Observing & Evaluating

Motor Skills of Young Children

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Choosy Assessment of Motor Patterns
CAMP

(Developmental Levels)

	Emerging	Transitional	Efficient
Throwing	Trunk faces target + throwing hand moves beside or behind head + elbow points up or out on the throwing side + feet stationary facing target.	Trunk faces target + foot on the throwing side steps forward + elbow on throwing side points up or out.	Nondominant shoulder faces target + arm/leg opposition + transfer of weight with a step + throwing hand drops down and back + elbow moves forward at shoulder level. Teaching cue: Step, twist your belly button, throw.
Catching	Arms pull the ball to the body.	Hands pull the ball to the body.	Hands catch away from the body, thumbs up + palms facing each other + arms extended or slightly flexed.
Kicking	Straight leg push forward + no backswing of kicking leg + upright posture + little or no use of arms.	Backswing from knee & slight forward trunk lean; use of arms for balance + limited follow-through.	Full leg swing from the hip + compensating trunk movements + arm/leg opposition + high follow-through + hop on support foot or raise up on toes of support foot.
Jumping	One-foot take-off + looks like stepping + upright posture + little or no use of arms.	Two-foot take-off; two-foot landing + trunk propelled upward + ineffective use of arms.	Preliminary leg crouch + full arm swing + arms swing forward and reach overhead during flight + body weight forward on landing.
Striking	Child's trunk faces "pitcher" + chopping down motion with one or both hands.	Nondominant shoulder faces "pitcher" + horizontal swing with one or both hands + feet stationary.	Nondominant shoulder faces "pitcher" + horizontal swing with one or both hands + simultaneous rotation, transfer of weight with a step.
Stability	Side-stepping foot pattern + slight trunk lean + rigid arms held close.	Shuffle-step foot pattern in a forward direction + slight trunk lean + rigid arms held close.	Alternate stepping in a forward direction + relaxed upright posture + compensating movements.
Space Awareness	Touches body parts that lead into the space.	Touches trunk when exiting.	Does not touch, or touches body parts that follow when exiting.

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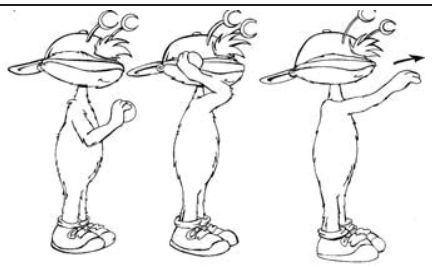
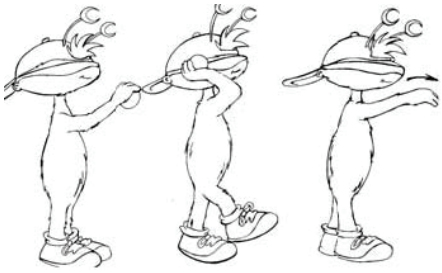
Choosy **A**ssessment of **M**otor **P**atterns

THROWING

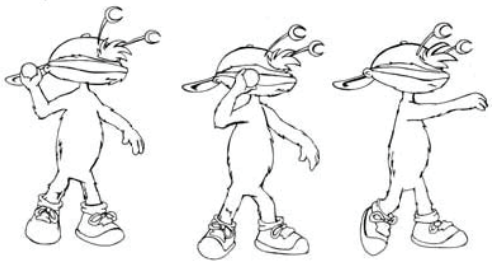
Criteria for Evaluation	
Equipment	Large target (wall or sheet), small ball (tennis ball size) or bean bag
Blueprint	The child stands 10 feet from the target with the ball on the floor in front of the child at midline.
Cue	"Pick up the ball and throw it hard toward the target."
Trials	At least three



Emerging—Trunk faces target + throwing hand moves beside or behind head + elbow points up or out on the throwing side + feet facing target



Transitional—Trunk faces target + foot on the throwing side steps forward + elbow on throwing side points up or out



Efficient—Nondominant shoulder faces target + arm/leg opposition + transfer of weight with a step + throwing hand drops down and back + elbow moves forward at shoulder level. (Teaching cue: Step, twist your belly button, and throw.)

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THROWING

Teaching Tips

1. Make sure the target is sufficiently large enough to almost ensure success.

2. Use balls or bean bags that are small enough for the child's hand.

3. Be sure the child is looking at the target and is not visually distracted.

4. Cue the child to throw hard or far.

5. Do not have the child retrieve after each throw. Provide several bean bags or balls.

6. Stress arm and leg opposition by placing three footprints, tape lines, or chalk lines, etc., on the floor.

7. With nondominant shoulder facing the target, encourage the "rocking-step" in which the child rocks the weight to the back foot and then steps toward the target to throw.

8. Use the teaching cues, "step, twist your belly button, and throw."

9. If the child has not established a preferred throwing arm, stress arm and leg opposition and transfer of weight regardless of which side the child prefers at the time.

10. Positively praise each child for improvements using hand claps, smiles, high fives, pat on the back, etc.

11. Model the Efficient level of throwing.

12. Using the **I Am Learning Movement Vocabulary Framework**, modify throwing practice with the following concepts:
    Levels
    Force

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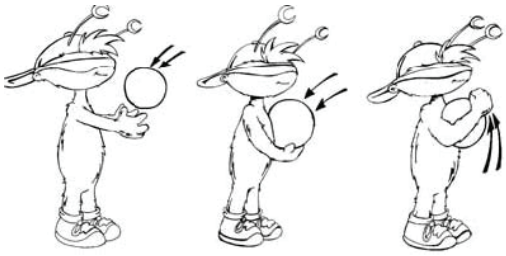
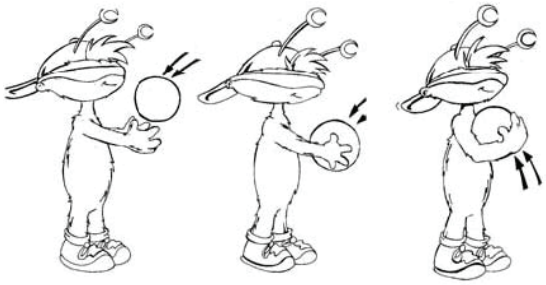
CATCHING

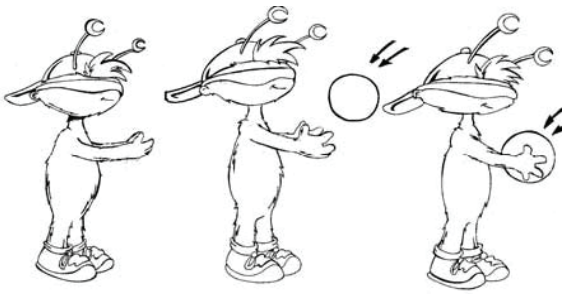
Criteria for Evaluation	
Equipment	Six-inch long sponge ball, Nerf ball, or yarn ball
Blueprint	Toss the ball from a distance of 10 feet at a medium level. Do not evaluate the catch if the ball does not land between the child's waist and chest.
Cue	"Catch the ball."
Trials	Three



Emerging—Arms pull the ball to the body.



Transitional—Hands pull the ball to the body.



Efficient—Hands catch away from body, thumbs up + palms facing each other + arms extended or slightly flexed.

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CATCHING

Teaching Tips

1. Provide the child with an uncluttered visual background.

2. Always be sure that you have the child's visual attention before asking him/her to catch.

3. Cue child to extend arms in front and with arms slightly flexed, have palms facing the ball or facing each other.

4. Start with large, soft, colorful balls and gradually reduce the size of the balls used for catching.

5. Provide lots of positive feedback and praise.

6. Modeling the skill may prove helpful for the child. Always model the Efficient level of catching.

7. Challenge each child with variety; however, ensure that each child experiences success. Variety should include catching all sizes and shapes of objects, bouncing and catching, catching off of a wall, tossing and catching, catching at various distances, standing stationary to catch and moving to catch, catching with two hands and one hand, etc.

8. To increase the difficulty of any catching task, decrease the size of the ball, increase the distance between "tosser" and child, toss the ball higher in the air, or require the child to move in order to catch.

9. If a child is having difficulty catching, do not require the child to watch the ball go high up into the air, or to catch small balls.

10. Using the **I Am Learning Movement Vocabulary Framework**, modify catching practice with the following concepts:
    - Levels
    - Force
    - Directions

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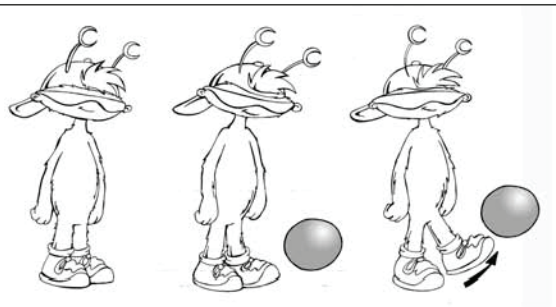
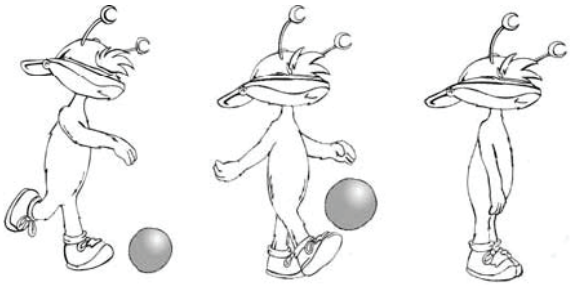
KICKING

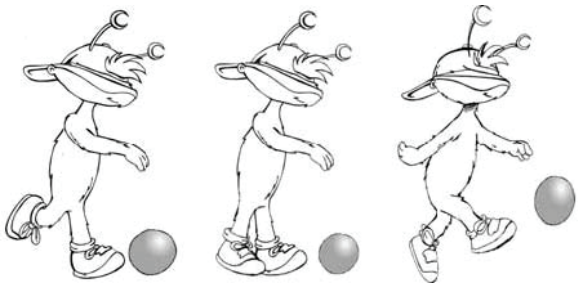
Criteria for Evaluation	
Equipment	Any large target (wall or sheet), six-inch soft ball
Blueprint	Position ball 10' from target. Child stands about two feet behind the ball.
Cue	"Kick the ball as hard as you can toward the target."
Trials	Three



Emerging—Straight leg push forward + no backswing of kicking leg + upright posture + little or no use of arms.



Transitional—Backswing from knee & slight forward trunk lean; use of arms for balance + limited follow-through.



Efficient—Full leg swing from the hip + compensating trunk movements + arm/leg opposition + high follow-through + hop on support foot or raise up on toes of support foot.

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KICKING

Teaching Tips

1. Cue the child to look first at the target, then at the ball.

2. Use large, soft, colorful balls at first.

3. Use large targets that almost ensure success.

4. Reduce any visual "clutter" that could be distracting for the child.

5. When kicking inflated balls, use a kicking tee (margarine tub lid) so that the ball remains stationary.

6. Place the ball in front of the kicking foot.

7. Modeling a forceful kick may be helpful. Model the Efficient level of kicking.

8. Ask the child to kick hard or far. The notion of force may encourage the child to take several running steps before kicking.

9. To increase difficulty of kicking:
   - Kick smaller balls
   - Increase the distance between the child and the target (stationary ball, stationary child).
   - Have the child take a few steps or run to kick a stationary ball (moving child, stationary ball).
   - Roll the ball to the stationary child (stationary child, moving ball).
   - Have the child move or run to kick a moving ball (moving child, moving ball).
   - Have the child kick a stationary ball to a moving target (stationary child, stationary ball, moving target).

10. Using the **I Am Learning Movement Vocabulary Framework,** modify kicking practice with the following concepts:
    - Levels
    - Force
    - Locations

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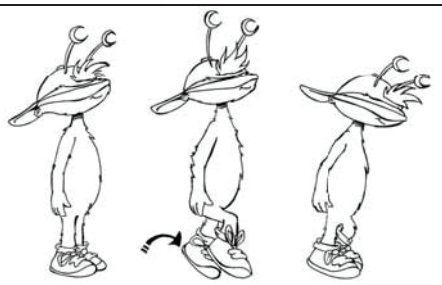
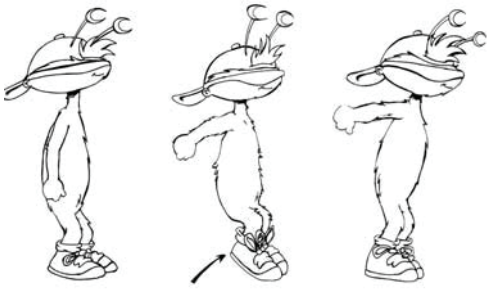
JUMPING (forward for distance)

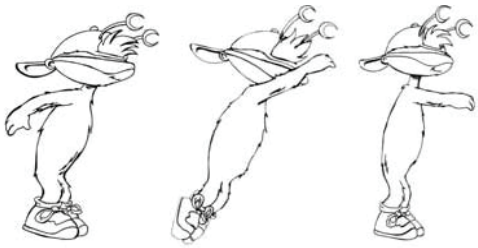
Criteria for Evaluation	
Equipment	Taped starting line
Blueprint	The child stands with toes behind the starting line.
Cue	"Jump as far as you can."
Trials	Three



Emerging—One foot take-off + looks like stepping + upright posture + little or no use of arms



Transitional—Two foot take-off; two foot landing + trunk propelled upward + ineffective use of arms



Efficient—Preliminary leg crouch + full arm swing + arms swing forward and reach overhead during flight + body weight forward on landing

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JUMPING

1. Stress a safe, upright balanced landing. Even on extra padded areas, stress an upright landing.

2. Efficient jumps have a preliminary crouch (not deep knee bend), full arm swing, two-foot take-off at about 45 degrees, and two-foot landing.

3. Model the Efficient developmental level of horizontal jumping.

4. A useful cue to say to the child is "when your legs jump up (or out), your arms go up," which encourages the child to use arms and legs together in one coordinated movement.

5. Teach and practice other "kinds" of jumps.

   Examples: Jumping over a boundary
   Jumping up
   Jumping down

6. Tape lines or rubber circles are very helpful for practicing goal-setting behaviors. Use the tape lines or rubber circles as targets when jumping for accuracy.

   Examples: Jumping over or jumping for distance
   Jumping up and landing in the same place
   Jumping down from various "safe" heights

7. Special teaching considerations for other kinds of jumps.

   Jumping up

   1. Cue the child to visually attend to the task by looking at the target.
   2. Encourage the child not to travel (landing should be close to take-off point).

   Jumping down

   1. Stand or kneel in front of your child to keep him/her from falling forward out of control.
   2. Stress a safe, upright landing.
   3. If the child is falling forward, place your hands, palms up, out in front of you and cue the child to grab or slap your hands on landing.

Jumping over

1. Do not encourage the child to take too deep of a preliminary crouch (he/she will not have the explosive strength needed to get out of it).

2. Encourage a safe, upright landing.

8. Consecutive jumping (for example, jump four times and count for each jump) and rhythmic jumping (for example, jump to a cadence determined by hand clapping or music) are also important to practice.

9. At stations requiring consecutive jumps, ask the child to hop also. The child may try hopping in place, hopping with either foot, and consecutive or rhythmic hops. Remember that jumping is a two-foot take off with a two-foot landing, while hopping is a one-foot take off and a one-foot landing (on the take-off foot).

10. For additional complexity, ask the child to jump or hop in different directions.

11. When rope jumping, a sticker, tape, or rubber circle can be very helpful in keeping the child from "traveling" on each jump.

12. Using the **I Am Learning Curriculum,** modify jumping practice with the following concepts:

    Levels
    Force
    Directions
    Locations
    Time

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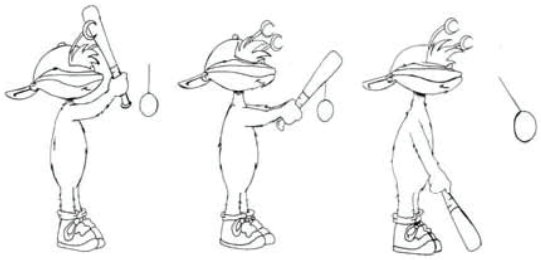
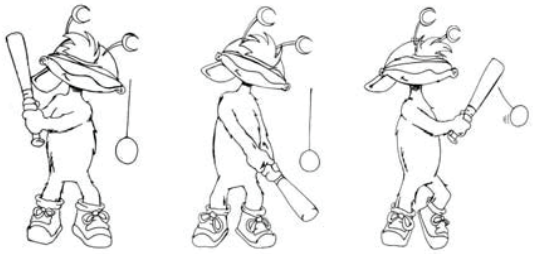
STRIKING

Criteria for Evaluation	
Equipment	A lightweight bat with a large batting surface and a small handle; six-inch yarn ball or sponge ball. Toss the ball or suspend it from the ceiling or from a pole.
Blueprint	Toss or suspend the ball so that it is approximately waist level for the child. Evaluator stands 10' away and releases the suspended ball or tosses it toward the child.
Cue	"Hit the ball towards me as hard as you can when I throw it to you."
Trials	Three



Emerging—Child's trunk faces "pitcher" + chopping down motion with one or both hands.

Transitional—Nondominant shoulder faces "pitcher" + horizontal swing with one or both hands + feet stationary.



Efficient—Nondominant shoulder faces "pitcher" + horizontal swing with one or both hands + simultaneous rotation, transfer of weight with a step. (Teaching cue: step, twist your belly button, swing)

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STRIKING

1. Whether using a tee, cone, suspended ball, or freely tossed ball, try to have the ball about waist level for the child.

2. Utilize large targets or no targets at all, and use a bat or paddle with a large batting surface.

3. Use footprints or lines on the floor for helping the child with the notion of stepping forward to transfer weight.

4. Cue the child to look at the ball. Do not begin the task unless the child is watching the ball.

5. Suggested cues for batting for a right-handed striker (reverse for lefty):
   Left shoulder facing the target.
   Grip: left hand on bottom, right hand on top
   Left elbow down and in; right elbow up and out
   Slight forward lean in trunk
   Slight bend in knees
   Look at ball
   Step toward target to make contact with the ball
   Turn belly button toward target; follow through with bat
   Use these cues: step, belly button, bat

6. Modeling batting may prove very helpful for the child. Model the Efficient developmental level.

7. A traffic cone makes a good batting tee and offers the child a stationary ball to hit. Be sure to position the child so that he/she must step to strike the ball)

8. The swinging suspended ball and freely tossed ball require visual tracking. Striking a moving object is more difficult than a stationary one. Practice hitting a stationary object first.

9. Use one-hand striking for practice for eye-hand coordination. Use covered balloons, rackets, paddles, or bare hands.

10. Using the **I Am Learning Movement Vocabulary Framework,** modify striking practice with the following concepts:
    Levels
    Body Parts
    Force
    Directions

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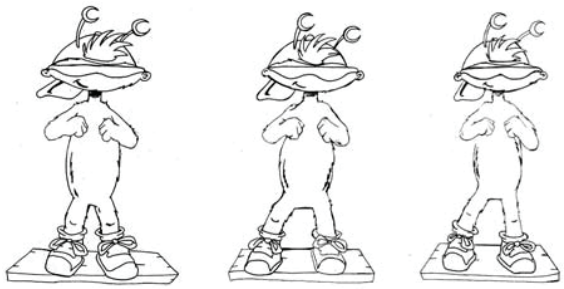
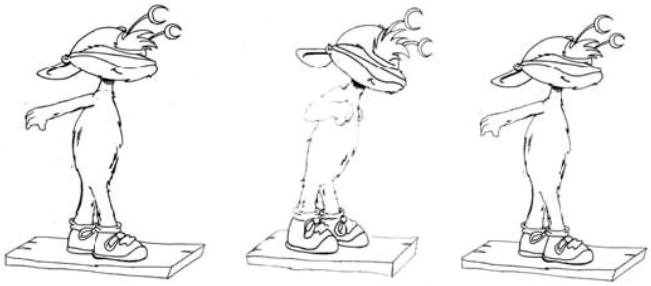
STABILITY

Criteria for Evaluation	
Equipment	Four-inch wide beam 6–8 feet long, no higher than 6 inches off the floor
Blueprint	Position the beam on top of carpet or mats. Evaluator walks beside the child for spotting; however, the evaluator should not support the child.
Cue	"Walk forward to the end of the beam all by yourself, then walk backward."
Trials	Three (Score only the stability pattern the child demonstrates without being supported).



Emerging—Side-stepping foot pattern + slight trunk lean + rigid arms held close.

Transitional—Shuffle-step foot pattern in a forward direction + slight trunk lean + rigid arms held close



Efficient—Alternate stepping in a forward direction + relaxed upright posture + compensating movements

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STABILITY

1. Having children perform stability or balance tasks in bare feet provides them with additional sensory information.

2. Be close in case help is needed, but try to avoid offering the child your hand or arm for support on stability tasks. A child may exhibit a more mature movement pattern than he/she really is capable due to the security that your hand or arm offers.

3. Cue the child to look at the beam.

4. Stress the use of the arms out to the side for balance.

5. As the task becomes more complex (height, angles, narrow width), the child's movement pattern may regress back to a lower developmental level.

6. Attempt different beam heights, angles of incline, and widths of the beam. (Keep #5 in mind)

7. Asking children to travel on unstable or more narrow surfaces helps to encourage the development of compensatory movements, such as arms out or compensating movements of the trunk.

8. To increase difficulty:
   - Narrow the width of the beam
   - Raise the height of the beam
   - Increase the angle of incline
   - Have the child bend down or squat down, keeping the back straight
   - Have the child turn around and walk backward on the beam
   - Have the child look straight ahead instead of down
   - Walk on the beam carrying a prop like a bean bag or ball
   - Walk on the beam and balance a bean bag on a body part

9. All of the above should be encouraged with supervision but little or no touching (unless to avoid a fall).

10. When asking a child to pick up an item off the beam, encourage a straight-backed squatting position and ask the child to lower the weight over the feet instead of out in front of them.

11. Using the **I Am Learning Movement Vocabulary Framework,** modify stability practice with the following concepts or actions:

Body Parts
Locations
Levels
Directions
Traveling Actions
Stabilizing Actions
Manipulating Actions

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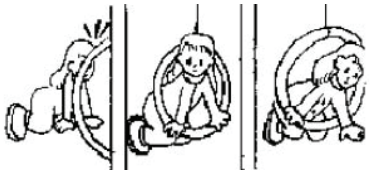
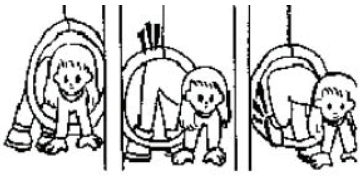
SPACE AWARENESS

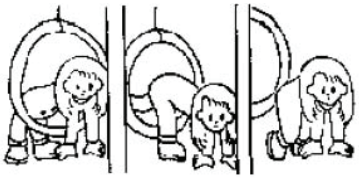
Criteria for Evaluation	
Equipment	Small hula hoop
Blueprint	Suspend hoop or hold it so that the bottom edge touches the floor.
Cue	"Take your body through the hoop without touching."
Trials	Three



Emerging—Touches body parts that lead into the space.



Transitional—Touches trunk when exiting.



Efficient—Does not touch, or touches body parts that follow when exiting.

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SPACE AWARENESS

Teaching Tips

1. Space awareness requires the child to estimate the size of spaces and how much space his/her total body, or body parts, will need to do a task.

2. Encourage each child to move slowly and cautiously.

3. Cue the child to move without touching.

4. In tasks utilizing large spaces and total body movement, if a body part touched the boundary (rope, hoop, tire), ask the child what body part touched after attempting to go through, over, or under.

5. For an increased challenge, ask the child to try going through the space backward.

6. In tasks utilizing small spaces (for hands, head, feet, fingers), ask the child what body parts could fit in that space before the child attempts the task.

7. Using the **I Am Learning Movement Vocabulary Framework**, modify space awareness practice with the following concepts or actions:

   Body Parts
   Locations
   Self-space
   Shared Space
   Relationships (Roles)
   Force
   Traveling Actions
   Stabilizing Actions
   Manipulating Actions

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Teacher/Classroom

Choosy **A**ssessment of **M**otor **P**atterns
Sample Score Sheet
Catching

Key
1 Emerging
2 Transitional
3 Efficient

Child's Name	1 2 3	First Evaluation Date_____ Comments	1 2 3	Second Evaluation Date_____ Comments	1 2 3	Third Evaluation Date_____ Comments
1						
2						
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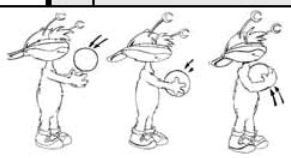
Emerging—Arms pull the ball to the body.



Transitional—Hands pull the ball to the body.

Efficient—Hands catch away from body, thumbs up + palms facing each other + arms extended or slightly flexed.

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Teacher/Classroom

Choosy Assessment of Motor Patterns
Sample Score Sheet

Key

1 Emerging
2 Transitional
3 Efficient

Child's Name	1 2 3	First Evaluation Date_____ Comments	1 2 3	Second Evaluation Date_____ Comments	1 2 3	Third Evaluation Date_____ Comments
Throwing						
Catching						
Kicking						
Jumping						
Striking						
Balance						
Space Awareness						

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