INTRODUCTION
Children typically begin to develop ball skills between 18-24 months of age however some children may develop these skills later. Ball skills are a great way to keep your child active and enable them to participate in team activities.

What can you do to help?
There are various ways you can help your child to develop ball skills, the key element is to begin with simple games which the child can do and build up to more challenging activities.
– It is more fun to practise ball skills with a partner and spending time being active and practising kicking/throwing/catching with your child will encourage their development.
– Try using a selection of balls i.e. a lighter ball or balloon moves slower allowing more time to catch it.
- Larger balls are easier to catch than smaller balls, which with practise can help build a child’s confidence and ability.

Simple Games

Bubbles
- Encourage the child to burst bubbles by clapping hands together
– Child stands on the spot then reaches to burst bubbles

Balloons
- Keepie ups, count how many times you can hit the balloon to keep it up in the air
– Tennis, hit the balloon back and forward between two people using either hands or a racket.

Simple ball games
- Roll ball back and forward to a partner while sitting on the floor
– Roll ball into a goal or to knock down skittles
– Using two hands, bounce then catch a ball
– Throw a ball/ bean bag at a target such as a hoop or waste paper bin 1-2 metres away.
Child uses 2 hands to throw and catch initially then moves onto one handed throw and catch

Next step ball games
– Bounce a ball using alternate hands
– Bounce a ball between 2 people
– Throwing and catching a ball between 2 people (increase the distance between persons and decrease size of ball as ability grows)
– Group of people stand in a circle and throw 1 ball around the group varying the direction, speed and force of the throws
**Challenging ball games**
- Repeat any of the previous games with a smaller ball to increase difficulty
- Throw and catch a bouncy/tennis ball off a wall—try with one bounce or no bounce
- Throw and catch a tennis ball with your partner while one or both of you move around
- Throw a bean bag or ball into a small container/box/hoop
- Throw a ball into low basket ball net then increase the height to increase difficulty
- In a group circle, throw 2 or more balls around the circle in the same direction or try changing direction when one person shouts “change”

**Football skills**
- Kick a ball into a goal 2 meters away
- Kick a ball between 2 people
- Stop ball with one foot and carefully kick back to partner
- Stand in a group circle and kick the ball around the group varying direction.
- Dribbling a ball around an obstacle course
- Kick a ball while moving around
- Move goal posts closer together/ kick the ball from further away to increase difficulty