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LEARNING SENSORIMOTOR BODY CONTROL SKILLS

During the prekindergarten and kindergarten years emphasis is placed on introducing students to the many different ways their bodies can move. As students are guided into exploring and discovering their movement potential, goals need to be established and outcomes evaluated according to the guidelines listed below.

- ☑ Students will develop a cognitive awareness of the basic components that define each skill. For example, hopping is taking off on one foot, and landing on the same foot; jumping is taking off on two feet, and landing on two feet.
- ☑ Students will be able to demonstrate the basic components that define each movement pattern. For example, are individual students able to hop on one foot without losing their balance?
- ☑ Students will demonstrate the ability to change from one movement pattern to another without additional prompting (fixation).
- ☑ Students will be able to maintain the *basic* movement pattern for each skill in the context of altered conditions (diversification). For example, Can students hop faster? Hop sideways? Use hopping to play a simple game?

NONLOCOMOTOR BODY CONTROL SKILLS

This section introduces students to the various stability skills or nonlocomotor ways they can move their body parts. To rehearse these movements, consider using simple “Show me how to . . .” statements, playing Simon Says, and doing aerobic-type routines to music.

Starting and Stopping

Have students initiate, control, and stop movement of any or all body parts on verbal or nonverbal command. (You may be surprised how difficult this is for some of the more fidgety students!)

Balancing

Have students maintain a nonmoving base of support and hold a variety of body positions over that base of support. (Balance is covered in greater detail later in the chapter on page 96.)

Jumping from a Height

Encourage students to maintain total body control while jumping from a variety of heights that you choose or they choose. Be sure to discuss safety factors and tell students to land on their feet. (Jumping is discussed in greater detail later in this chapter on page 80.)

- Encourage students to land without falling down and without letting their feet move.
- To help with the timing of the arm swing, say, “The arms swing first to show the feet which way to go.”

Practice Activities

Note that repetitive practice of jumping is also an excellent way to develop dynamic leg strength.

- ▶ Have students lie down with their feet at a line and mark their height. Challenge students to jump their height length.
- ▶ Mark out a given distance. Challenge students to see how many jumps it takes them to go the distance. The fewer jumps the better.
- ▶ Have students start with their heels on a line, jump as far as they can, and land without moving their feet. Then ask them to turn around and jump back, jumping all the way over the line.
- ▶ Have students jump over a series of ropes spaced equally across the floor, or even over ropes that are held 15–45 cm off the floor by their classmates.
Caution: Warn about the danger of rope activities *before* students become careless with the ropes while others are jumping.
- ▶ Have students work in groups of three. Let each student take a turn jumping back and forth over a rope as the partners slowly raise it higher and higher.
- ▶ Show me how to . . .
 - jump like a kangaroo.
 - jump like a bouncing ball.
 - jump forward, backward, sideways.
 - jump in and out of hoops.
 - jump over various objects.
- ▶ Have students try standing broad jumps. Tell them to stand behind a line and to jump as far as possible. Measure the distance jumped from the starting line to a student’s heel.
- ▶ Lead students in doing vertical jumps. Tell them to stand next to a wall and to jump as high as possible, thrusting the arm nearest the wall upward. Measure the distance jumped from the floor to the point where students’ fingertips reached. Then subtract students’ height from this number to find their reaching height.
- ▶ KHAM HUAY (a game from Thailand). This game involves tigers jumping over five kinds of lakes without touching them. Choose one student to be the first lake, and tell the rest of the class to pretend they are tigers. While the one student assumes the position of the shallow lake (see description below), the tigers take turns making two-footed jumps or running leaps over the lake. Any tiger who touches part of the lake while jumping, or who cannot jump over the lake successfully, becomes the same lake and the game continues. If all of the tigers jump or leap over the shallow lake successfully, the lake changes to a deep lake, then a stony water lake, a wide

MATURE SKILL PATTERNS

A review of the mature stage of each manipulative object control skill follows. By the end of grade 2, every student should be able to perform a mature pattern in each skill.

Catching

Focus on catching thrown and fly balls—“playing catch.”

- ✓ Elbows flex and arms and fingers relax as they come forward to meet the ball. Hands catch and control the ball without using the body to secure the catch.
- ✓ Catch is made while moving in any locomotive skill pattern, especially running.
- ✓ Eyes track the ball into the hands. This skill is crucial. The eyes send catching messages to the brain; the brain in turn sends messages to the hands. If the head turns away, the hands are without the proper stimulus.
- ✓ Key learning cues: track, circle, catch in hands, give.

Throwing

Focus on overarm throwing.

- ✓ In the wind-up phase the throwing arm moves in a downward and backward arc as the opposite foot begins a forward stride with the leg extended.
- ✓ Hips and spine rotate into a sideways position as the arm comes up and over.
- ✓ Follow-through involves the throwing hand crossing in front of the leading leg.
- ✓ Key learning cues: stretch back, arm up and out, rotate, step with opposite foot, follow through.

Kicking

Focus on instep kicking.

- ✓ Ball approach is at a run.
- ✓ The nonkicking foot lands next to the ball.
- ✓ The kicking leg flexes slightly at the knee and hip.
- ✓ Force is generated by rotating the hip forward and extending the leg forward.
- ✓ Contact is made with the instep (shoelace) of the foot. Ankle remains rigid. Follow-through is waist high.
- ✓ Key learning cues: run, leap, plant nonkicking foot, extend kicking leg, keep toe down and back, follow through.

Punting

Note: If you have chosen to introduce punting at the grade 2 level, refer to page 225 in the grade 1 curriculum for the developmental stages, teaching-learning suggestions, practice activities, and assessment.

- ✓ Hands hold the ball toward kicking side of body.
- ✓ Hands drop the ball down as body moves forward.
- ✓ Trunk leans forward before ball release and leans backward just before ball contact.
- ✓ Knee flexes prior to kick; leg extends powerfully at contact.

HEALTH FITNESS TESTS

The administration of health fitness tests in grades PreK–2 is *not* an important element of the fitness awareness program described in this teacher guide. However, you may wish to evaluate fitness—especially if you are emphasizing growth and improvement status. The following tests and qualifying standards for a health fitness award are part of the FITNESSGRAM® and ACTIVITYGRAM® programs recommended by the American Alliance of Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD). A FITNESSGRAM® test administration manual is available from the Cooper Institute for Aerobics Research and can be purchased from Human Kinetics Press (www.humankinetics.com). Information is also available at www.fitnessgram.net.

TESTS

- **ENDURANCE RUN/WALK.** At the K–3 level, have students run or walk 0.4 km (0.25 mile).
- **PARTIAL CURL-UPS.** Divide the class into groups of three students. One student from each group lies on his or her back on a mat. Their legs are slightly apart and knees bent slightly. Their arms lay straight along their sides with their palms resting on the mat and fingers outstretched. One partner sits or kneels at the student’s head. The other partner places the appropriate measuring strip under the student’s knees so that his or her fingertips are resting on the edge of the strip. (Use a commercially bought strip or a piece of tape on the mat.) On the signal to go, the reclining student curls up slowly and slides his or her fingers across the measuring strip until they reach the other side. Then the student returns to the starting position. The movement should be slow and in control. Have students try to do as many curl-ups in a row as possible.
- **BACK-SAVER SIT AND REACH.** Have students take off their shoes and sit in front of a sit-and-reach box. (See diagrams of boxes below.) Students extend one leg so that the bottom of the foot is flat against the box. They bend the other leg and bring their knee up with the foot flat on the floor next to the extended leg. Students extend their arms over the sit-and-reach box with one hand on top of the other and palms down. Students reach forward along the measuring scale four times and hold the fourth reach for 1 second. Repeat the exercise with the other leg in the bent position. Record the number of centimeters or inches reached on both sides.

