



Sports and Visual Ability in Toddlers

Vision is not mature in this age group, and toddlers have difficulty tracking a moving object and figuring out how fast it is speeding toward them. This poor score on visual skills is related to eye movements that are not precise, minor farsightedness, and incomplete development of vision centers in the brain. Hopefully, this information makes it easier to see why it is difficult for some kids in this age group to hit or catch a moving ball in tennis, basketball, football, softball, baseball, or volleyball, or judge an upcoming wall for a flip turn.



It is not simply a lack of coordination or just needing more practice; it is a lack of true visual maturity that is the culprit. Now that age-old phrase of hand-eye coordination finally makes more sense! If 4-year-old Jermaine cannot hit or catch a ball you throw at him in the backyard 100 times, please repeat after me—"Jermaine is *not* a failure at sports."

Congratulations and hats off to organizations like Little League baseball that have adapted to make up for the natural deficits at this age with such activities as T-ball. Toddlers and young children can do much better if they are allowed to kick or swing at a stationary ball.

Many sports situations would be better for kids if the ball sizes, playing fields, equipment, and practice times were more custom-made for those young learning beings.

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