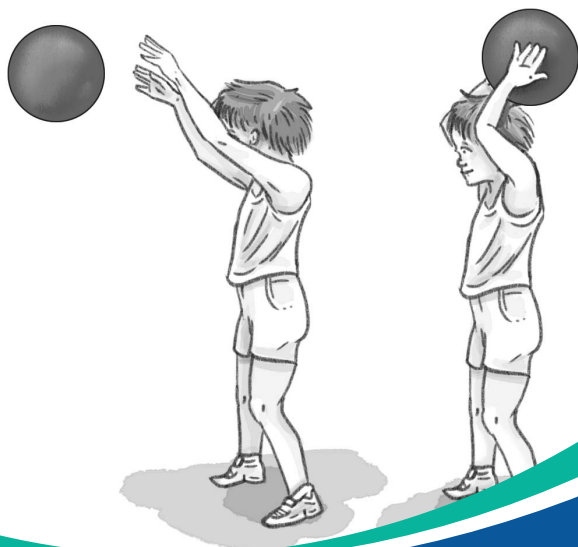
Stand facing your Young Athlete. Encourage them to bend their knees and hold a ball with one hand.

Ask your Young Athlete to look at your hands as they toss the ball underhand to you, into a basket, through a hoop or over another object.

Everyday Healthy Play

Set up two baskets or hoops. Using food-shaped beanbags or beanbags with photos of food taped to them, let your Young Athlete toss healthy food items into one basket and unhealthy food items into the other.

Two-Handed Overhand Throw



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Two-Handed Overhand Throw

Materials: Ball or beanbag and basket or hoop

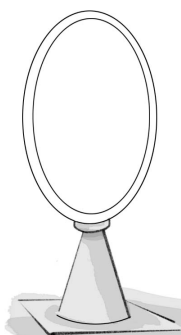
Have your Young Athlete stand with one foot in front of the other, with their feet as wide as their hips.

Encourage your Young Athlete to rock backward and forward while raising both arms overhead. While rocking forward, have your Young Athlete bring their arms forward to throw the ball.

More Ways to Play

Let your Young Athlete choose a target, such as a basket or a hoop. Let them practice tossing the ball overhand with two hands toward the target.

One-Handed Overhand Throw



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



One-Handed Overhand Throw

Materials: Ball or beanbag and basket or hoop

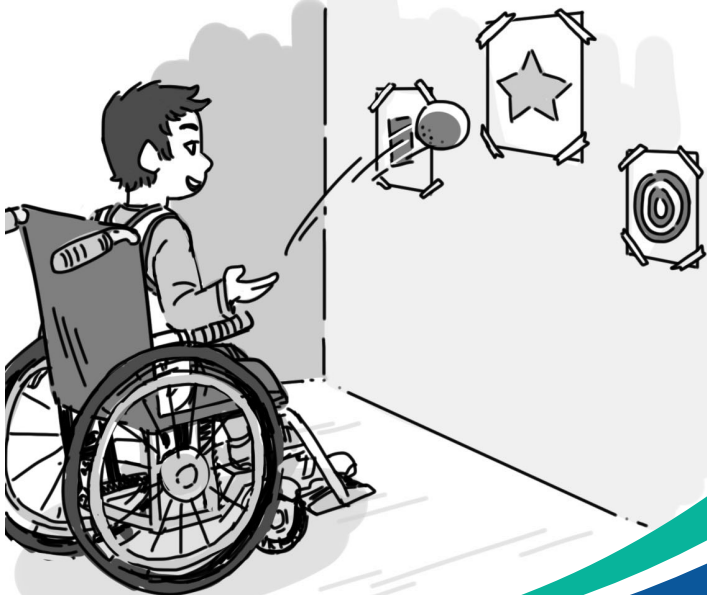
Have your Young Athlete stand with one foot in front of the other, with their feet as wide as their hips.

Encourage your Young Athlete to hold the ball or beanbag in one hand, bringing their arm backward and forward overhead to throw it.

Skill Building Tip

Let your Young Athlete practice throwing a ball overhand with one hand into a basket, through a hoop or over another object.

Target Practice



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Target Practice

Materials: Tape, pictures, floor markers and balls or beanbags

Tape pictures of animals, shapes, cartoon characters or other favorite things to the wall. Put two floor markers on the ground at a distance.

Let your Young Athlete stand on the floor markers and toss small, soft balls at the pictures. Count how many targets they can hit in a row.

Everyday Healthy Play

Tape pictures of healthy foods to the wall. Let your Young Athlete call out the name of each while tossing the balls at the images.

Shoot to Score Basketball



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Shoot to Score Basketball

Materials: Basket or hoop and ball

Hold a basket or hoop while one of your Young Athletes holds a ball.

Call out a number, and let your Young Athletes pass the ball between or around them that many times.

Let the child who ends up with the ball toss it into the basket or hoop for a point.
Score!

Group Play Tip

This game is fun for groups. Invite family members and friends to play.

Handball



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Handball

Materials: Ball and cone

Balance a ball on a cone. Let your Young Athlete knock the ball off the cone with their fist or open hand.

Skill Building Tip

Start with a large ball, then use smaller ones as your Young Athlete gets more confident.

Ball Tap



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Ball Tap

Materials: Lightweight ball or balloon

Tap a ball into the air toward your Young Athlete. Let them tap it back to you with an open hand.

More Ways to Play

Work as a team. Count how many times you can tap the ball back and forth before it touches the ground.

Beginning Floorball or Golf



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Beginning Floorball or Golf

Materials: Ball, stick and blocks or cones

Let your Young Athlete hold a stick in both hands with thumbs pointing down. Place a ball on the ground in front of them.

Encourage your Young Athlete to stand sideways facing the ball and strike it with the stick.

Group Play Tip

Set up a goal using blocks or cones. Have Young Athletes work in pairs to take turns shooting at the goal and playing goalie.

Beginning Tennis or Softball



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Beginning Tennis or Softball

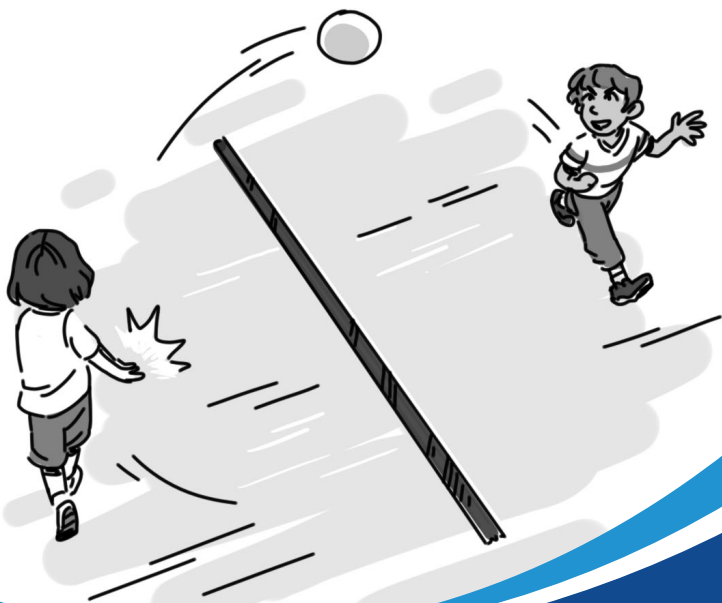
Materials: Ball, cone and paddle or bat

Balance a ball on a cone. Let your Young Athlete knock the ball off the cone with the paddle.

Group Play Tip

Set up floor markers to form bases. Let your Young Athletes run the bases after they strike the ball.

Beginning Volleyball



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Beginning Volleyball

Materials: Rope or tape and ball or balloon

Create a “net” by placing a rope or strip of tape on the floor. Make two teams, and have one team stand on each side of the net. Let teams tap the ball over the net to each other with open hands.

More Ways to Play

Have teams work together as one team. Count how many times your group can tap the ball over the net before it touches the ground.

Stationary Ball Kick



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Stationary Ball Kick

Materials: Ball and floor markers

Place a ball on the ground in front of your Young Athlete. Let them kick it to you with the toe of their preferred foot.

More Ways to Play

Set up floor markers and have your Young Athlete kick the ball between them.

Penalty Kick



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Penalty Kick

Materials: Ball and floor markers

Place a ball on the ground. Let your Young Athlete run up to the ball and then kick it toward you.

More Ways to Play

Let your Young Athlete run up to the ball and kick it between two floor markers to score a goal.

Passing Practice



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Passing Practice

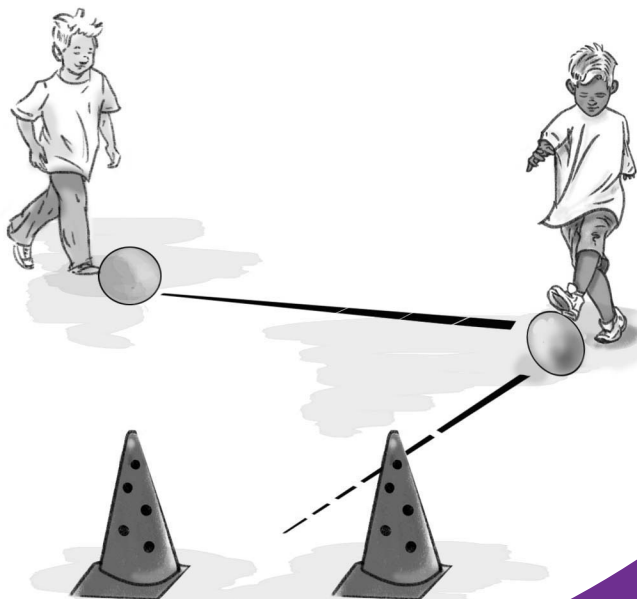
Materials: Ball

Have Young Athletes stand facing each other or in a circle. Let them kick the ball to each other. Make sure to keep the ball inside the circle.

Skill Building Tip

Encourage your Young Athlete to follow through with their kicking leg while they kick.

Give and Go



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Give and Go

Materials: Ball and floor markers

Kick a ball to your Young Athlete. Ask them to kick the ball between two floor markers...while it's still moving. Count how many goals your Young Athlete can score.

Skill Building Tip

Move the floor markers farther away from the kicker or closer to each other.

Pinball



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Pinball

Materials: Ropes or sticks, blocks or toys and ball

Create a frame using ropes, sticks or blocks. Add blocks or toys to the inside of the frame to make obstacles.

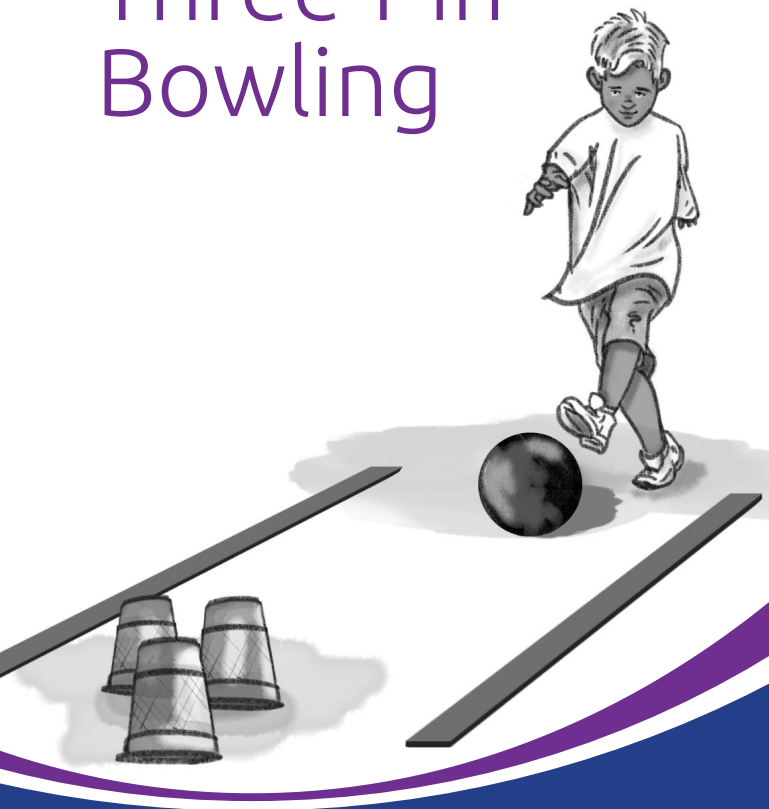
Have Young Athletes stand on either side of the frame and kick the ball to each other, letting it bounce against the frame and obstacles.

Watch where it goes and how it changes direction.

Everyday Healthy Play

Have Young Athletes call out their favorite sport or screen-free activity when the ball comes to them.

Three-Pin Bowling



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Three-Pin Bowling

Materials: Ropes or sticks, cups or plastic bottles and ball

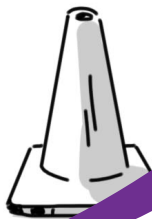
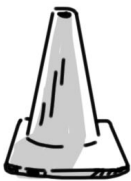
Build a bowling lane from ropes, strips of tape or sticks. Stack at least three cups or bottles at the end of the lane.

Let your Young Athlete kick the ball down the lane to try to knock them over.

Skill Building Tip

Make the lane longer or use a smaller ball.

Cone Dribble



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Cone Dribble

Materials: Cones or toys and ball

Place cones or toys on the floor. Let your Young Athlete kick a ball around your play space. Tell them to try not to hit the cones.

Skill Building Tip

Encourage Young Athletes to focus their eyes on the ball before kicking and on the target while kicking.

Punting



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Punting

Materials: Ball

Have your Young Athlete balance on one foot with their kicking leg in front and their arms out to the sides. Ask them to swing their kicking leg backward and forward.

Then, have them hold a ball in both hands and drop it while their kicking leg is back, and swing their kicking leg forward to kick the ball.

Tip

Advanced sports skills require strength, balance, vision and coordination. If your Young Athlete needs more practice before punting, build up skills using **Balance and Jumping** and **Kicking** activities. Then, try again.

Galloping



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Galloping

Materials: Floor markers

Put down floor markers in a straight line. Have your Young Athlete leap onto each marker with their preferred foot, then bring their back foot to rest on the marker.

Tip

Advanced sports skills require strength, balance, vision and coordination. If your Young Athlete needs more practice before galloping, build up skills using **Walking and Running** and **Balance and Jumping** activities. Then, try again.

Skipping



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Skipping

Materials: Floor markers

Put down floor markers in a straight line.

Have your Young Athlete step onto one marker, then hop with that foot. As the hopping foot lands, have your Young Athlete hop onto the next marker with the other foot.

Skip all the way to the end of the floor markers.

Tip

Advanced sports skills require strength, balance, vision and coordination. If your Young Athlete needs more practice before skipping, build up skills using **Walking and Running** and **Balance and Jumping** activities. Then, try again.

Stand, Roll and Trap



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Stand, Roll and Trap

Materials: Ball

Ask Young Athletes to stand facing each other or in a circle. Let one Young Athlete roll a ball while the other stops or traps the ball under one foot.

Tip

Advanced sports skills require strength, balance, vision and coordination. If your Young Athlete needs more practice before stopping or trapping, build up skills using **Trapping and Catching** and **Kicking** activities. Then, try again.

Two-on-One



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Two-on-One

Materials: Ball and floor markers

Create a goal from two floor markers. Have one person stand between the floor markers to block the goal, while two more try to score a goal.

On a clap or whistle, let one Young Athlete kick the ball to pass to another, who then kicks the ball to shoot towards the goal.

Let everyone practice passing, shooting and being goalie.

Tip

Advanced sports skills require strength, balance, vision and coordination. If your Young Athlete needs more practice before playing Two-on-One, build up skills using **Trapping and Catching** and **Kicking** activities. Then, try again.

One-on-One



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



One-on-One

Materials: Ball and floor markers

Create a goal from two floor markers. While running towards the goal, kick to pass a ball to and from your Young Athlete three times. After the third pass, let your Young Athlete shoot at the goal.

Tip

Advanced sports skills require strength, balance, vision and coordination. If your Young Athlete needs more practice before playing One-on-One, build up skills using **Trapping and Catching** and **Kicking** activities. Then, try again.

Dribble



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Dribble

Materials: Ball

Stand behind your Young Athlete. Help them bounce the ball with two hands, touching the ball but not catching it.

Progress by helping less, using smaller balls and encouraging your Young Athlete to use one hand.

Tip

Advanced sports skills require strength, balance, vision and coordination. If your Young Athlete needs more practice before dribbling, build up skills using **Trapping and Catching** activities. Then, try again.

Pass and Shoot



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Pass and Shoot

Materials: Ball, hoop or basket

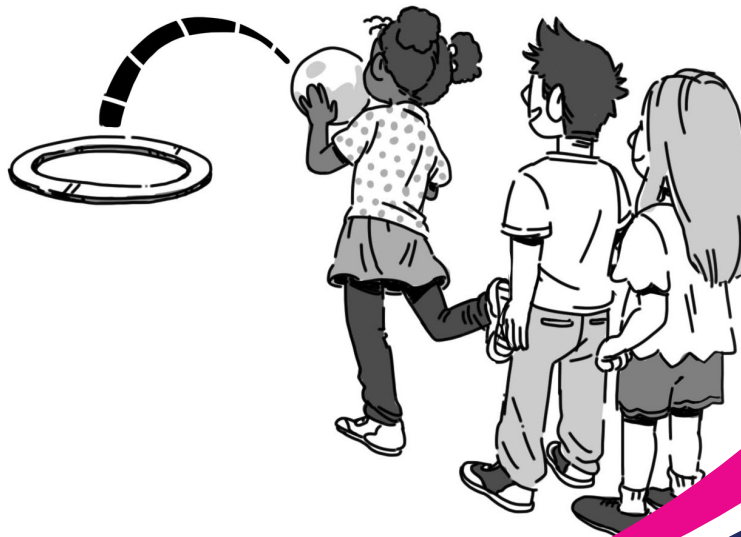
Stand facing your Young Athlete with a basket or a hoop on the floor between you. Throw, bounce-to-pass or pass the ball back and forth three times.

After the third pass, let the person holding the ball shoot at the hoop. Score!

Tip

Advanced sports skills require strength, balance, vision and coordination. If your Young Athlete needs more practice before playing Pass and Shoot, build up skills using **Trapping and Catching** and **Throwing** activities. Then, try again.

Dribble and Shoot



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Dribble and Shoot

Materials: Hoop or basket and ball

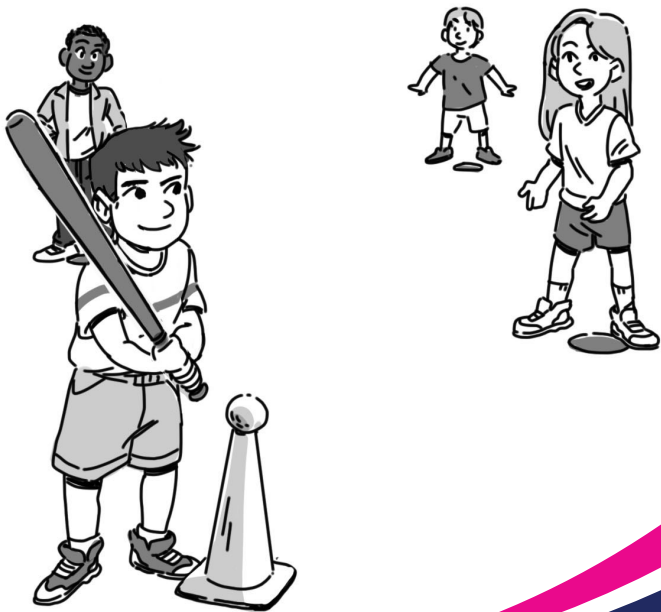
Place a hoop or a basket on the ground in front of your Young Athlete. Let them dribble three times then shoot at the hoop.

After they shoot, it's your turn. Have them pick up the ball and hand it to you. Take your shot, then switch again.

Tip

Advanced sports skills require strength, balance, vision and coordination. If your Young Athlete needs more practice before playing Dribble and Shoot, build up skills using **Trapping and Catching** and **Throwing** activities. Then, try again.

Run the Bases



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Run the Bases

Materials: Floor markers, ball, block or cone and stick or bat

Batter up! Start by building bases using floor markers. On home base, balance a ball on a cone.

Have one person stand on each base. Let the person on home base hit the ball with the stick or bat, then run the bases. Let the others standing on the bases pass the ball around before the batter returns home.

Give everyone a turn at each base.

Tip

Advanced sports skills require strength, balance, vision and coordination. If your Young Athlete needs more practice before playing Run the Bases, build up skills using **Walking and Running** and **Striking** activities. Then, try again.