



Skill Toy Kit User Guide

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Introduction to Skill Toys

Your teens are about to embark on a fun adventure into the world of skill toys. Each toy included in this kit has its own story, design, and body of tricks. Most of them have a lower barrier to entry than juggling, and the following lessons of good posture, problem solving, and goal setting apply to all.

Before getting started with any of the skill toys, it is important to remember to relax. Stand with legs shoulder width apart, bend your knees, and take deep breaths. Many of them require you to absorb energy. We have found that the more stressed a player is, the more likely he/she will be to struggle. Not surprisingly, adults tend to have this problem more than kids. If you have teens getting frustrated, remind them to relax. *Playing should be fun!*

Also, remind the teens that even the drops or mess-ups can give us valuable information. If they observe what is happening when they attempt to use the skill toys, they can use this information to problem solve. Try throwing it higher, try making the circle bigger, try holding it looser. Try something different and then pay attention to what effect it had. Take the pressure off of dropping by using it as a clue and a critical step in the learning process.

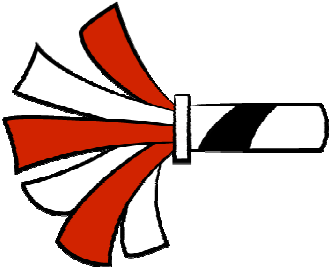
Each of these toys has a wide range of tricks that can be learned. If teens get bored, it is only because they have not explored the full range of possibilities. Teens should look through the instructional materials and videos, decide on a set of tricks to learn, and then work on the steps toward mastering those goals.

Once your teens have had a chance to play with the skill toys, you can spend time comparing the similarities and differences between them. Most teens end up with a favorite, but it will vary from teen to teen. After the first session, we always like to ask which is their favorite and why. Some like the skill toy that is the most challenging, some like the one that comes easiest, while others like the ones that use bigger motions. You may be surprised by what they share and how it may change the more they play.

One major difference that we will address in this section is the difference between stop and go skill toys versus flow skill toys. Stop and go plays just like it sounds. The player starts in a rest position, does a trick, and then returns to rest. The flow toys are like juggling in that once started, the toy has to stay in motion. There is usually a home position that has to be mastered first and from this action all of the other tricks are done. Often times the player has to return to this home position in between tricks to regain momentum.

Happy Playing!

Coaching Tips - Flower Sticks



History: The history of the flower sticks most likely dates back to ancient times, but the earliest written history of the toy comes from European explorers that traveled along the Silk Road to China during the 1700s. The *Hua Kun* (flower stick) popular in China at the time was brought back to Europe. The design has changed slightly over the years, but the style of play remains similar.

Stop & Go: To first get comfortable playing with the flower sticks, have the teens hold the two short sticks or hand sticks in each of their hands and balance the flower stick across the hand sticks. The set of tricks in this part all involve the flower stick starting at rest, going into motion, and then returning to a resting position. Stop and go.

- *Toss and Catch:* Throw different heights to get comfortable with the prop.
- *Toss and Catch with a Partner:* Practice with one flower stick back and forth first. When tossing two at a time, one partner throws high and the other throws low so the flower sticks do not collide in the middle.
- *Flips:* Flip to the right, to the left, double flip, etc. One stick pushes up harder than the other to create the flipping action.
- *Flats:* Toss the flower stick into the air while pushing with one stick and pulling with the other in order to make the stick rotate in a flat circle.
- *Rolls:* Roll the flower stick down the hand sticks and then down arms to shoulders.
- *Fancy Catches:* Toss, cross arms while stick is in the air, and catch with arms crossed; toss above head and catch on the back side of hand sticks over head; toss over the head and catch behind the back; toss up and catch with one arm under the leg.

Of course, with all of the fancy catches listed above, the flower stick player then needs to figure out the next move. This is where creativity and innovation become important. Challenge teens to come up with their own signature routines that consist of a series of five moves (or more). A behind the back catch is impressive, but then how do you get it back to the front for more tricks? What is the big finish trick to impress the audience? These are some of the questions you can pose to get them thinking creatively. We love when teens discover new moves to create fantastic routines.

Flow: The basic flow motion for the flower stick is called the Tick Tock. Have the teens watch the instructional video to see how to start and practice it. Here are the basic points to remember as they are learning.

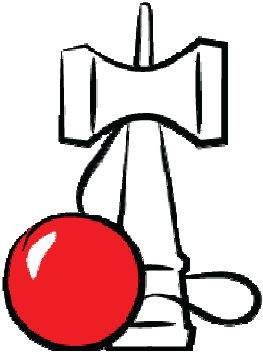
- Start by kneeling on the ground or with the bottom of the flower stick resting on a table.
- The hand sticks should make contact with the flower stick three quarters of the way up.
- The motion is not batting back and forth, but an actual toss and catch between the hand sticks.
- Player will need to use both hands equally with this prop.

Flow Tricks: Once they have mastered the tick tock comfortably, they can move on to more difficult tricks. Teens will want to start with these tricks because they look so impressive, but they really need to have control of the sticks and the basic tick tock before they increase the level of difficulty.

- *Flips:* Have the flower stick do half flips or full flips in either direction.
- *Under the leg:* Have one arm reach under one leg and continue the tick tock in this position.
- *Helicopter:* Keep the same motion as the tick tock, but have one hand stick pull and the other push so that the flower stick moves in a horizontal plane.
- *Propeller:* Move one hand stick in a small circular motion around the flower stick's center to make it spin like a propeller. As the hand stick gets to the bottom of its circular path it gives the flower stick a gentle lift, moves in a circle around it, and then gives another lift when it gets to the bottom again.
- Combine stop and go and flow tricks.

Flower sticks allow teens to bring in other talents that they may have already developed. For example, a drummer can toss up the flower stick do some fancy drumstick spins with the hand sticks and then catch the flower stick. The dancer can add pirouettes or other dance moves. The baton twirler will have fancy twirls that can be added. Or the juggler can move from the tick tock, to juggling the three sticks, and back to the tick tock. Encourage the teens to think creatively about how to combine talents and develop their own personal style.

Coaching Tips - Kendama



History: The modern version of the kendama that your teens will be using was developed in Japan during the early 1900s, but its history dates back even further. Versions of this type of toy that practices hand-eye coordination have been found around the world in England (cup and ball), France (bilboquet), North America (pommawonga), and South America (balero). The indigenous people of Japan (the Ainu) may have had their own version of the toy, but evidence indicates that the European explorers traveling the Silk Road in the 1700s brought the modern version of the toy to Japan. At first, it was primarily enjoyed by adults, but then in 1876 Japan's Ministry of Education wrote a report indicating that the toy should be used by children. It then became widely popular and is still played by Japanese children today.

How it Works: The Japanese kendama has three cups and a pin on which to catch the ball. A variety of tosses and catches can be used with this stop and go toy. The handle or stick is the *ken* and the ball is the *tama* or *dama*.

Basic Toss & Catch:

- Hold the stick as if it were an ice cream cone or lollipop.
- Tip the stick so that it is parallel to the ground and the pin is pointing away from you. Let the ball hang from the stick.
- Once the ball stops moving, gently lift the handle so that the ball gets tossed above the stick.
- Slide the stick under the ball as it peaks and catch in the cup.

Tips:

- Before starting, take a deep breath and relax. If you hold the stick rigidly, the ball will bounce right off the cup. It also helps to bend your knees when catching to help absorb the energy.
- If you look closely at the two side cups, you will see that one cup is slightly larger than the other. This makes a good beginner target.
- Do not try to swing the ball up in a circular motion. That is a more difficult way to make the catch.
- The key to the kendama is precision and gentle, smooth motions.

Grips: There are several different ways to hold the kendama to allow for a variety of tricks.

- *Common Grip:* The grip described above for the basic toss and catch.
- *Pencil Grip:* Hold stick like you are writing with it (the pin being your pencil tip).
- *Candle Grip:* Hold the stick by the pin.

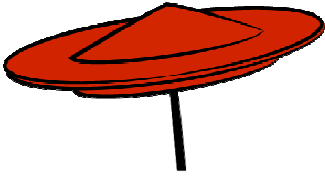
Tricks:

- Toss and catch in each of the three cups using the common grip.
- Move the ball from cup to cup using the common grip.
- *Spike Catch*: Catch the ball on the pin using the common grip.
- *Moshikame*: Using the pencil grip, start with the ball on the big side cup then toss to the bottom cup and return to the big cup. Repeat this motion back and forth. Japanese children do this while singing a song about the tortoise and hare folktale.
- *Candle*: Use the candle grip and swing the ball so it lands in the bottom cup.
- *Airplane*: Hold the ball and toss the stick up in order to catch the pin in the hole of the ball.

Putting it away: You need to take special care with the string toys to prevent knots and tangles.

- Wrap the string around the handle of the kendama just below the cups.
- When you get close to the end, stretch the string so that the ball can be put onto the pin.
- You should be able to hold it upside down without the ball falling off. If it does fall off, wrap once or twice more and try again.

Coaching Tips - Spinning Plate



History: Spinning and balancing plates on sticks of varying heights became popular in the United States during the Vaudeville era and on early television variety shows such as *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Comedy routines involved getting large numbers of plates spinning at the same time or combined the plate spinning with acrobatic skill. Spinning ceramic plates and bowls can also be seen in modern Chinese circus acts. There is evidence that the skill dates back to the Han Dynasty in China almost two thousand years ago in which performers were trained in a variety of performance skills.

How it works: The stick moves in a circular motion which makes the plate start to wobble and eventually spin flat and fast. Imagine that coin spinning on the table in reverse.

Making it Flow: Your kit contains special plates that are designed for making plate spinning easy. You can start by having teens place the dimple in the middle of the plate on top of the stick and practice balancing skills. They can even give it a little spin with their hands, but they will not be able to get it spinning fast enough to do tricks. To get the plate spinning more effectively, follow these steps.

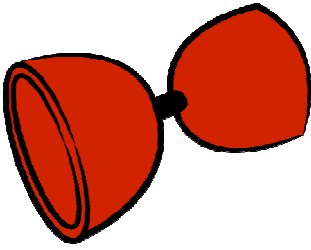
- Hold the stick loosely at the bottom with your dominant hand.
- The stick should be held straight up and down perpendicular to the ground.
- Notice that the plate has a lip around the bottom. Place the plate on the top of the stick from this lip so it hangs vertically.
- Imagine you are going to use the top of the stick to draw a circle in the sky and start moving it in this circular motion. It is important to focus on the movement of the stick and not the plate.
- The plate should start to wobble in a way that it starts to flatten.
- Continue the circular motion with the stick, but now pick up the speed of that motion.
- The plate should be almost flat by now and you should still be holding loosely (no white knuckles).
- At this point, grip the stick tight and it will jump to the dimple in the middle of the plate.

Tricks: Once you get the plate spinning fast, you can do a few different tricks. Keep an eye on how fast your plate is spinning. If it starts to slow down, slide the stick back out to the lip and give it some more spin before attempting another trick.

- **Fancy Start:** Holding the plate horizontal, give it a spin as you toss it in the air. Catch the plate on the dimple so the spin you gave it in the air keeps it in motion.
- **Balance:** Once you get the plate spinning, place the bottom of the stick on a finger, knee, elbow, or chin. Watch the top of the stick/plate to keep it balanced. *Safety tip:* have teens balance it on their chin - **NOT** their nose. If the stick slips, you do not want it too close to the eyes.
- **Toss and Catch:** Use the stick to give the plate a push from underneath to make it jump in the air and then catch it back on the dimple to keep it spinning. Bend your knees as you catch the plate to absorb the energy.

- *Throw and Catch with a Partner:* Start with just one plate and try passing it between sticks by tossing in the air with one stick and catching it with the other. If you move on to two plates, have one person throw high and the other throw low so that your plates do not collide.
- *Reverse Stick:* Toss the plate and give the stick a half flip so that you catch the plate on the opposite end of the stick. You will have to switch your grip or do it again to get back to normal.
- *Under the Arm:* This one requires a little flexibility. Hold your upper arm horizontal so that your elbow points away from you. It will stay in this position as you rotate your lower arm and wrist around in a circle in order to make the plate and stick move under your arm and back around to the front of your body.
- *Under the Leg:* Lift your leg in the air and bring the stick and plate under your leg. Then give the plate a toss in the air. When the plate is off the stick, bring the stick back over your leg and catch the plate back on the stick so you end up back where you started. Or you can toss it up in front of you and then quickly lift your leg and put your stick underneath to catch it under your leg.

Coaching Tips - Diabolo



History: The diabolo has a similar history to the flower sticks. A version of the toy commonly called the Chinese yo-yo was popular in China and brought to Europe by French and English explorers. Made of bamboo, the Chinese yo-yo has a different shape from the diabolo and makes a whistling noise when used. During the height of its popularity in 19th century France, clubs and competitions were formed around this skill toy. In the early 1900s, French engineer Gustave Phillippart altered the history of this prop in two significant ways. First he coined the name diabolo for the toy from the Greek words *dia* (across) and *bolo* (to toss). Second, he constructed the modern diabolo from two rubber domes joined by a metal axle similar to the prop your teens use.

Making it Flow: The diabolo has no stop and go tricks; it needs to always be in motion.

- One hand will do most of the work.
- Lift the hand stick with the dominant hand and drop the other hand letting the diabolo roll down the string.
- As it approaches the bottom of the string, quickly drop the dominant hand and then lift it back up again.
- If you drop and lift the dominant hand too slowly, it creates friction which slows the diabolo.
- Repeat this action over and over to keep the diabolo spinning on the string.

Tips: Once it starts spinning, a few common problems will occur.

- *Tilt Away:* If the diabolo tilts away from you, pull your dominant hand stick in toward your body to get the diabolo into a neutral position.
- *Tilt Toward:* If the diabolo tilts toward your body, push the dominant hand stick away from your body to return the diabolo to a neutral position.
- *Turn:* The diabolo may stay balanced, but turn clockwise or counter-clockwise. In this case, just take a step in the same direction so that the cup of the diabolo always faces your body.
- When getting it started, you can give it a roll in one direction. Do not roll it back and forth to try to wind it up. Just start with it on the same side as your dominant hand and give it one smooth roll to the other side as you lift for the first time.
- If the string gets wound up, hold the diabolo in front of you and let the hand sticks hang to the ground. From here, you can unwind the string in order to prevent knots.

Diabolo Tricks: Teens should be able to get the diabolo spinning fast before moving on to these tricks. Most of these tricks will slow the spinning of the diabolo. Make sure to return to the basic spinning motion in between tricks to pick up the speed again. You may want to have an outdoor session for practicing some of these tricks.

- *Foot tap:* Spread the hands sticks wider, tap the string with your toe, and the diabolo will jump over the foot and land on the string.
- *Over the leg:* Step over the string, have the diabolo jump off the string and over the leg by pulling with the non-dominant hand, and then catch on the string to go under the leg, and repeat.
- *Over the arm:* Lift your dominant arm so it is parallel to the ground and rotate your wrist so that the string end of the stick is pointing behind you. Lift the non-dominant hand stick and give a pull to make it jump over the arm. Catch it on the string and let roll under the arm and repeat.
- *Toss & catch:* Snap arms apart to make the string go taut which will cause the diabolo to fly into the air. Keep the string taut and have the dominant hand higher in the air to aim for and catch to continue spinning.
- *Elevator:* Once the diabolo is spinning fast, wrap the string around the axle. Lift the non-dominant hand and pull the string tight so that the string is vertical. Watch the diabolo climb to the top.

Putting it Away: You need to take special care with the string toys to prevent knots and tangles.

- Line up the hand sticks next to each other.
- Wrap the string tightly around the ends of the two sticks.
- When you get to the end of the string, split the unwrapped ends of the sticks like a pair of scissors. This will create a space at the wrapped tip where you can stick the end of the string.
- Slide the sticks back together which will hold the string in place.

Coaching Tips - Flop Ball



History: People have used bean bags of all shapes and sizes as skill toys for hundreds of years, but the flop ball is brand new from Flow Circus. We originally aimed to design a skill toy for juggling that wouldn't roll away when dropped. Once we came up with this flat, sand filled circle, we realized that there is a wide range of unique flop ball tricks to explore.

We named it flop ball because that's what it does - it flops! The name also provides a perfect reminder that although learning a new skill doesn't always look pretty, it can and should be fun. So let's get flopping!

How it works: The flop ball turns the world of throwing and catching upside down by having players use the back of their hand. Spread your fingers wide with the palm facing down. Place the flop ball flat on the back of the hand. Stay relaxed as you toss and catch it. It helps to bend your knees on the catch.

Tricks: Don't let the flop ball fool you. The basic play seems simple enough, but it quickly gets challenging. Here are the basic categories of tricks:

- *Flats:* Flat means that the flop ball gets tossed without any flipping. The same side stays facing up. This is actually harder than most people think because the force exerted on the flop ball during the toss must be even throughout so that it doesn't flip.
- *Flips:* The flop ball can flip in a number of directions and numbers of rotations. The basic flip results in the top of the flop ball ending up on the bottom (a 180 degree rotation) and can be done as a front flip, back flip, inside flip, or outside flip.
- *Flops:* Flop tricks include any motion of the flop ball in which it never loses contact with the back of the hand or other body part. For example, a slide flop is a trick in which the flop ball slides from the back of the hand to the elbow. In the swing flop, the player swings their hand from side to side so that it ends up close to perpendicular to the ground without the flop ball coming off the back of the hand.
- *Stacks:* See how many flop balls you can stack, flip, and catch.
- *Swaps:* This category covers tricks that change hands such as the flip swap in which the flop ball flips as it changes hands.
- *Partner/Group:* Here's where things get fun. Find a friend (or 2) and practice flips and flats back and forth. Start with one and then challenge yourselves by adding a second. Get in a rhythm and keep them in motion even if one ends up on the ground.

Putting it Away: Help keep the kit organized by putting them away in the flop ball bag.

Coaching Tips - Yo-Yo



History: The yo-yo has a long rich history dating back as far as 500 BC. Vases from Ancient Greece depict children playing with the toy and a few terra cotta yo-yos from that time still exist. The yo-yo was played on several continents throughout its history, but the story of its modern popularity starts in the Philippines.

In 1915, Pedro Flores came to the United States from the Philippines at the age of 16. After dropping out of law school, Flores moved to California and worked as a bellhop. During his lunch breaks, he practiced yo-yo skills from his childhood and people would gather to watch. He started to sense there might be a market for the toy and created the Yo-Yo Manufacturing Company in 1928. He carved the first dozen yo-yos by hand. In the early 1930s, Donald Duncan learned about the yo-yo's popularity and bought Flores' business and made the toy popular. Duncan yo-yo's are still sold in stores today.

How it works: The yo-yo consists of two disks connected by a short axle. One long string is looped around the axle and then wrapped into one twisted string. The goal is get the yo-yo spinning by using the manipulation of the string and the momentum of the object falling and rising to be able to do tricks.

Winding the string:

- Because the string is looped around the axle and not tied to it, it's sometimes hard to start winding up the yo-yo. To get it started, press the string against the side of the yo-yo with one finger and hold it stationary while winding with the other hand. After one or two winds, you can let go and continue to wind.
- When winding the string, be sure to take the string off your finger. Keeping it on will tighten the twisted string and you will end up with it looking like tangled spaghetti.

Preparing to throw the yo-yo:

- Many people try to squeeze their finger into the loop at the end of the string to no avail. That loop is actually there so you can create a slip knot. Take approximately an inch of string that is next to the loop and push it through creating a second loop that can be adjusted to your finger size.
- Place the loop of string on the first or second knuckle of the index or middle finger whichever feels most comfortable for you.

Throwing and catching the yo-yo:

- Hold the yo-yo in your hand with palm facing up.
- Position the yo-yo with the string going from the top of the yo-yo to the finger so that it can roll away from your body.
- With outstretched arm and palm facing up, bend at the elbow to a 90 degree angle.
- Throw the yo-yo out and down with a flick of the wrist. The harder the flick, the faster the spin and the more stable the yo-yo.
- As the yo-yo travels down turn your palm face down.
- At the bottom of the throw (as the yo-yo string is fully extended), give a slight tug to get the yo-yo rolling back up the string.

- With a strong, hard throw/flick, there is no need to reach or grasp for the yo-yo. It will return right to your hand.
- As it makes contact with you palm, close your fingers around the yo-yo.
- You are now reset to throw again.

String Tension:

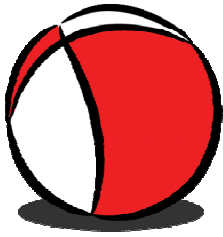
- Repeated throwing of the yo-yo can tighten or loosen the wrap of the string. It is advisable for beginners to periodically let the string hang, fully extended from the yo-yo, to allow the string to untwist and reset to a neutral tightness.

Types of Yo-Yos:

- Yo-yo's with rounded disks are called looping style yo-yos and are best for beginner tricks and looping tricks such *Around the World*.
- Yo-yo disks with flat sides and are best for sleeper tricks (where the yo-yo spins at the bottom of the string) such as *Walk the Dog* and string tricks such as *Rock the Baby*.

Putting it Away: Wind the string back up before putting the yo-yo back in the kit to prevent it from getting tangled with other toys.

Coaching Tips - Juggling



The Basic Cascade Pattern - One Step at a Time: Below are the steps to learn how to juggle three balls along with a few of the common problems that typically come up as people learn. Encourage the teens to observe what is happening with their throws, timing, consistency, etc. Once they pay attention to the immediate feedback juggling gives them, they can make appropriate adjustments. Emphasize to the jugglers that they learn at their own pace and it is okay to review one and two ball juggling when learning the three ball cascade.

One Ball - The Toss:

- Place feet shoulder width apart with knees bent. Take a deep breath.
- Hold ball in palm of hand. Keep elbows at sides and arms parallel to floor.
- Toss ball to other hand – ball should be a little higher than your forehead.
- Catch ball and absorb its fall, as if catching an egg.
- Toss ball from hand to hand in a figure eight pattern.
- Catch on outside and toss up by belly button with an underhand throw.

One Ball Problem Solving:

Shape: A common tendency is to throw the ball in an arc or rainbow shape, but the ball needs to move in a figure eight to allow room for adding the second and third balls.

- **Tips:** Scoop with an underhand throw (not overhand).

Grabbing: Due to nervousness or old habits, teens may reach up and grab the ball.

- **Tips:** Keep arms bent and elbows by sides. Wait for the ball to come down to catch.

Dropping: Jugglers may struggle with catching even with just one ball.

- **Tips:** Take deep breath, bend knees, and relax. Watch the top of the pattern where the balls peak, not the hands. Try throwing higher or lower.

Two Balls - The Exchange:

- Feet shoulder width apart with knees bent. Take a deep breath.
- Toss a ball with one hand. When the ball peaks, toss the second ball underneath it.
- The first few times, do not try to catch the balls. Focus on good throws and let the balls drop to the ground.
- Once throws are consistent heights, practice catching the balls.
- Practice until you can catch them every time. Then practice starting with the other hand.

Two Ball Juggling Tips:

- The balls make an X in the air. No passing across.
- All balls are tossed to the opposite hand.
- Both throws should be the same height, just above the forehead.
- It helps to say *Throw, Throw, Catch, Catch*.
- Wait for the ball to come to you. Do not reach up for the ball.

Two Ball Problem Solving:

X's and O's: If they have tried to teach themselves to juggle in the past, they most likely will throw the balls in a circular pattern with one hand throwing high and the other just passing across. This is the hard way to learn three ball juggling.

- **Tips:** Breaking the habit and retraining the body is tough but doable. Let the balls drop to the ground in order to focus on throws. Start with the non-dominant hand. Slow down throws. Imagine a target in the air above the forehead that both throws have to hit.

Timing: Throwing too slow or too fast will become even more problematic when a third ball is added. It is better to address the problem now. Let the balls drop to the ground and listen to find out whether the timing is good.

- **Too Fast:** If the balls hit the peak of the throw at the same time, the throws are too fast. Slow down! Throw the first ball, wait until it hits the ground, and then throw the second to feel what slow feels like. Count out loud *one-pause-two*. Do this several times and then slowly speed up your throws.
- **Too Slow:** If the exchange is happening close to the hands, the second throw is too slow. Speed up the throws and overcompensate by throwing very fast. Do this several times and then slowly reduce the speed of the throws.

Consistency: Both throws can go the same height, but often the second throw is too low. Start with the other hand to determine if it is typically the second throw or the non-dominant hand.

- **Second Throw:** Count as you throw, but say two louder to emphasize that throw.
- **Non-dominant:** Start with the non-dominant hand. Often times just this focus will improve the throw.

Aim: If one or both of the throws go forward, catching will be a challenge!

- **Tips:** Bend elbows and keep them by your sides. Start with non-dominant hand. Over-compensate by throwing over the opposite shoulder and behind your body.

Three Balls - The Exchange:

- Feet shoulder width apart with knees bent. Take a deep breath.
- Two balls in one hand, one in the other.
- The hand with two balls throws first. In this example let us assume there are two balls in your right hand.
- Throw the first ball from your right hand. When the ball peaks, toss a second ball from your left hand and catch the first ball. This is the exchange that you practiced with two balls.
- As the second ball from your left hand peaks, toss the third ball from your right hand and catch the second ball.
- As the third ball peaks, toss the ball in your left hand.
- Continue to alternately toss a ball under the one falling.

Three Ball Juggling Problem Solving:

Starting with wrong hand: It does not matter if you start with the right or left, you just need to start with the hand holding two balls. No tips one other than remembering this key detail.

Stuck on #3: After practicing two ball juggling for a while, jugglers may have trouble throwing the third ball.

- **Tip:** Count and say three loudly to remind yourself to throw. Practice holding two balls in one hand, throwing one, and then the other to get used to the feeling.

Stuck on #4 or #5: Most jugglers can master three throws pretty quickly when they let the balls drop to the ground. Once they try to catch, you often see stopping.

- **Tips:** Count and say four and five loudly. Do not stop until all balls are on the ground. Do not worry if the first few throws are not perfect. Just keep throwing.

Timing: The most common timing problem with three is the juggler throws them all up too quickly in a panic not realizing that all three then come down at the same time!

- **Tips:** Slow down! Take a deep breath and relax before starting each time. Do not panic. Remember that the pace of the balls is controlled by the juggler's throws.

Walking forward: The most common aim problem with three ball juggling is the walker that ends up on the other side of the room.

- **Tips:** Walk backwards while juggling. Practice throwing all three balls over the opposite shoulder and behind the back. Juggle in front of a wall.

Experimentation: Learning to juggle is very similar to a scientist running an experiment; much of it is trial and error. Teens can use the scientific method as a way to guide problem solving.

Problem: The third throw (my right hand) goes too far to the left for me to catch.

Hypothesis: My right hand panics about trying to catch and throw at the same time.

Experiment: Allow the balls to fall to the ground without trying to catch. If my throw improves, my hypothesis is right.

Observation: The throw improved.

Conclusion: I need to relax when it comes to the third throw and not panic. Take deep breathes, count calmly, or play music to help me relax.

Creating a Routine – One Juggler

Once the teens learn basic juggling skills, they are going to want to show them off. A juggling routine can wow an audience even if it is only made up of basic tricks. The key is to have a clear beginning, middle, and end (comparisons can be made to writing and storytelling). Below are some suggestions. Set it to music or have the teens create sound effects to enhance the routine.

Fancy Starts

- Throw one, two or three balls behind back and begin juggling.
- Roll one ball off head and begin juggling.
- Toss ball under leg and begin juggling.
- Put ball on foot and kick up to begin juggling.

Volunteer Toss-In

- Give one ball to a volunteer.
- Hold one ball in each of your hands.
- Volunteer throws ball to one of your hands.
- Begin juggling.

Other Types of Throws & Catches

- Toss under the leg.
- Toss behind the back.
- Toss over your head.
- Toss and bounce off wall.
- Catch on back of hand.
- Catch on back of neck.
- Toss over your shoulder and catch behind your back without looking (yes...*it is possible*).

Fancy Finishes

- *Under Leg:* Catch final ball under leg.
- *Pirouette:* Toss ball high into air, pirouette, and catch.
- *Hat Trick:* Toss balls high into air and catch in hat.

Beyond the Basic Cascade

- *Over the Top:* Throw one ball over the top of the incoming ball.
- *Half shower:* Throw all balls from one hand over the top of the incoming ball.
- *Tennis:* Throw one ball over the top, back and forth.
- *Reverse Cascade:* All balls are thrown over the top. Throw from the outside of your body and catch on the inside.
- *Under the Arm:* Throw ball under opposite arm and straight up.
- *Under Arm Variations:* Half shower, tennis, every ball under.
- *Two in One Hand:* Inside circles, outside circles, side by side.

Creating a Routine – Multiple Jugglers

There are lots of fun ways to choreograph a routine for multiple jugglers. We recommend music that has clear changes so the jugglers do not have to actually count the beats. Try having parts of the song that the jugglers do in unison – maybe they all walk out while juggling a cascade pattern. Then have parts of the song where the individual jugglers can show off their own series of tricks. Below are ways in which multiple jugglers can actually juggle together in one pattern. Obviously, the most important aspect of a good performance is *practice, practice, practice!*

Partner Juggling

- Stand side-by-side, shoulder to shoulder.
- Person on right uses right hand.
- Person on left uses left hand.
- Person with two balls throws first.
- Each person tosses ball in turn under incoming ball.
- Keep three ball pattern going; each person using one hand.

Steals: *Important Safety note for steals* - The ball should be scooped from side, not reached for head on. Balls sometimes bounce off hand and can hit juggler in face.

Method 1: The Steal & Return

The Steal

- Juggler with a consistent pattern juggles.
- Stealer takes one ball from juggling pattern as ball reaches top of arc.
- Juggler maintains a three ball juggling pattern with an imaginary third ball.

The Return:

- Stealer holds ball above hand the ball will be returned to.
- Watch for hand to make two throws in a row.
- Drop ball immediately after second throw.

Method 2:

- Stealer takes all three balls and continues the cascade pattern without stopping the pattern.
- The original juggler will be left standing without any juggling balls.
- Balls can then be stolen back in the same way.

Passing

- Two partners with similar juggling skills stand facing each other a few feet apart.
- Each partner starts with two balls in right hand.
- Partners start at the same time by saying *up, down*.
 - On *up*, partners raise arms to chest height.
 - On *down*, partners drop arms to waist level.
 - In time, partners begin the first throw of juggling.
- Partners count only right hand throws.
- On every third throw, partners pass ball from right hand to partner's left. It might help to speak the pattern: *self, self, pass, self, self, pass...*
- Variations:
 - Fast Start*: First throw is a pass to partner.
 - Every Others*: Every second right hand throw is a pass to partner.
 - Every One*: Every right hand throw is a pass to partner.
 - Ultimates*: Every right and left hand throw is a pass to partner (no self throws).

DIY Kendama aka "Fundama"

Materials needed:

- 3oz paper cup (1)
- String (12-14 inches in length)
- Masking Tape
- Scissors
- Popsicle stick (optional)



Steps:

- Use scissors to cut string (12-14 inches)
- Tear off about 3 feet of masking tape and crumple into a ball
- Wrap another piece of masking tape around the ball so that the exterior is not sticky
- Attach one end of your string to the ball with another piece of masking tape; make sure the string is attached securely so it doesn't come apart while playing
- Tape the other end of the string on the side of the cup near the brim; the tape won't go on smoothly because of the shape of the cup – don't worry if you have bumps in the tape
- *Optional Step:* Tape a popsicle stick to the side of the cup near the bottom

Alternative Materials: *(these are just suggestions – there's really no limit to what you can use)*

- Different colored masking tapes
- Yarn
- Silly straws
- Pipe cleaners
- Paper towel holders

Games:

- **Ten:** Each player has 10 tries to get the ball in the cup and they count how many times they are successful.
- **Imagination:** Each player has to try to come up with a creative move to get the ball in the cup (they can sit down, stand up, jump, swing, or other motions).
- **How does the Tama Feel?** Tama is a Japanese word for ball. You can have one child create a gesture with the Fundama and a word about the gesture. For example, "the tama is dizzy" could describe swinging the tama around in a few circles and then catching in the cup. The second person to go might say, "the tama is dizzy and sleepy." While saying this they might swing the tama in a few circles like the first person and then let the tama fall out and hang straight down. Each person adds a gesture to create a story about the tama.

Extension Activities:

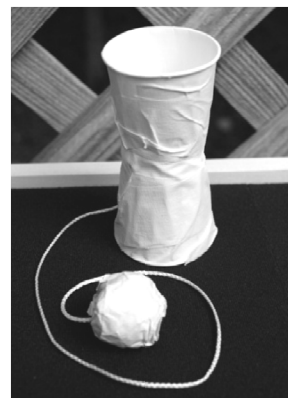
- Use magic markers, tinsel, finger paints, stickers, or other items to decorate the cups. Decorations can connect to a particular theme or story.
- Have teens be your assistants for this activity with younger kids. Your teens could do a mini-performance of their skills with the more challenging Fundama and then teach the younger ones how to make the Basic.

- **Design your own Fundama:** Multiple cups and sticks can be attached in creative ways to develop new versions of the toy. Below are a few we've come up with. Challenge your teens to design, name, master, teach, and do a commercial for their own creation.

Other Versions of Fundama

Freestyle:

- Use a loop of masking tape to attach the bottoms of 2 paper cups
- Now use long pieces of masking tape to wrap the sides of the 2 cups so that they are securely attached to one another; the tape won't go on smoothly because of the shape of the cup – don't worry if you have bumps in the tape
- Tape the end of string that doesn't have the ball to the middle of your Fundama (where the 2 bottoms were attached) so that the string is equal distance from both cups; use several pieces of tape to secure it in place



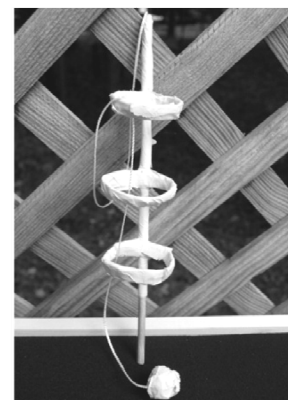
The Six:

- Place one cup face down and the other 5 face up in a circle around the one that's face down
- Attach the 6 cups together by taking the pre-cut tape and wrapping it around the sides of the six cups.
- Further secure the cups in place by using smaller pieces of tape (about 3 inches) from the inside of one cup over the brim and into the inside of the neighboring cup
- It will look misshapen at first but as you add more tape, the toy takes form
- Tape the end of the string that doesn't have the ball to the center of the six which is the bottom of the one cup that is upside down
- Use several pieces of tape to secure the string in place
- Use marker to write the numbers 1-6 inside the cups; 1-5 on the face up cups and then flip it over to write 6 inside the center cup.



The Ladder:

- Flatten a cup and cut off the top rim of the cup (about ½ in); do this with all 3 cups
- Wrap tape around each ring to strengthen them (may be helpful to have 2-3 inch pieces of tape pre cut to make this part go a little more quickly)
- Tape the first ring near the top of the dowel; use several pieces of tape to secure the ring in place
- Attach the 2nd and 3rd rings with approximately 2 inches between each ring using several pieces of tape
- Tape the end of the string that doesn't have the ball to the top of the dowel



DIY Flower Sticks

Materials needed:

- 24" dowel with a 5/8" diameter
- Two 20" dowels with a 1/2" diameter
- Two 24"x4" pieces of vinyl, leather, suede, or other thick fabric (paper grocery bags would work too)
- Double sided tape
- Electrical tape
- Athletic tape
- Four screws with a 1/4" length

The following tools will also be needed and should be used by an adult or under adult supervision

- Drill with small drill bit
- Handsaw, tape measure, & pencil
- Scissors
- Screwdriver

Procedure – Center Stick:

1. Have the 5/8" dowel pre-cut when you purchase it. Or use tape measure and pencil to mark 24" and cut with handsaw.
2. Place the thick material in front of you horizontally with the finished side face down. Measure 1" from the top (or 3" from the bottom) and draw a line. Now use the scissors to cut strips into the material. Cut from the bottom up to the line so that the strips are 3" long and about 1/2" wide (leave the 1" area above the line uncut).
3. Take the 24" dowel and use the drill to put two starter holes at the end of the dowel. The starter holes should be placed next to each other along the side of the dowel.
4. Wrap the end of the dowel (where you just put the starter holes) with 1-2 layers of athletic tape to prevent the wood from splitting. Mark your starter holes by poking a pencil tips through the tape and into the hole.
5. Repeat steps 3-4 at the other end of the dowel.
6. Attach the electrical tape at one end of the dowel and let the roll hang from the dowel. Give the roll of tape a spin so the unrolled part gets twisted up. Now roll this twisted tape around the dowel at an angle with about an inch between each spiral (like the stripe on a candy cane). The electrical tape should look and feel bumpy.
7. Wrap the athletic tape around the dowel on top of the electrical tape. As you wrap this tape have each layer overlap the previous one about 1/2".
8. Take one end of the dowel and place it on the fabric so that the dowel rests at on the uncut part at one end of the fabric.
9. Roll the fabric over the two starter holes. Push 2 screws through the fabric into the starter holes and use a screwdriver to secure one end of the fabric in place.
10. Place long strips of double sided tape along the uncut part of the fabric and roll the fabric around the end of the dowel. Wrap it so the fabric rolls tightly and evenly.
11. Use athletic or decorative tape around the base of the fabric to secure it in place.
12. Repeat steps 8-11 on the other end of the dowel.

Procedure: Hand Sticks

1. Have the ½" dowels pre-cut when you purchase it. Or use tape measure and pencil to mark 20" and cut with handsaw.
2. Wrap both dowels in fabric tape for extra grip.
3. Add decorative tape to the ends to add your own personal style.

DIY Juggling Balls

Materials needed:

- 3-4 Round Balloons Per Juggling Ball (9 inch work best)
- Bird Seed or Popcorn Kernels – 1/3 Cup Per Juggling Ball
- Measuring Cup
- Empty Plastic Bottle (500 ml)
- Funnel
- Scissors

Procedure:

1. Measure out 1/2 cup of the filler you are using.
2. Use the funnel to pour the filler from the measuring cup into the clean, dry bottle.
3. Blow up the balloon about halfway; twist but do not knot the neck of the balloon.
4. Stretch the mouth of the balloon over the mouth of the bottle and then let the neck untwist.
5. Hold the mouth of the balloon so that it does not slip off the bottle and then tip the bottle so the filler goes into the balloon.
6. Take the balloon off the bottle and let the remaining air escape from the balloon.
7. Cut off the mouth of the balloon leaving most of the neck.
8. Take a 2nd balloon – do not inflate or fill.
9. Using your fingers, stretch the 2nd balloon over the first so that the opening on the 1st is covered. Stretch the mouth and neck away and cut them off close to the body being careful not to cut the first balloon
10. Repeat step 9 with a 3rd balloon. If you want extra strength you can add a 4th balloon. For juggling balls that are all 1 color, be sure that the last 2 balloons you use are the same color.
11. Put this ball aside and do steps 1-10 two more times so you can have 3 juggling balls!

Goal Setting Lesson Plan

Sample 60 Minute Session: Below is one way to break down an hour session with your group if they have already had some basic instruction, but are still relatively new to skill toys. It should be adapted to the skill level of your teens.

Sample 60 Minute Session – Goal Setting	
10 min	Warm Up Session: Allow your teens to come in, pick up the toys, and start practicing. We find that they are often anxious to get their hands on the props so giving them an unstructured warm up allows them to get into the mode and get some energy out. It also allows for late arrivals and taking care of other logistical issues you might have.
5 min	Goal Setting Introduction: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have teens think about their goal for each prop and share what they are excited to work on during the session.• Discuss the importance of setting achievable goals.
40 min	Stations: Set the props up in 5 stations around the room so that each station contains one of the props. Have the teens count off into 5 different groups (or you can pre-pick the groups to balance personalities, skill level, or to mix up usual groupings). Every 7 minutes rotate the groups between the stations. The time allotted includes transition time.
5 min	Wrap Up: Ask teens to reflect on whether they moved closer to or achieved the goal they had set for themselves. What else do they need to do to achieve it in the future (i.e. watch the instructional video, practice, etc)? What obstacles are they facing? If they met their goal, what is the next trick they want to learn?

Tips:

- Play music during the practice sessions at each station. When you stop the music, the teens will know it is time to switch stations.
- Before they move to the next station, pause and glance at the props in each station to make sure they are neatly stacked/organized before instructing the teens to switch to the next station. Pay particular attention to the props with string (kendama and diabolo) to make sure they are not all tangled up (have kids review the care and usage video if needed).
- Depending on the technology available, you may want to have a station with instructional videos cued up in case the teens want to review instruction on a particular trick. They would not have to rotate through this station, but they can visit it as needed during the session.

Other Session Ideas

Trick of the Week/Month: Once you have most of your teens mastering the basics, you will want to challenge them to keep improving their skills. You could announce the trick of the upcoming month/week at one meeting and see how many have it mastered by the next meeting. A variation on this would be to have a teen sign up to do the *Trick of the Week/Month* for each session. They will have to learn a new trick, demonstrate it, and then teach it to the group. Teens can use the books and on-line resources at the library to discover new tricks.

Everyday Objects: The skills they are practicing such as balancing, tossing and catching, and spinning can be practiced with everyday objects found in their homes. Hats, balls, trays, books, and pens can provide hours of fun. Set up stations with these or other objects and have them rotate around to try each one. Remind them that they should not use breakable objects like mom's favorite dish!

- **Hat Tricks:** Roll it, spin it, flip it, balance it, or juggle more than one.
- **Pen spinning:** Take an ordinary pen and spin it around your fingers. More advanced tricks include *Thumb Around*, *Finger Pass*, and *Sonic Infinity*.
- **Dice Stacking:** Sweep several die under a cup moving back and forth and then stop the motion suddenly. Lift the cup and see how many dice are stacked up.
- **Tennis Balls & Can:** Toss and catch one or more tennis balls with the tennis ball canister. Balls can be caught inside or on the bottom of the can or flipped out of the can. The can itself can be flipped and caught along with the balls.
- **Ball Spinning:** Most basketball players have learned this skill when they had time to kill during practice. It can also be done with playground balls of similar size or beach balls. Throw the ball into the air and catch it on one finger. As it slows, use your free hand to give the spin some extra momentum.
- **Padiddling:** Keeping a flat object like a book or a lunch tray spinning requires a different motion which is called padiddling. The finger balancing the item being spun needs to move in a small circle to give the flat object momentum to spin.
- **Balancing:** Items both large and small can be balanced on a finger, hand, elbow, or other body part. Peacock feathers, yard sticks, brooms are common objects. One tip for success is to watch the top of the item you are balancing.

Vaudeville Nights: Step back in time by hosting movie nights featuring Vaudeville stars such as Charlie Chaplin, Buster Keaton, or W.C. Fields. For an overview of Vaudeville, the American Masters film *Vaudeville* features more than eighty original acts. Have teens play with the skill toys, watch a movie, and then discuss the different skills/characters in the movie.

Circus Nights: Movie nights can also feature films with circus related themes. Many Cirque du Soleil shows are available to watch on DVD and highlight the creative heights of skill toys. PBS produced a six part documentary on the Big Apple Circus called CIRCUS. Teens may not want to watch all six hours, but you can find episodes on the PBS website (pbs.org/show/circus). For a classic movie experience, show Cecil B. DeMille's *The Greatest Show on Earth*, a 1952 movie about the Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus. *The Butterfly Circus* is a powerful short film about a Depression era travelling circus (thebutterflycircus.com).

Toy Hall of Fame: Have teens select and research toys already inducted into the National Toy Hall of Fame (toyhalloffame.org) such as the yo-yo or hula hoop. First have them decide whether they think the toy fits into the genre of skill toys. They should be able to explain to fellow teens why or why not. You can then have them decide whether any of the skill toys they have been practicing deserve to be in the Toy Hall of Fame. The site actually has a place where toys can be nominated. Teams of teens can be formed to launch campaigns on behalf of the different skill toys.

Toys/Games from Around the World: As mentioned previously, the skill toys the teens are using have rich histories that span centuries and continents. Have teens learn more about the toys they are using and then send them out into the library to find information about other toys or games from different countries. You can assign them different countries or continents and see what they find. They should present the information to the group by showing pictures from books or you can have them try to create their own DIY version of it to share.

Book Talks: In addition to movies, sessions can also incorporate book talks about related books such as:

- *Grounded for Good* by Dawn Daria
- *Sir Charlie: Chaplin, The Funniest Man in the World* by Sid Fleischman
- *Freaks: Alive on the Inside* by Annette Curtis Klaus
- *The Great and Only Barnum: The Tremendous, Stupendous Life of Showman P.T. Barnum* by Candace Fleming

Or other books related to juggling, circus, or Vaudeville. Questions can focus on how the main characters used skills for the benefit of themselves or others. Teens can also discuss what the main characters might have sacrificed in pursuit of these skills. Themes such as fitting in/standing out and influence of adults or peers can be addressed too.

Video Contests: Challenge the teens to use their skills to create videos. Below are a few suggestions for different types of videos.

- **Book Trailers:** They can pick a book like *Catherine, Called Birdy* set in the Middle Ages that mentions jugglers or books about Vaudeville such as *Sir Charlie: Chaplin, The Funniest Man in the World*. Skill Toys can also be used as a metaphor for some aspect of a story or to illustrate themes such as perseverance.
- **Music Video:** Pick a few pieces of royalty free music from sources such as incompetech.com and then have performers choreograph juggling routines to music.
- **Commercials:** Have students create a thirty or sixty second commercial for your organization, teen programs, Summer Reading Program, or the benefits of skill toys. Teens have fun with this video prompt, and it gives them practice formulating and communicating a message. Not to mention, you end up with videos you can use for promotion.

Videos can be done individually or in groups depending on what works best for your community. If you frame it as a video contest, let them know ahead of time what the judging criteria will be. Below are criteria that we have used in the past.

- **Creativity:** Group uses the juggling props in a unique and creative way to accomplish the goal.

- **Skill:** Although you do not want to base it solely on skill, you do still want to see teens show some level of proficiency. You can be specific here and say that you want to see a certain number of tricks or you can keep it general depending on the level of skill in your group.
- **Number of Views:** This measure is optional depending on your goals and the service you use for viewing videos. If you use a site like YouTube, you can easily incorporate the number of views. Again, you do not want to base it solely on views because then it becomes a popularity contest, but think about the value of having teens encouraging other teens to watch videos highlighting your organization.

Skill Toy Kit 60 Second Challenges: These challenges can be done individually or in teams.

- **Tower of Toys:** Teams compete one at a time to create the tallest tower of toys using any and all props in the kit. Teams will have to get creative as they try to balance all of the different shaped props into a tall sculpture that will stay intact. At the end of the minute, measure to the highest point of the sculpture.
- **Flower Balance:** One person holds one hand stick with one hand while the team works to get all 4 flower sticks balanced. At the end of a minute, the team that has the most flower sticks balanced wins.
- **Stick Relay:** Holding one hand stick, balance a second hand stick and walk across the room to a teammate. The teammate takes the hand stick and walks back across the room without dropping the balanced one. The most number of laps completed in a minute without dropping wins. If the stick drops, the team starts over.
- **Plate Relay:** One team member gets a plate balanced on a stick (it does not have to be spinning), and walks it across the room to pass it to a teammate. To add a little challenge, the teammate should have his own stick and the plate should pass from the tip of one stick to the tip of the other. The most number of laps completed in a minute without dropping wins. If the plate drops, the team starts over.
- **Kendama Relay:** One team member holds the ball of the kendama so that the stick is balanced on top of it (bottom cup rests on top of the ball). He walks with it balanced and then passes it to a team mate without having the kendama fall off the ball. The most number of laps completed in a minute without dropping wins. If the kendama slides off, the team starts over.
- **Stick Pass:** Teammates stand in a line each holding one hand stick. The first person in the line balances the flower stick and then passes to the next person in line from stick to stick. Once the flower stick has been passed, the first person in line can run to the end of the line to keep the stick moving longer, but if it drops he has to get back to the front of the line to start over. The team with the most number of passes in a minute wins.
- **Human Tower of Toys:** One person is the sculpture and the team works together to see how many props can be balanced by/on the sculpture. The team gets points for plates balanced on sticks, kendama sticks balanced on the ball, flower sticks balanced on one hand stick, and diabolos balanced on a hand stick. They can try to go for one of each prop or multiples of some to get the most points.

Skill Toy Bingo: The following version of bingo encourages teens to learn new skills in a fun way. You could have tiered prizes for row of five, around the world, and/or full card.

B	I	N	G	O
Flower Sticks: Tick Tock for 1 minute	Diabolo: Spin on string for 1 minute	Kendama: Side cup to side cup	Spinning Plate: Toss and catch	YoYo: Around the world
Kendama: Bottom cup to side cup & back to bottom cup	Flower Sticks: Propeller for 5 seconds	Spinning Plate: Balance on finger for 30 seconds	Hand sack: The flow	Diabolo: Toss & catch
Spinning Plate: Start hanging on stick & get spinning flat	Hand Sack: Chicken wing	Free Space	Flower Sticks: Helicopter	Kendama: Catch ball on peg
Diabolo: Over the arm	Spinning Plate: Balance on chin for 15 seconds	YoYo: Walk the dog	Kendama: Catch stick on ball & balance	Flower Sticks: Double flip & catch
Yoyo: Rock the baby	Kendama: Catch on side cup	Flower Sticks: Cat scan	Diabolo: Over the foot	Spinning Plate: Toss & catch on opposite end of stick

Library Outreach

Create an Exhibition: Teens can engage the rest of the library community and share their new interest by creating a skill toy exhibition for an area in your library. They can combine props with books about juggling, skill toys, circus, and/or Vaudeville for an informational and colorful display. Create teams to handle different aspects of the research, writing of wall text, and design of the exhibition that can explain the history, science, or mathematics related to skill toys. This is a fun and easy way to start to engage the larger community.

Warm-Up Act: As your jugglers become more skilled and develop routines, think about adding them to your regularly scheduled programs. They can be a warm-up act for professional performers or they can be performing in the lobby as families come in to see a performance.

Festivals & Special Events: If your organization hosts special events like a Harvest Festival or Spring Fling, jugglers will add a fun and festive atmosphere. They can stroll to add ambiance or they can set up a play station to teach skill toys to families attending the event.

Statue Gallery: Your teens can also use their skills to fundraise for your organization. The statue gallery is a fun way to solicit donations. The teens stand frozen in a lobby with a donation box in front of them. When someone comes by and puts in a donation, the statues come to life and perform for one minute. The teens can assemble fun costumes or characters to add to the fun. Signs in front of them can say: *These statues will come to life and amaze you when you contribute to the donation box. All proceeds benefit the Friends of the Library.*

Teens Teach: Once the teens start performing for the community, you will probably find adults that express an interest in learning to use the props. The truth is that no matter what age, we all need an opportunity to play. Why not have the teens host a skill toy workshop for the adults. The teens get to take on a leadership role and the adults get to learn a new skill. Everybody wins. Have the teens decide which instructional videos to show and determine the roles that they each will play during the workshop. You can have committees such as:

- *Instruction team:* Give directions about how to stand, key things to remember at each step of the learning process, etc.
- *Production team:* Prep the music and videos.
- *Marketing team:* Make signs and create other ways to advertise the program.
- *Feedback team:* Help learners problem solve.
- *Performance team:* Kick off the workshop with a mini-performance to show off the benefits of practice.

Breaking into smaller groups and having specific tasks will help make the experience more successful for you and the teens.

Community Outreach

Community Service: Have teens provide entertainment for local hospitals, day cares, or senior centers. Have them work in small groups to develop a few different routines that can be combined for a fun show. Or they can play traveling minstrels going from room to room bringing a few minutes of playfulness and fun to smaller audiences. This can also be done in committees so that less accomplished performers can participate by calling around to local facilities to plan a visit, making cards that can be delivered by the performers, or writing press releases for local newspapers about the visits.

Representing the Organization: Does your community host parades or other community events? Think of the attention your float or booth would get if there are jugglers entertaining the crowds. Whether you create a Medieval or Vaudeville themed float or just use the performers as buskers to attract people to your table, they will leave a lasting impression.

Talent Variety Show: Once your teens have gained some performance experience and have developed routines, they can host a talent show or Vaudeville night for teens throughout the community. The talents do not have to be limited to skill toys, but instead should have a variety of talents represented. You can have your teens look at old Vaudeville playbills at the Library of Congress (memory.loc.gov/ammem/vshtml) or watch the PBS American Masters production *Vaudeville* to learn more about how shows were put together. It is a wonderful way to let your teens showcase new talents, but also to attract new groups of teens to your organization.

Regional Systems: You may be part of a regional system or want to expose your teens to experiences beyond your own community. Skill toys can be used as a common ground between teens in different communities. If your sites are close enough, you can coordinate skill toy meet ups. We have seen jugglers from very different backgrounds immediately engage and start passing juggling balls and showing each other skill toy tricks within minutes of meeting. The distance between locations may be too far, in which case on-line video contests or skyping can be a fun alternative. It gives teens an opportunity to see new tricks and creative ways to incorporate skill toys into a routine.

Mentor Program: You may have resources in your community that you have not been able to tap into yet. First, check the Internet to see if there is a juggling club that meets in your area. Your teens may want to attend the meetings or you may be able to get some of the club members to come to your site to help mentor your jugglers. If there is no club in your area, check with a local college. Many education majors need contact hours with students and this would be a fun way for them to fulfill those hours. Other college students may need community service hours or may just juggle as a hobby. Take advantage of resources like these to help you with running club sessions and give the teens an opportunity to work with college students or other adults in your community.

Reading List & On-line Resources

Juggling, Skill Toys, Circus, Vaudeville

Non-fiction – Juggling:

- *Juggling for the Complete Klutz* - John Cassidy and B. C. Rimbeaux
- *The Complete Juggler* – Dave Finnigan
- *Beyond the Cascade* – George Gillson (basic to advanced tricks)
- *The Encyclopedia of Ball Juggling* – Charlie Dancey
- *Compendium of Club Juggling* – Charlie Dancey
- *Club Passing* – Brendan Brolly, Simon Schofield, & Jonny Poper
- *Club Swinging* – W. J. Schatz
- *Contact Juggling* – James Ernest
- *Circus Techniques: Juggling, Equilibristics, Vaulting* – Hovey Burgess
- *The Mathematics of Juggling* – Burkward Polster

Non-fiction – Skill Toys/Games from Around the World:

- *Play with Us: 100 Games from Around the World* - Oriol Ripoll
- *Kids Around the World Play!: The Best Fun & Games from Many Lands* – Arlette N. Brackman
- *Juguetes: A Photo-documentary of Toys and Games from the Dominican Republic* – Jaime Jimenez
- *The Diabolo From A to Z* – Mister Babache
- *The Juggler's Manual of Cigar Box Manipulation and Balance* – Reginald W. Bacon
- *Devil Stick Book* – Todd Strong
- *The Diabolo Book* – Todd Strong
- *Manipulative Miscellanea* – Reginald W. Bacon (hat tricks, balances, misc)
- *Poi Spinning* – Michal Kahn
- *Will Rogers Rope Tricks* - Frank Dean
- *How To Trick Rope* – Clare Johnson
- *How to Ride Your Unicycle* – Charlie Dancey
- *Indian Clubs* – Alice Hoffman

Non-Fiction - Positive Psychology and Wellbeing:

- *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* - Carol Dweck
- *Play: How It Shapes the Brain, Opens the Imagination and Invigorates the Soul* - Stuart Brown
- *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience* - Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi
- *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* - Howard Gardner
- *Mindfulness* - Ellen Langer
- *The Upside of Stress: Why Stress is Good for You and How to Get Good at It* - Kelly McGonigal
- *Thrive: The Third Metric to Redefining Success and Creating a Life of Well-Being, Wisdom, and Wonder* - Arianna Huffington
- *Why We Do What We Do: Understanding Self Motivation* - Edward L. Deci
- *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead* - Brene Brown

Non-fiction – Performance/History:

- *Mime Spoken Here: The Performers Portable Workshop* – Tony & Karen Montanaro
- *Passing the Hat* – Patricia Campbell
- *Be a Clown!: The Complete Guide to Instant Clowning* – Turk Pipkin
- *No Applause – Just Throw Money: The Book That Made Vaudeville Famous* – Trav S.D.
- *American Vaudeville: As Seen By Its Contemporaries*– Charles W. Stein

YA Non-fiction – Biography:

- *Sir Charlie: Chaplin, The Funniest Man in the World* – Sid Fleischman
- *Escape!: The Story of the Great Houdini* – Sid Fleischman
- *The Great and Only Barnum: The Tremendous, Stupendous Life of Showman P.T. Barnum* – Candace Fleming

YA Fiction:

- *Freaks: Alive, on the Inside!* – Annette Curtis Klause
- *Selling Hope* – Kristin O'Donnell Tubb
- *Catherine, Called Birdy* – Karen Cushman
- *Grounded for Good* - Dawn Daria

Other Websites:

- *The American Variety Stage: Vaudeville and Popular Entertainment, 1870-1920* (Library of Congress Exhibition): <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/vshtml/vsintro.html>
- *Circus* (PBS Documentary): <http://www.pbs.org/show/circus/>
- *Toy Hall of Fame*: <http://www.toyhalloffame.org/>
- Instructional & DIY Videos: <http://flowcircus.com/videos>

Flow Circus Skill Toy Kit Inventory Sheet

4 sets	Flower Sticks		Set: (1) flower stick and (2) rubber coated handsticks
4 sets	Diabolo		Set: (1) diabolo and (2) handsticks with string Wrap string around handsticks. Slide end between sticks to hold in place.
4	Kendama		Wrap string around handle. Near end stretch string and slide ball on pin.
10 sets	Spinning Plates		Set: (1) spinning plate and (1) handstick
2	YoYo - Imperial		Wind the string around the yoyo. *better for looping tricks
2	YoYo - Butterfly		Wind the string around the yoyo. *better for string tricks
24	Flop Balls		View tricks at Flopball.com
6	Juggling Balls		

**Instructional & DIY videos at
FlowCircus.com/videos**