LARGE MOTOR SKILLS

Toss in the Can
Assemble a sock ball, a bean bag or a yarn ball and an empty trash can or tub. Place the can or tub close to the child.
Show the child how to toss the ball or bean bag into the trash can or tub.
Encourage the child to use one hand, but accept either under- or overhand tosses. Insisting on one or the other at this age may confuse or frustrate the child. The child may even prefer to use both hands. The object is to aim for the target with the ball or bean bag.

This is a simple activity and should interest the child. However, make it clear to the child that he should aim for the trash can or tub and not the furniture, lamps, tables, etc.

When the child has gained confidence in tossing the ball a short distance, the trash can or tub can be moved farther away from the child. This will offer more of a challenge to the child and will increase his skill and confidence.

This activity develops:
- eye-hand coordination
- gross motor coordination
- interest in a game
- following directions
- an awareness of distance and time in relation to when the ball is first tossed and when it stopped

BEAN BAG GAMES
Heads or Tails: Toss two-color bean bag in the air and have child guess which color will land facing up.

Bean Bag Crawl: Put bean bag on child's back and see how far he/she can crawl before it falls off. Racing this way is great for a birthday party.

Bean Bag Walk: Child balances bean bag on head as he/she walks, sits in a chair, sits on the floor, walks backward, etc.

Keep a Straight Face
Two teams sit facing each other in two lines. One team is chosen to go first and they must keep a straight face no matter what. In the meantime, the opposing team is doing everything within their power to make the other team laugh or crack a smile. No touching or tickling, but other than that, anything goes! It's so funny to watch the creative ways people try to make each other laugh.

MONKEY TAG
Number of Players: Any number
Location: Outdoors with over the head places to touch, such as tree limbs, clotheslines, etc. (backyard or park)
Equipment: None
Object: Avoid being tagged by "IT"
Set-Up: One player is chosen as "IT"
Play: "IT" cannot tag any players if they are touching something over their heads AND standing on only one foot. (This position prevents players from remaining in the safe position too long). Players should be encouraged to move around and take chances. Also, "IT" cannot stand next to one player to wait for them to move and cannot push them to make them get off balance. "IT" has to keep moving from one player to the next. NO two players can touch the same overhead object and the "last" player to an object wins that spot, thereby causing the other player to have to run.

Winner: None

**FLAMINGO BALL RELAY**

Required: Balls  
Players: Small to large groups  
Category: Relay Games

Set up teams of 8 - 11 players and each team will need one ball. Choose one player on each team to toss the ball to their team players. The teams are to line up side-by-side about one to two feet part from the other team players.

The players with the balls are to be facing the first player in line about 5-8 feet away. On go, the first player is to stand on one foot (left foot) and the ball is to be passed to them 5 times by their player with the ball. If they put their foot down they are to start over with the count of 5 again. Once that player has completed the 5 passes then the next player will complete the task. You do this all the way down the line until the end. Once the last person has completed standing on the left foot, they will now stand on the right foot for 5 ball passes. The next player will do the same standing now on the right foot working your way back up to the starting point. The first team to complete the ball passing while standing like a Flamingo is the winner. This game idea came to me after reading the book called The Gift of Dyslexia. Created by R. Scheel, Fun-Attic, Inc.

**BEAN BAG FUN**

You can make a bean bag toss board by cutting a circle in a piece of plywood and painting it whatever colour or pattern you wish, even making the hole part of a character's stomach.

Toss bean bags into a hoop or series of hoops on the ground, assigning point values for each hoop. Or have them toss the bean bags through hoops like a lion jumping through a hoop.

Use the bean bags for body part identification, asking them to walk around with the bean bags on shoulders, elbows, etc. or just have them touch the bean bags to their limbs.

Have the kids shake the bean bags, then toss them up in the air and catch them. Have them see how many times they can clap while the beanbag is up in the air before catching it or have them spin in a circle before catching it.

There's always the great old stand-by of Hot Potato :)  

Have them play catch, taking a step back everytime they catch it and a step forward when they miss.

**BUBBLE WRAP**

*Submitted by Marilyn*

One of the teachers in my school did this simple activity with her class and it was a success. She bought a large piece of bubble wrap paper and taped it onto the carpeted floor. Then she placed plastic and wooden toy hammers all around. The children spent so much time banging and popping the bubble wrap. It was a different thing to do to break up the day. So easy - so much fun!

**LARGE MOTOR GAME**

*Submitted by Dianne*
Materials: sponge balls
large box or basket.

Scatter the balls around and let the children pick them up using their feet instead of their hands. In fact, we have them scoot around on their bottoms to get to the balls and then scoot over to the basket and let them drop in. They can't use their hands at all. Some other items to pick up are small stuffed animals, bean bags, small boxes and/or empty milk cartons.

**Big Blocks**
Liven up your blocks center with these attractive, lightweight building blocks. Collect a supply of concentrated detergent boxes. Tape over the opening of each box with packaging tape. Cover each box with colored Cont-Tact® paper. Youngsters will demonstrate new heights of creativity when they're building with these larger-than-life blocks!

**Parachute Games!**
*submitted by Amy*

**Mushroom**
This is not so much a game, more an essential starting point for parachute play. Get everyone to spread out the parachute and hold the edge, spaced out more or less evenly so they're standing in a circle. Pull the chute taut and lower it to the ground (or knee level). On the magic word (e.g. Mushroom!) everyone pulls the chute upwards (don't let go). It will fill with air and rise up like a giant mushroom - or igloo. To get it as high as possible everyone must take a couple of paces towards the center as the chute rises. It's good to practice this so that the group can learn to work effectively as a team and get the chute really high. It won't work without co-operation.

**Variations on Mushroom**
Once you've mastered the basic mushroom it's fun to experiment. See what happens if:
 Everyone mushrooms and then runs to the center, still holding the chute. Everyone mushrooms, then lets go, especially outdoors on a windy day! Everyone lets go at exactly the same time. If there isn't any wind, the chute will retain its perfect mushroom shape and rise straight up in the air. Indoors it may go up to the ceiling. To get this right it's best for someone to shout "One…. Two…. Three…. Go!", or similar, immediately after the "Mushroom!" instruction. For everyone to let go at exactly the right instant will take practice and concentration. Groups of children who haven't played with a parachute before will probably be delighted and fascinated by the effect for quite a while before you move on to other games. It's particularly spectacular when the sun is shining down through the chute.

**Rollerball**
Everyone holds the chute taut. Place a large ball near the edge. Try to make the ball roll around the edge of the chute. To do this someone starts the ball rolling. As it comes towards you, you lower the edge you are holding, and as it goes past you raise your edge. When all the players do this in synchronization it creates a wave going round the edge, pushing the ball round in front of it in a smooth, steady circle. It can not be done without concentration and co-operation! However, it is very rewarding for the group to eventually achieve a smooth, continuous motion. Once you've done this try speeding up - or change direction.

**Big Turtle**
Have the children get on their hands and knees under a large "turtle shell" and try to make the turtle move in one direction. As a cooperative game, children have to work together to get the turtle to move. Variation: Have the turtle go over a hill or bench or through an obstacle course without losing the shell.

**The Ocean**
We pretend the parachute is the ocean. I have them give me the name of an ocean. Children move the parachute in response to the 'weather report' they heard. (Encourages children to be creative). For example, I'll say, "I
heard on the weather report this morning that there was a slight breeze over the Atlantic. What would that look like?" The children respond by making small waves in the parachute. Other suggestions have been - high winds, snow (we would have to pull it tight to make the ice), twisters, etc. Once they get the hang of it the possibilities are endless.

**Jaws**
Everyone sits on the floor in a circle holding the parachute stretched out with his or her legs underneath it. The chute is the sea and they are sitting on the beach, happily dipping their toes in the water. By shaking the edge of the chute realistic ripple or wave effects can be generated. Once the waves are going well someone is selected to be a shark and disappears under the chute. They move around underneath and because of the waves it will be difficult to see where they are. The shark chooses a victim and grabs him or her by the feet. The victim can give an appropriate scream before disappearing under the chute. This person now becomes a new shark. To prolong the game you can have the original shark revert to being a bather - or to make it more lively you can have several sharks in there at once. To finish the game you can choose 'once a shark, always a shark' - so everyone eventually becomes a shark. You can introduce freak weather conditions - or even a killer whale!

**See-Saw Pull** -- From a sitting position, have the children pull the chute back and forth in a see-sawing motion.

**Make Waves** -- While gripping the parachute, everyone moves their arms up and down to make small and large waves.

**Ball Roll** -- Have the children try to roll balls into the hole in the center of the parachute.

**Chute Lift** -- Ask the children to lift the parachute high over their heads and down again. Talk about the soft sounds and breezes that are created. Move the parachute faster and notice the different effects.

**Mushroom** -- From a standing position, lift the parachute from the ground to waist height, counting one (lift) and two (lift). On three (lift), have everyone raise the parachute high over their heads and then crouch down, pulling the parachute tightly behind them. A mushroom effect is created as the parachute settles.

**Parachute Tag** -- Lift the parachute high overhead. Call one child's name and have her run (skip, hop, twirl or crawl) to the other side before the parachute comes down and tags her.

**One Hand Run** -- Have each child hold the parachute with one hand, extending the opposite arm out for balance. Run around in one direction, then change and run around in the other direction. A variation would be to use music as the cue for changing direction (i.e. direction can be changed every time the music stops).

**Parachute Run** -- Have the children take turns running on the parachute as it lies on the ground, while the other children make waves. See how long the children can maneuver on the waves before falling down. The length of turns can be determined by songs that the children choose to sing (i.e. everyone's turn lasts the length of one song).

**PARACHUTE FUN**
When the Parachute Goes Up (sung to: If Your Happy and You Know it)

When the parachute goes up stomp your feet
When the parachute goes up stomp your feet
When the parachute is high
It floats up in the sky
When the parachute goes up stomp your feet.

Encourage children to think of other movements.
(bend your knees, nod your head, shout hooray)
Name Game (sung to: Row Row Row your Boat)
Up, up, up it goes
Down, down, down it comes
If your name is------ (put in a child's name)
Now's your turn to run
As you sing the song have the children raise the parachute above their heads. When a child is named have him/her run under the parachute. Then slowly lower the parachute to try and trap the child. Continue until all children have had a turn.

STILTS
Submitted by Margie
Materials: Tuna Fish cans; Thin rope (like a clothes line)
Preparation: Poke holes in opposites of Tuna cans using a pair of teacher scissors. String rope through Tuna can holes so that knots can be tied at both ends (under the Tuna fish can) Rope should be long enough for the child to hold while standing on the tuna can.
Process: Child takes 2 cans with rope attached and walks on them, while pulling up on ropes to keep tuna can against the bottom of his/her feet.
VARIATION: For older children/more advanced use coffee cans or large fruit/vegetable cans.

LARGE MOTOR SKILLS GAMES
Title: Sock Ball Ages 1 - 3
Goal: build motor control and improve aim.
Use a rolled up pair of socks to make a great beginner's ball with which he/she can practice throwing. To build sense of confidence first ask child to toss (as in underhanded) the ball to you. This is an easiest way for young children to throw with accuracy. Start by asking the child to toss it to the wall, big box, square on floor - something large so child will have confidence to try smaller targets.

Hula Hoop Toss
Ages 2 - 5
Goal: Increase aim and build motor control.
Use either sock ball or other soft ball and throw thru a hula hoop hanging from ceiling or teacher, while sitting on floor, can hold over her head. It is important for the hoop to be at child's eye level. Later, as coordination improves move the hoop from side- to- side to increase the challenge.

Kick Ball
Ages 2 - 5
Goal: Increase motor coordination and teaches to kick ball without falling.
Balancing on one foot and kicking the ball with the other is not easy, and this exercise is to help improve that balance. At first the child can start by holding one foot up and seeing how long they can balance. Make a game out of it by singing this song while the children hold their foot up. As an added skill have them hold their foot with the same hand while balancing)
Tune; Wheels On the Bus
I can balance on just one foot, just one foot, just one foot.
I can balance on just one foot - as still as a statue
As balancing improves then have them hop on one foot, then progress to hopping on one foot while holding the other foot.
Now have them kick a ball! You will be amazed at their coordination and aim since balancing is a skill already learned.

The Tortoise
Ages: 2 - 5 Goal: Team work and coordination
To create a giant tortoise several children get on their hands and knees while you cover them with a shell made
from a blanket or large sheet of cardboard. Suggest that the tortoise take a little walk. Do not be surprised if it loses its shell the first few tries. The children will need to practice and use team work to move as one and keep their "home" on their backs. Once they start operating as a team set up a simple obstacle path, put a chair in path that they have to turn to avoid, blocks that must be climbed over.

**Caterpillar Crawl**
Line up kids on hands and knees and link together by having each child hold on to the person's ankles in front of them and have a slithery excursion across grass as a caterpillar! Surmounting cushions placed in their path or following a prescribed route around several chairs can add challenge to the fun.

**BEAN BAGS**
When making bean bags, use fish rocks from the tank (really cheap stuff) so when it's time to wash those dirty bean bags, you can throw them in the wash machine! (rice & beans will become soggy)

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**Bean Bag Games**

Bean bag games make use of a fun and inexpensive prop for gross motor activities. Younger children may find beanbags easier to handle than a ball, and because beanbags can't roll away, they may be less frustrating for the child with poor coordination skills. Try these fun ideas to develop your child’s gross motor skills. Some of the games suggested can make great kids party games too!

**Bean Bag Games for Balance Skills:**
Have your child balance a beanbag on the head while walking along a balance beam, a length of rope, or along a line marked out on the ground.
If this is easy, make it more difficult by doing a heel-to-toe walk.
A more challenging activity is to walk around obstacles, or to touch an object on the floor along the way while keeping the beanbag on their heads.

**Bean Bag Games for Coordination:**

**Bean Bag Toss:**
This develops hand-eye coordination. Show your child how to toss a bean bag gently into the air and then catch again. Younger children can do a very gentle toss, older kids can toss just above head level.

Increase the challenge by introducing a hand-clap between tossing and catching. (ie toss, clap, catch), or a one-handed catch for older kids.

For a child whose hand-eye coordination is particularly poor, tie the beanbag into a vegetable net bag, and suspend it from a doorway or a tree branch with a rope. The child can then practice pushing the beanbag away and catching it again.

**Bean Bag Relay:**
You need a few kids or family members for this – get them to stand in a line, one behind the other. Put a pile of beanbags in the front, and a bucket at the back. The child in front grabs a bean bag and passes it overhead to the child behind and so on, until the last child pops it in the bucket, and then runs to the front to repeat the relay.

Your child will be using hand-eye coordination to accurately receive and pass the bean bag without dropping it, and bilateral coordination by using both hands together.
Bean Bag Games to Boost Crossing the Midline:
Tossing a beanbag at a target is good for coordination skills, but this activity can also be adapted to encourage children to cross the imaginary midline of their body. Have your child sit on the floor cross-legged, or kneeling.

A right-handed child should use the right hand to throw beanbags across the body space to a target on the left side. A left-handed child would throw beanbags to a target on the right side.

Ideas: an easy target would be to hit a wall or simply get the bean bag over a line. A harder target would be a hoop on the wall, or a cardboard cutout face with a mouth for the bean bags.

Improving General Endurance:
If your child needs to improve physical endurance, then making use of a bean bag can make a boring exercise seem more fun!

Put a pile of beanbags at one side of the yard and a bucket at the other, and have your child hop, run, jump, crawl or skip to take the bean bag to the bucket – your child can either hold the beanbag, balance it on the head, or balance it on an outstretched arm.

You could even try a crab-walk with a beanbag on the tummy, or leopard crawl with a beanbag on the back. You could turn this into a relay if there are a couple of kids around, or ask your child to beat his own personal time on each relay.