

Directions on How to Play Target Ball

1. Find 5-10 items your child could knock down. These could be anything from plastic water bottles to plastic storage containers. With younger children start off only using 5 items. When your child is ready you can move up to 10 items to knock down.
2. Find 1 ball (For example, a tennis ball, a kickball, or a basketball).
3. Present all of the items to be knocked down and the ball to your child (Remember, you don't need to make all the changes to Target Ball mentioned in the video in one day of playing the game. These changes can be made over multiple days of playing Target Ball).
4. As you start to play Target Ball, say to your child, *"I have some things here that we can play with. What do you think we could do with these things?"* Let your child use his/her imagination and creativity to decide what to do with the items. Your child may build with them, knock them together to make noise, or perhaps suggest some craft-type activity.
5. After awhile, say, *"I wonder if we set the bottles up, how many we could knock down with the ball? How could you set the bottles up to knock them over?"*
6. Let your child set the bottles up in the arrangement he wants. There is a good chance your child will place the bottles far apart in a row in order to knock them down. You will be tempted to correct him and put them into a bowling pin formation as YOU know that arranging them in this way will allow one bottle to knock down another. If you resist and let your child figure out how that works on his own, you'll be putting him into the position of problem solving involving basic laws of physics. So for now, let your child do what he wants to do with the arrangement of the bottles.
7. At this point your child may attempt to knock the bottles over by throwing the ball at the bottles. After the first attempt, discuss with your child the idea of rolling the ball instead of throwing it, especially inside the house.

I see you were able to get some down by throwing the ball, but did you notice how you almost hit the lamp? That wouldn't be good, would it? Let's see if we can knock them down by rolling the ball at the bottles so we can keep playing.

8. After your child tries to knock down the bottles by rolling the ball a few times ask your child, *"I wonder if there is another way to arrange the bottles so more bottles will be knocked down when you roll the ball?"*

9. Let your child attempt other arrangements to try to knock down more than one bottle at a time. Remember to let her try out her OWN ideas, not yours. She is working at Problem Solving skills during this process. You can support her by pointing out things you notice.

Did you see how when you hit this bottle, when it fell it knocked over the bottle right next to it? The ball didn't make it fall down, but the bottle did. How can you set them up to make that happen again?

Wow! You got three to fall down that time, even though you only hit one bottle with the ball. Do you think it had something to do with where you put each bottle? I wonder if you can get even more down!

10. As your child rolls the ball at the bottles, encourage him to count how many bottles are knocked down and how many are still standing. This gives your child real reasons to count and keep counting.
11. Remember to only play Target Ball for as long as your child shows interest. It is your job to make the game fun! Don't push too hard by focusing only on the academic aspects of the game.