

EYFS - Intro to Racket Skills

Lesson Plan

PLAYING
EDSTART

Lesson Objective To be able to hold a tennis racket correctly and be able to balance a ball on their racket. **Lesson 1/6**

Equipment Needed Tennis rackets, tennis ball, cones, markers, bean bags, sponge tennis balls, hoops.

Success Criteria Children can:

- know what hand they will mostly hold their racket in and be able to hold racket at the bottom of the grip.
- know where they need to hold their racket in relation to the body.

EDSTART KNOW

- I can say how to hold my racket.
- I can tell which hand I use.
- I can say what balance means.

EDSTART GO

- I can hold my racket the right way.
- I can balance a ball on my racket.
- I can play small games.

EDSTART SHOW

- I can wait my turn.
- can smile when friends play.
- I can clap when my team does well.

Warm Up **RACKET RESCUE:** Ask the children to carefully place their rackets on the floor, spaced out around the room. They move around the space using different movements — walking, skipping, tiptoeing, and jumping — making sure not to touch any rackets. When the coach shouts “Rescue your racket!”, the children must quickly find the nearest racket, pick it up, and hold it like they are shaking hands with it. Encourage big smiles and praise good grip. PROGRESSION: Add fun instructions — “swap rackets with a friend!” or “find a racket with a red handle!”
EYFS Link: Physical Development (spatial awareness, coordination, fine motor skills), Communication & Language (listening and following instructions), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (sharing and confidence).

Main Activity **HANDSHAKE HEROES:** Demonstrate how to hold the racket — “like shaking hands with a new friend.” Children practise picking up and putting down their rackets several times, checking their “friendly grip.” Walk around to help each child and praise effort. PROGRESSION: Challenge children to balance the ball on their racket while standing still.
EYFS Link: Physical Development (fine motor control), Communication & Language (understanding vocabulary and instructions), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (confidence through mastery).



BALANCING BALLS: In small groups, give each child a racket and a ball. Children balance the ball on their racket and walk carefully to their teammate before handing it over. Encourage them to move slowly and keep eyes on the ball! PROGRESSION: Try walking faster or weaving through cones.

EYFS Link: Physical Development (balance, control, hand-eye coordination), Mathematics (sequencing turns), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (teamwork and patience).

MOUSE ON THE HOUSE: The ball is the “mouse” and the racket is the “house.”
“Walk the mouse” — move slowly around balancing the ball.
“Bounce the mouse” — let the ball drop and hit it gently back up.
“Mouse trap!” — squash the ball softly under the racket.
Children copy each instruction with excitement and focus on control. PROGRESSION: Add “Sneaky Mouse!” — balance while moving sideways or backwards.
EYFS Link: Physical Development (control and coordination), Understanding the World (using imagination and story play), Communication & Language (listening for key words).

TAP-UP TENNIS: Give each child a racket and ball. Can they gently tap the ball up into the air without it rolling away? Encourage counting their taps — “1, 2, 3...” Can you beat your score? In pairs, children take turns to keep the ball bouncing between them. PROGRESSION: Allow one bounce between each hit or challenge children to move while tapping.

EYFS Link: Physical Development (hand-eye coordination, timing), Mathematics (counting and comparing), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (sharing and celebrating success).

Adapted Learning (Differentiation) (Challenge)	SPACE	TASK	EQUIPMENT	PEOPLE
	Big running areas first, smaller later.	Start with holding only, then balancing while moving.	Rackets, sponge balls, cones.	Alone first, then pairs and groups.

Cooldown **SLEEPY TENNIS BALL:** Children sit or lie on the floor with their racket beside them. Ask them to close their eyes and take deep breaths while pretending their ball is falling asleep after a long game. Slowly stretch their arms high (like reaching for a serve), then relax them down. PROGRESSION: Add gentle rolling of the ball on the racket while sitting to calm down.
EYFS Link: Physical Development (relaxation and control), Communication & Language (listening to calm instructions), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (emotional regulation and calm reflection).

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Lesson Objective	To be able to keep the tennis ball off the floor by bouncing it on their racket.	Lesson 2/6
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Equipment Needed	Cones, hoops, balloons, markers, beach ball, bean bag, tennis ball, pompom balls, spiky ball, tennis rackets, cricket bats.
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Success Criteria	Children can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">watch the ball and follow it with their racket.control the racket, keep it flat and move it smoothly.bounce the ball at waist height and hit it into the air.
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EDSTART KNOW	EDSTART GO	EDSTART SHOW
<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can say how to keep the ball up.I can tell why I watch the ball.I can say why my racket must stay flat.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can bounce a ball on my racket.I can hit the ball at waist height.I can play small games.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can try my best when counting bounces.I can cheer when others try.I can play kindly in my group.

Warm Up	DOCTOR HEALTHY: Split the class into four teams and scatter coloured cones across the space — each colour represents a food. Explain that the doctor wants to make sure everyone is eating healthy foods! One child from each team runs out, picks up a cone, and brings it back. Healthy foods (apple, banana, strawberry) are worth 2 points, and unhealthy ones (ice cream, sweets) are worth 1 point. The team with the highest score wins! Encourage excitement and cheer for all teams. PROGRESSION: Add a fitness task (e.g., 3 star jumps) before picking up the next cone. EYFS Link: Physical Development (agility, balance, coordination), Understanding the World (healthy choices), Mathematics (counting and scoring), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (teamwork and fairness).
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Main Activity	RACKET BUDDIES: In pairs, one child has a racket and the other is the feeder. The feeder gently throws the ball to their partner's forehead and backhand sides. The player lets it bounce once and returns it. Swap roles after a few turns. Encourage watching the ball closely and swinging gently. PROGRESSION: Try hitting the ball before it bounces to improve reaction speed. EYFS Link: Physical Development (coordination, reaction, control), Communication & Language (listening and responding), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (sharing roles and encouragement).
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	BALANCING RALLY: In small groups, children balance the ball on their racket and walk to a partner before handing it over carefully. This develops focus and steady movement. PROGRESSION: Add small cones or obstacles to move around before handing the ball off. EYFS Link: Physical Development (fine motor control, balance), Mathematics (sequencing turns), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (team collaboration and encouragement).
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	 MOUSE ADVENTURE: The ball is the "mouse" and the racket is the "house." Children balance the mouse on the racket ("walk the mouse"), let it bounce and tap it back up ("bounce the mouse"), and gently squash it ("mouse trap"). Encourage imagination and gentle movements. PROGRESSION: Add "sneaky mouse" — balancing while turning in a circle or walking backwards. EYFS Link: Physical Development (control and stability), Expressive Arts & Design (imaginative play), Communication & Language (understanding themed instructions).
	BUBBLE TAP TENNIS: Each child taps the ball gently up on the racket, counting their taps aloud. "Can you keep it up like a bubble without popping it?" Emphasise gentle, controlled movements. In pairs, children take turns keeping the rally going. PROGRESSION: Add a "bounce once" rule between taps or ask children to move around while tapping. EYFS Link: Physical Development (hand-eye coordination), Mathematics (counting sequences), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (perseverance and turn-taking).

Adapted Learning (Differentiation) (Challenge)	SPACE Large hall first, smaller courts later.	TASK One bounce first, then continuous bounces.	EQUIPMENT Rackets, balloons, beach balls, tennis balls.	PEOPLE Alone first, then pairs and groups.
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Cooldown	MAGIC RACKET RELAX: Children lie on their backs holding their racket on their tummy. Take slow breaths — in through the nose, out through the mouth — watching the racket rise and fall like a magic lift. Ask them to share what they enjoyed most and what made them proud. PROGRESSION: Add a partner reflection — each child tells a friend one thing they did well. EYFS Link: Physical Development (relaxation and body awareness), Communication & Language (expressing ideas), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (confidence and self-recognition).
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EYFS - Intro to Racket Skills

Lesson Plan

PLAYING
EDSTART

Lesson Objective To be able to hold a racket and make contact with the ball from a self-feed. **Lesson 3/6**

Equipment Needed Tennis rackets, tennis ball, cones, markers, bean bags, sponge tennis balls, hoops.

Success Criteria Children can:

- hold the variety of rackets / bats safely and can contact a ball.
- feed a ball to them and be able to contact it.

EDSTART KNOW

- I can say how to drop the ball.
- I can tell how to swing the racket.
- I can say what a target is.

EDSTART GO

- I can drop and hit the ball myself.
- I can hit to my partner in Tennis.
- I can small games.

EDSTART SHOW

- I can share equipment with my friend.
- I can clap when others score.
- I can smile when I try.

Warm Up

BALANCING RALLY: Split the class into small groups (no more than four). Give each child a racket and a ball. Children balance the ball on their racket and move carefully around the space, walking to their teammate before gently handing the ball and racket over. Encourage control, slow movement, and keeping eyes on the ball. **PROGRESSION:** Add cones or obstacles to weave around, or challenge children to move faster without dropping the ball.

EYFS Link: Physical Development (balance, coordination, control), Communication & Language (listening and following instructions), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (confidence and teamwork).

Main Activity

RACKET PARTNERS: In pairs, one child holds a racket and the other feeds the ball underarm. The player lets it bounce once and gently hits it back. Alternate forehand and backhand sides, then swap roles. Focus on watching the ball, holding the racket correctly, and gentle control. **PROGRESSION:** Try hitting the ball without letting it bounce or increase distance between partners.

EYFS Link: Physical Development (hand-eye coordination and reaction), Communication & Language (clear listening and responding), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (cooperation and encouragement).

MOUSE ADVENTURE: Explain that the ball is the mouse and the racket is its house. Walk the mouse by balancing it on the racket, bounce the mouse gently on the floor, and finally "trap" the mouse by squashing it softly with the racket. Use storytelling to make the activity engaging. **PROGRESSION:** Add new challenges — e.g., "Sneaky Mouse" (move sideways while balancing) or "Sleepy Mouse" (balance while sitting).

EYFS Link: Physical Development (fine motor control and stability), Expressive Arts & Design (imaginative play), Understanding the World (story engagement and cause/effect).

BUBBLE TAP CHALLENGE: Each child has a racket and ball. They tap the ball up gently, keeping it under control — "like a bubble that mustn't pop." Count how many times they can tap before dropping it. In pairs, they take turns keeping the ball in the air, letting it bounce once between hits. **PROGRESSION:** Ask children to move slowly while tapping or swap hands.

EYFS Link: Physical Development (coordination, timing, focus), Mathematics (counting sequences), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (persistence and sharing success).

TARGET CHAMPIONS: Set out markers and scatter cones between two end lines. In pairs, children feed the ball to themselves and hit towards the cones, aiming to knock them over or hit between them. Players keep the cones they hit. The player with the most cones at the end wins. **PROGRESSION:** Move the targets further away or reduce their size for extra challenge.

EYFS Link: Physical Development (accuracy and coordination), Mathematics (counting and comparison), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (friendly competition and fair play).

Adapted Learning (Differentiation) (Challenge)

SPACE

Wide court first, smaller zones later.

TASK

Drop-hit first, then rally.

EQUIPMENT

Rackets, cones, sponge balls.

PEOPLE

Alone first, then pairs.

Cooldown

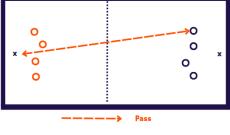
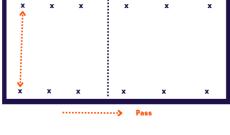
SLEEPY TENNIS BALL: Children sit cross-legged or lie on their backs with their racket beside them. Ask them to place the ball on their tummy and take slow breaths — "watch your tennis ball rise and fall as it takes a rest." Then ask them to share one skill they enjoyed most today. **PROGRESSION:** Add a gentle pass-the-ball circle where they roll it softly to a partner.

EYFS Link: Physical Development (relaxation and breathing control), Communication & Language (reflection and sharing), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (emotional regulation and calmness).

EYFS - Intro to Racket Skills

Lesson Plan

PLAYING
EDSTART

Lesson Objective	To be able to hit a bouncing ball towards a partner.			Lesson 4/6
Equipment Needed	Tennis rackets, tennis ball, cones, markers, bean bags, sponge tennis balls, hoops.			
Success Criteria	Children can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">be in balanced position when hitting the ball.have their racket back before the ball has bounced.have the strings of their racket facing their partner.			
EDSTART KNOW	EDSTART GO	EDSTART SHOW		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can say what bounce means.I can tell how to stand ready.I can say how to face my racket to my partner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can hit a bouncing ball to a partner.I can aim at cones in Target Tennis.I can rally with a friend.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can cheer when my partner scores.I can take turns hitting.I can celebrate my team's effort.		
Warm Up	MOUSE ADVENTURE: Give each child a racket and a ball — explain that the ball is the “mouse” and the racket is its “house.” Start by saying, “Walk the mouse!” and children move around carefully balancing the ball on their racket. Next, “Bounce the mouse!” — gently let the ball drop and tap it back up like it’s playing. Finally, “Mouse trap!” — squash the ball softly with the racket on the floor. Encourage children to use imagination and keep control of their mouse! PROGRESSION: Add “Sneaky Mouse” (move sideways while balancing) or “Sleepy Mouse” (balance while sitting still). EYFS Link: Physical Development (coordination and control), Communication & Language (listening to instructions), Expressive Arts & Design (imaginative play and storytelling).			
Main Activity	RACKET PARTNERS: In pairs, one child holds the racket and the other is the feeder. The feeder gently throws the ball to the hitter’s forehand and backhand sides. The hitter lets it bounce once before returning it. Swap roles after a few turns. Focus on watching the ball closely, correct grip, and gentle control. PROGRESSION: Challenge children to hit the ball back before it bounces or increase the throwing distance slightly. EYFS Link: Physical Development (hand-eye coordination, timing), Communication & Language (understanding and responding to directions), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (turn-taking and encouragement).			
	 TARGET CHAMPIONS: Mark a line where children must stand behind. Scatter cones or small targets between two end points. Players take turns hitting their ball under control, aiming to knock over or hit the cones. Each cone they hit is theirs to keep! The player with the most cones at the end wins. PROGRESSION: Move targets further away or reduce their size to make it trickier. EYFS Link: Physical Development (accuracy and coordination), Mathematics (counting and comparing), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (sportsmanship and fair play).			
	 RALLY STARS: Working in pairs on half a court, children take turns hitting the ball back and forth, trying to see how many passes they can make before the ball bounces twice or goes out of bounds. Encourage gentle, controlled hits and teamwork to keep the rally going. PROGRESSION: Try forehand-only rallies, then add backhands or movement between shots. EYFS Link: Physical Development (balance, coordination, agility), Communication & Language (cooperative dialogue), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (persistence and teamwork).			
Adapted Learning (Differentiation) (Challenge)	SPACE Half courts first, smaller later.	TASK One bounce then hit, later rallies.	EQUIPMENT Rackets, tennis balls, cones.	PEOPLE Pairs, then small groups.
Cooldown	SLEEPY RACKET: Children sit in a circle, holding their racket flat like a bed for their “mouse” (ball). Ask them to gently rock the mouse to sleep by moving the racket side to side while taking slow breaths. Once calm, ask them to share what they liked best about the lesson and one thing they improved. PROGRESSION: Pass the mouse slowly around the circle without dropping it. EYFS Link: Physical Development (relaxation and control), Communication & Language (expressing ideas), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (reflection and calm closure).			

EYFS - Intro to Racket Skills

Lesson Plan

PLAYING
EDSTART

Lesson Objective	To understand that the shot they are playing is called the forearm shot.	Lesson 5/6
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Equipment Needed	Tennis rackets, tennis ball, cones, markers, bean bags, sponge tennis balls, hoops.
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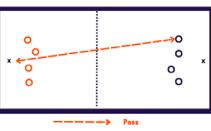
Success Criteria	Children can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">understand that the shot they are playing is called the forearm shot
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EDSTART KNOW	EDSTART GO	EDSTART SHOW
<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can say the word "forehand".I can tell how to swing low to high.I can say why I step to the ball.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can swing my racket forehand.I can rally with my partner.I can play small games.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can cheer when friends play.I can wait for my turn.I can smile when I try my best.

Warm Up	<p>RACKET BUDDIES: In pairs, one child has a racket while the other is the feeder. The feeder gently throws the ball to their partner, alternating between forehand and backhand sides. The hitter lets the ball bounce once before returning it. As confidence builds, encourage them to hit before it bounces. Swap roles after each turn to ensure everyone practices both feeding and hitting. Focus on correct grip, watching the ball, and soft, controlled swings. PROGRESSION: Add movement — feeders can throw slightly to the left or right, encouraging side steps before hitting.</p> <p>EYFS Link: Physical Development (hand-eye coordination, agility), Communication & Language (listening and understanding), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (turn-taking and confidence building).</p>
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Main Activity	<p>STEP AND STRIKE: In groups of three, mark two flat spots either side of the middle player. The outer players take turns throwing the ball towards one of the markers. The middle player moves (chassé step) to the side, hits or returns the ball, then quickly returns to the middle "ready position." Encourage bending knees, quick feet, and smooth swings. PROGRESSION: Increase speed of throws or ask players to call out "ready!" before hitting.</p> <p>EYFS Link: Physical Development (agility, coordination, balance), Communication & Language (responding to visual and verbal cues), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (focus and perseverance).</p>
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RALLY STARS: In pairs, children play on half a court, aiming to see how many consecutive shots they can make before the ball bounces twice or goes out of play. Encourage gentle, upward shots and teamwork to keep the rally going for as long as possible. PROGRESSION: Add challenges such as "forehands only," "no bounce," or "move one step back after five rallies."	<p>EYFS Link: Physical Development (timing, rhythm, spatial awareness), Communication & Language (talking and listening to partners), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (teamwork and patience).</p>
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	<p>TARGET CHALLENGE: Scatter cones or small goals between two players. Each takes turns feeding and hitting the ball, aiming to knock over or land near a target. Every cone hit is "won" by the player — the one with the most cones wins! PROGRESSION: Make targets smaller or add further distances for advanced control.</p> <p>EYFS Link: Physical Development (accuracy and coordination), Mathematics (counting and comparing scores), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (friendly competition and turn-taking).</p>
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Adapted Learning (Differentiation) (Challenge)	SPACE Small courts for control, bigger for challenge.	TASK Forehand only first, then forehand rallies.	EQUIPMENT Rackets, sponge balls, cones.	PEOPLE Pairs first, then teams of 3.
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Cooldown	<p>TENNIS CLOUDS: Children sit or lie on their backs with their rackets on their tummy and balls resting on top. Ask them to take slow, deep breaths and watch the ball rise and fall like a floating cloud. Discuss what skill they enjoyed most or improved today — "Was it balance, hitting, or teamwork?" PROGRESSION: End with a slow "pass the cloud" — gently rolling the ball around the circle without dropping it.</p> <p>EYFS Link: Physical Development (relaxation and breathing control), Communication & Language (expressing preferences), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (self-reflection and calm focus).</p>
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EYFS - Intro to Racket Skills

Lesson Plan

PLAYING
EDSTART

Lesson Objective	To be able to hit the ball over a net towards a partner.			Lesson 6/6
Equipment Needed	Tennis rackets, tennis ball, cones, markers, bean bags, sponge tennis balls, hoops.			
Success Criteria	Children can: <ul style="list-style-type: none">hit the ball over a short distance towards a target area.swing their racket from low to high and leave racket facing towards the target area.			
EDSTART KNOW	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can say what a net is.I can tell how to swing my racket.I can say why I hit over the net.	EDSTART GO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">I can tap the ball on my racket.I can rally with my partner.I can play half-court matches.	EDSTART SHOW
Warm Up	RACKET BUDDIES: In pairs, one child holds a racket and the other is the feeder. The feeder gently throws the ball to their partner, alternating between forehand and backhand sides. The hitter lets it bounce once before returning it. As confidence builds, encourage them to hit before the bounce. Swap roles regularly so both children practice hitting and feeding. PROGRESSION: Add small side steps before hitting or introduce gentle movement forward and backward. EYFS Link: Physical Development (hand-eye coordination, agility), Communication & Language (listening and understanding), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (turn-taking and teamwork).			
Main Activity	BUBBLE TAPPERS: Give each child a racket and ball — they must gently tap the ball up and keep it in the air like a bubble that mustn't pop! Count how many taps they can do before it falls. Encourage soft hands and control. PROGRESSION: Work in pairs — one ball per pair. Each player takes turns tapping the ball up, but it can only bounce once before the partner hits it again. See how long they can keep their "bubble" floating! EYFS Link: Physical Development (coordination, control, balance), Mathematics (counting taps), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (confidence and self-belief).			
	RALLY STARS: Children work in pairs on half a court, trying to rally the ball back and forth as many times as possible before it bounces twice or goes out of play. Encourage them to move gently and focus on soft hits that keep the rally alive. PROGRESSION: Try "forehand only" or "move one step back after 5 successful rallies." EYFS Link: Physical Development (timing, rhythm, coordination), Communication & Language (talking and listening to partners), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (teamwork and patience).			
	TENNIS ZOO: Turn the court into a zoo! Each pair or team becomes an animal (e.g., Lions, Monkeys, Elephants, Crocodiles). Children rally the ball over a low net or marked line, earning one "banana" (cone or point) every time their team keeps the ball going. The aim is to help their animal collect the most bananas by the end! Encourage animal movements between points — monkey jumps, elephant stomps, or lion roars! PROGRESSION: Add a mini "zoo challenge" — if they drop the ball, they must do their animal walk back to the start before continuing. EYFS Link: Physical Development (movement control, spatial awareness), Expressive Arts & Design (imaginative play), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (collaboration and fun competition).			
Adapted Learning (Differentiation) (Challenge)	SPACE Mini nets first, bigger courts later.	TASK Tap up tennis first, then rallies over net.	EQUIPMENT Rackets, sponge balls, nets, cones.	PEOPLE On own, then doubles.
Cooldown	SLEEPY TENNIS BALL: Children lie down or sit with their racket on their tummy and the ball on top. Ask them to take slow breaths, watching their ball rise and fall like it's falling asleep. Then, pass the ball slowly around the circle without dropping it. EYFS Link: Physical Development (relaxation and focus), Communication & Language (sharing thoughts), Personal, Social & Emotional Development (calm reflection and group connection).			