



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Young Athletes
.....
LESSON PLANS
.....

ABRIDGED
AGES 2-4

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Dear Fellow Educators,

I am thrilled to present our newly developed Special Olympics Young Athletes resource, the year-round Young Athletes lesson plans. The Young Athletes lesson plans are an instrumental tool that will transform the global educational landscape. As an educator, an advocate for social and emotional learning, and Chairman of Special Olympics, I am deeply committed to ensuring that children of all abilities flourish and thrive together.

Young Athletes, a core Special Olympics program tailored to children with and without intellectual disabilities ages 2–7, is a beacon of inclusivity, serving all children through play and motor skill development. The unveiling of the year-round Young Athletes lesson plans offers a unique opportunity to empower educators to create truly inclusive classrooms. This comprehensive resource not only hones fundamental motor skills crucial for physical development, but also seamlessly integrates social-emotional and academic learning to foster holistic growth. By embracing these unique lesson plans, schools will nurture the physical well-being of all students, while instilling the important values of empathy, understanding, and collaboration.

Please join us and champion the use of this crucial new tool within your school community to enrich the educational journey for every student. It's time to ensure that every child, regardless of ability, feels a profound sense of belonging and purpose.

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy Shriver". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "T" and "S".

Dr. Timothy Shriver
Chairman of the Board of Directors
Special Olympics International

There are 5 components to each lesson in this resource.

- **Leadership Time**

This is the foundation of the resource because it provides a framework to talk about social emotional learning for students and build the trust and connection throughout your classroom. Each week there is a book to help spark discussion, encourage deep thinking, and provide a bridge to further conversations and connections throughout the classroom. Use this section as either the start of a full Young Athletes lesson all at once, or do this read aloud during snack, a brain break, or any other part of your day where you have an extra 5-10 minutes. QR codes for virtual book readings can be found in the resources.

- **Strength and Endurance**

This section is our warm up activity to get our bodies ready for the skills and games. Use this to warm up, but also keep these GoNoodle links, warm up posters, or songs available for extra brain breaks you may need throughout your day in the classroom.

- **Focus Skill**

This first activity or game is designed to introduce the skill being taught. This is either an explicitly taught skill such as how to properly underhand throw a ball or it is a game that incorporates the skill.

- **Optional Activity/Game**

The next activity or game is meant to reinforce the skill or review a game or skill that has been previously taught. Depending on timing, feel free to do this activity as part of your lesson or save it for another time in your day or week. All activities can be used as stand alone games to insert in your day when you have time or taught as one cohesive lesson.



- **Cool Down/Flexibility**

Similar to the Strength and Endurance section, this cool down is an opportunity for students to transition out of their Young Athletes time and cool down their bodies. Keep these different exercises around to use for a calming brain break or way to transition in your classroom.

- **Printables**

Throughout this resource, you will be referencing different posters to help students understand certain skills or games. Print these attachments out and laminate them at the beginning of the year to be ready for the lessons ahead of time!

EQUIPMENT

Equipment	Suggested Substitutions
 <p>Balance beam</p>	<p>Tape Rope</p>
 <p>Small foam ball</p>	<p>Tennis Ball Any small ball</p>
 <p>Bean Bags</p>	<p>Small, soft toys or figures Bags filled with rice, sand, or beans Natural items like flowers or leaves</p>
 <p>Sport Cones</p>	<p>Boxes Plastic soda bottles filled with sand</p>
 <p>Large plastic blocks</p>	<p>Foam or wood blocks Bricks</p>
 <p>Plastic dowel</p>	<p>Stick Paper towel roll</p>
 <p>Paddle</p>	<p>Short stick</p>
 <p>Floor markers</p>	<p>Stickers or tape Carpet squares Chalk-drawn shapes</p>
 <p>Hoops</p>	<p>Hula hoops Bicycle tubes Old tires</p>
 <p>Scarf</p>	<p>Dish towel Small piece of cloth</p>
 <p>Playground ball</p>	<p>Beach ball Any lightweight ball Balloon</p>

EQUIPMENT

Equipment		Suggested Substitutions
	Parachute	Large piece of fabric Sheet
	6 dice	Print out these and fold to make dice
	Jump ropes	Rope
	Tape measures or yard sticks	Rulers Printable rulers
	Bowling pins	Plastic cups Plastic bottles
	Basketball for each student	Playground ball for each student
	Soccer ball for each student	Playground ball for each student
	Unifix cubes	Other math manipulatives (cubes, chips, etc.)
	Small basketball hoop	Basket Box
	Way to play music (speaker, phone, computer)	

KEY POINTS TO CONSIDER IN THE CLASSROOM

Space and Safety

- **Not too big; not too small**
Take time to read each activity. Make sure the space matches the needs of the activity and the number of children in the group.
- **Indoor versus outdoor**
Young Athletes is good for both indoor and outdoor spaces. Be mindful of spacing. Define borders for safety.
- **One space vs. two spaces**
Many teachers have run Young Athletes by dividing their class into two groups. Use a classroom and hallways to run two smaller groups of children at a time.

Structure

- **Establish a routine**
Routines provide clear expectations, consistency and comfort for many children.
- **Plan for rest breaks**
Provide a space where children can rest if they become tired or overstimulated by the environment or activity.
- **Encourage different modes of movement to transition between activities**
This strengthens different muscles and encourages children to learn a new skill.
- **Use music to signal transition**
Songs can be used to signal when one activity is finished and another is about to begin.
- **Unified partners**
Have older children or children without ID support younger children by showing activities and serving as leaders and unified partners.
- **Hydration and healthy snacks**
Offer water and fruit at the end of the session, if available. Good hydration and nutrition are important for physical health and learning.

Young Athletes App

Young Athletes has an app that is a great resource for parents and caregivers to use at home. It supports your child's growth by providing suggested activities based on your child's individual skills that you can complete at home and on your schedule. Find the [printable flyer](#) at the end of Unit 1 for the QR code and links to send home!

EQUIPMENT MODIFICATIONS AND ADAPTATIONS

Changes to equipment can decrease injury and increase success. Balls, Frisbees, balloons, pucks, bats, rackets, paddles, sticks, bases, nets, goals and fitness equipment can be changed to meet the needs of each child.





- **Change the ball size**
Make the ball or sport object (puck, shuttle) larger or smaller.
- **Length or width**
Change the length of the striking implement (bat, stick) to be longer, shorter or wider.
- **Weight**
Offer striking equipment or balls that are lighter or heavier.
- **Grip**
Make the grip larger, smaller, softer or molded to fit the child's hand.
- **Composition and texture**
Offer a variety of balls and striking equipment that are made of foam, fleece, plastic, rubber, cardboard or other materials.
- **Colors**
Use equipment in many colors for organization or to visually engage children.
- **Height or size**
Lower the height of a net, goal or base. Use larger bases marked with numbers or colors. Increase the size of a goal or change the height to increase accuracy in aiming at a target.
- **Sound, light, pictures, signs or colors**
Use colored scarves, pictures and other visuals to emphasize location.

INCLUSIVE ADAPTATIONS

Young Athletes provides a space for children of all abilities to be successful. In some cases, due to a range of student abilities and challenges, activities may need to be adapted so that all students can participate.

The Inclusive Adaptations cards are a great resource to help you get started with providing suggestions for activity adaptations. The primary goal of the activity adaptations is to encourage students with the motor and sensory challenges below to participate in the SAME activity as their classmates. All students can benefit from either assisting or receiving assistance and seeing that activities can be performed, and goals can be achieved in different ways.



	Limited Mobility (LM): Students with limited or uncoordinated movement of their arms or legs; a student may use a wheelchair or stander for positioning and mobility.
	Assistive Device (AD): Students who are ambulatory with an assistive device (walker, crutches, cane, gait trainer) or wear a brace.
	Hard of Hearing (HOH): Students with difficulty hearing.
	Visual Impairment (VI): Students with difficulty seeing.
	Non-Verbal (NV): Students who have difficulty with oral communication; they may use sign language or a communication device.
	Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD): Some students may be overly sensitive to minor environmental stimuli (touch, sounds, etc.), while others may seek sensory stimulation, including movement.



Whenever you see this icon in the lower right corner of a lesson, refer to the Inclusive Adaptations cards to help you adapt the activity for all students.

MODIFICATIONS FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM

Consider the following suggestions when planning Young Athletes sessions that include children with autism:

Structure and Consistency:

- Schedule Young Athletes for the same time every day to maintain consistency.
- Repeat the same structure for every Young Athletes session. Start with a warm up and opening song. Have individual skill practice and group games. Then, close with a song. A consistent routine helps children know what to expect.
- Provide a clear beginning and clear end to activities.
- Use visuals and pictures to walk children through the activities for that day's session.

Surroundings and Physical Stimulations:

- Limit distractions, like bright lights or loud sounds.
- Avoid sudden noises, like a whistle or clapping.
- Designate a quiet room or have a calm area where children can go during times of overstimulation.

Instruction:

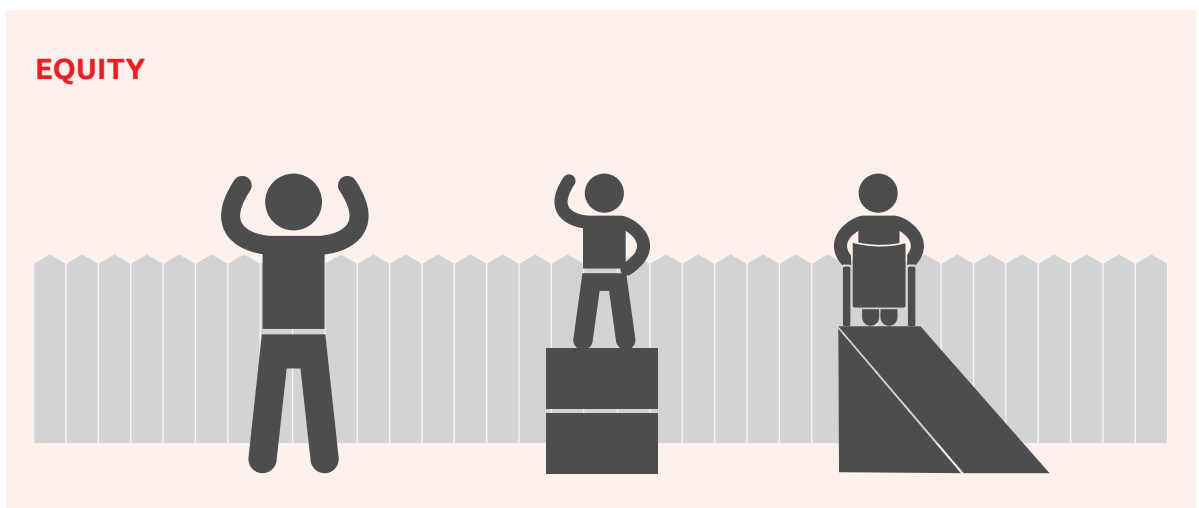
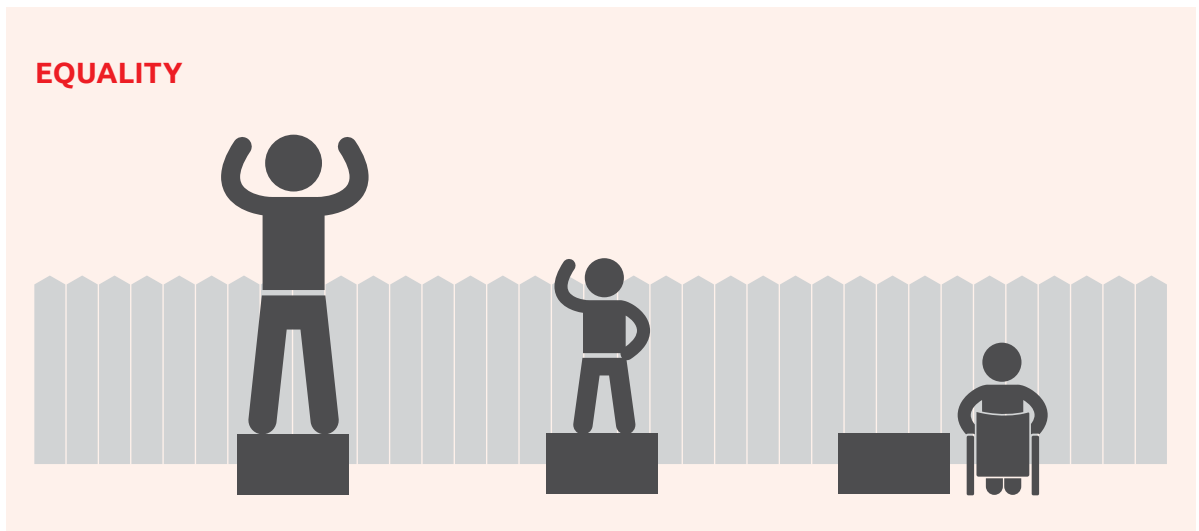
- Define clear boundaries for activities.
- Give clear and concise directions for each activity. This helps children understand what is expected of them.
- Develop rules about social interactions, behavior and communication. Use those rules to provide structure to the group.
- Provide individual support for children from volunteers, staff or other children.

UNDERSTANDING EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Equity and inclusion play an important role in establishing a foundation for learning and understanding among students. Creating a socially inclusive environment for all students enhances the learning process and allows opportunities for all children, regardless of ability, to learn, grow, and be successful. As the YA lesson plans are implemented, it is essential to understand the principles of equity and inclusion and how these concepts translate into the everyday classroom settings.

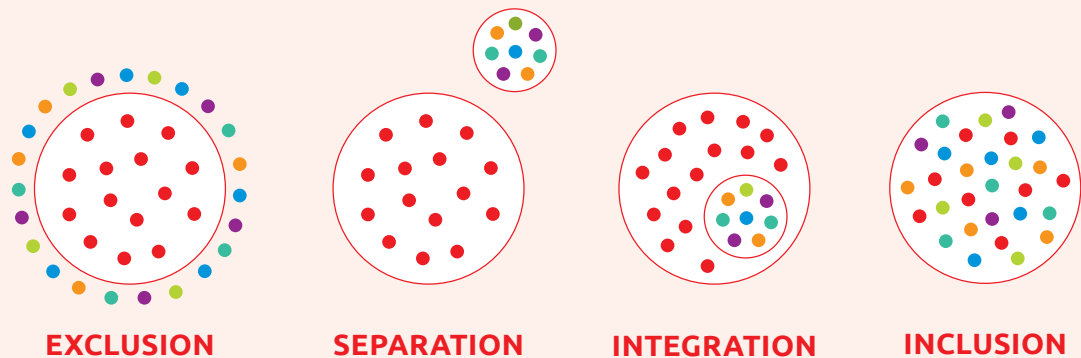
Equity:

Equality means everyone is given the same resources or opportunities. Equity recognizes that each person has different needs, abilities, and circumstances and allocates the resources and opportunities needed to each individual to reach an equal outcome. Equity ensures that all students have access to opportunities, resources, and supports needed to enhance learning and support individual needs. With relation to the YA lesson plans, equity will ensure each student receives the modifications and adaptations to meaningfully participate in activities.



Inclusion:

Inclusion is accepting all people as equals—regardless of ability, ethnicity, age, religion, or gender identity—and ensuring that they have access to the same services and opportunities as everyone else. Inclusion in the classroom is the acceptance of all students, no matter their abilities, and creating a space for all students to learn and thrive. All students should be respected as valuable members of the classroom, fully participate in classroom activities, and interact with peers of all ability levels to support holistic development. With relation to the YA resource, inclusion will ensure every student can be involved in YA activities and participate in activities with their peers with and without IDD.



Exclusion occurs when students are directly or indirectly prevented from or denied access to education in any form.

Segregation occurs when the education of students with disabilities is provided in separate environments designed or used to respond to a particular or various impairments, in isolation from students without disabilities.

Integration is a process of placing person with disabilities in existing mainstream educational institutions, as long as the former can adjust to the standardized requirements of such institutions.

Inclusion involves a process of systemic reform embodying changes and modifications in content, teaching methods, approaches, structures and strategies in education to overcome barriers with a vision serving to provide all students of the relevant age range with an equitable and participatory learning experience and environment that best corresponds to their requirements and preferences.

Placing students with disabilities within mainstream classes without accompanying structural changes to, for example, organization, curriculum and teaching and learning strategies, does not constitute inclusion. Furthermore, integration does not automatically guarantee the transition from segregation to inclusion.

BEST PRACTICES FOR INCLUSIVE CLASSROOMS

Creating an inclusive classroom allows for the opportunity to recognize and value the diverse learning needs of each student. For educators, it may involve adapting teaching methods and materials to ensure that all students, including those with IDD, are fully engaged and supported. Below are a variety of strategies to support building an inclusive classroom and implementing the YA lesson plans with fidelity to inclusive practices.

- Design your lessons to support and meet the needs of students with and without IDD. If you need additional support, connect with other school staff, such as special education teachers, paraeducators, speech pathologists, occupational therapists, and more to create a support team.
- Follow the STEP principle to modify and adapt individual lesson and activities and ensure each student can meaningfully participate. This may include adapting implementation of the daily lessons and taking things slower to ensure students learn the skill fundamentals.
- Identify the outcome for each student in each activity. Tiered learning will allow students to work at different levels of the same task, while still playing together.
- Provide experiences where students can learn more about disabilities and the experiences children with disabilities face. For example, have everyone wear a blindfold during an activity to give the same experience as a child with visual impairment.
- Support children in taking on leadership opportunities within the activities. Allowing children to choose their roles in activities can empower children to participate in a way that feels comfortable and enjoyable for them.
- Consider the way you communicate with students and the way in which students communicate with each other. Use both verbal and non-verbal communication forms and provide consistent cues for students. Use concise and simple language to avoid confusion.
- Introduce stories and songs from various cultures to develop empathy and respect for different backgrounds and perspectives.
- Provide opportunities for each child to showcase their strengths, whether in storytelling, singing, or physical activities, fostering a sense of accomplishment and self-worth.

ADAPTATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

When implementing YA activities, it is important to cater to individual needs of each student to ensure safety and create an inclusive and individualized learning environment. Every student, regardless of their skill and ability level, can participate in Young Athletes. Before beginning activities, educators should document information about the needs of their students and determine any accommodations or modifications in activities, equipment, or classroom arrangements that may be necessary to ensure meaningful participation. Adaptations to most activities can be made using the STEP principle.

Widely used in adapted physical education settings, STEP is defined as the following:

- **SPACE:**
Changing the space where an activity takes place, depending on the activity
» *Example: Modifying a field to be smaller to accommodate athlete needs.*
- **TASK:**
Increasing participation through individualization of activities during a lesson
» *Example: Depending on individual needs, allowing athletes to either walk or run while completing an activity.*
- **EQUIPMENT:**
Changing the equipment used, so that success is increased during the activity
» *Example: Using a balloon instead of a smaller ball during a striking activity to increase a student's hand-eye coordination.*
- **PEOPLE:**
Changing the number of children in an activity to allow for a better experience for everyone
» *Example: Allowing children to work alone or in smaller groups. Have students with and without IDD work as leaders and followers depending on ability.*

ACTIVITIES TO ENHANCE SELF-REGULATION

The Young Athletes lessons can support the development of self-regulation skills in students. Self-regulation refers to the ability to manage emotions, behaviors, and body movements when faced with a situation that is challenging or overwhelming. The lessons support self-regulation in the following ways:

- **Structured Physical Activities:** Engaging in structured physical activities helps students learn to follow rules and understand the importance of discipline, which is key in self-regulation.
- **Group Play for Emotional Management:** Participating in group activities allows students to experience emotions like excitement, disappointment, or frustration in a safe environment. This teaches them to manage their feelings effectively.
- **Routine and Consistency:** The regular and predictable structure of the lessons can be calming for students, providing a sense of security that fosters better self-regulation.
- **Positive Reinforcement:** The resource emphasizes positive reinforcement, which encourages students to understand the consequences of their actions and regulate their behavior accordingly.

Additional activities can be added to lessons and activities to support further development of self-regulation skills, based on the needs of the students.

- **Breathing Exercises:** Teach students to breathe in deeply through their nose, imagining their belly is a balloon filling up with air, and then slowly exhale through their mouth to deflate the balloon.
- **Mindful Listening:** Play a game of mindful listening where the child listens to various sounds around them (e.g., birds chirping, wind blowing) and describes what they hear. This can help children feel calm and settled.
- **Yoga and Stretching:** Introduce simple yoga poses that require concentration and balance, which can help in calming the mind and body.
- **Storytime Meditation:** Use guided stories where students have to visualize a calm and peaceful scenario. This can help them relax and manage their emotions.
- **Cool-Down Corners:** Encourage parents to create a 'cool-down corner' at home with comforting items like soft pillows, books, or soothing music. This space can be used when the child feels overwhelmed.

Intellectual and developmental disability (IDD) is a term used to describe a range of conditions that are usually present (but often not detected) at birth and uniquely affect the trajectory of a person’s physical, intellectual, and/or emotional development. This term is often used for young children who exhibit delays or missed milestones, and those that have not received a formal diagnosis.

- **Developmental disabilities (DD)** refer to a broader category of conditions that can cause an impairment in physical, learning, language, or behavior areas.
- **Intellectual Disability (ID)** is a term used when a person has certain limitations in cognitive functioning and skills, including conceptual, social, and practical skills, such as language, social and self-care skills. These limitations can cause a person to develop and learn more slowly or differently than a typically developing person. Intellectual disability can happen any time before a person turns 22 years old, even before birth. Some, but not all, children with developmental disabilities will be diagnosed with ID as they get older.

According to the American Association of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, an individual has intellectual disability if he or she meets three criteria:

- IQ is below 70.
- There are significant limitations in adaptive behavior in one or more of the following areas: conceptual, social or practical skills (skills that are needed to live, work, and play in the community).
- The condition manifests itself before the age of 22.

IDD can be caused by injury, disease, or a problem in the brain. Some causes of IDD—such as Down syndrome, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, birth defects, and infections—can happen before birth. Some happen while a baby is being born or soon after birth. Other causes of IDD do not occur until a child is older; these might include severe head injury, infections or stroke. Although the exact cause is unknown, autism may develop from a combination of genetic and environmental influences.

The most common causes of IDD are:

- **Genetic conditions.** Sometimes abnormal genes are inherited from parents, there are errors when genes combine, or other reasons. Examples of genetic conditions are Down syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, and phenylketonuria (PKU).
- **Complications during pregnancy.** Sometimes a baby does not develop inside the mother properly. For example, there may be a problem with the way the baby’s cells divide. A woman who drinks alcohol or gets an infection like rubella during pregnancy may also have a baby with an IDD.
- **Problems during birth.** Sometimes there are complications during labor and birth, such as a baby not getting enough oxygen.
- **Diseases or toxic exposure.** Diseases like whooping cough, measles, or meningitis can cause IDD. They can also be caused by extreme malnutrition, not getting appropriate medical care, or by being exposed to poisons like lead or mercury.

We know that intellectual and developmental disabilities are not contagious—you can’t catch an IDD from anyone else. We also know it’s not a type of mental illness, like depression. There are no cures for IDD but children with IDD can learn to do many things. They may just need to take more time or learn differently than other children.

This abridged version of the Young Athletes yearlong lesson plan resource includes 8 skill and sport areas taught through engaging activities and games. Use this overview to plan out all 24 lessons (8 weeks with 3 lessons per week). If you complete this resource and are looking for further materials, please reach out to learn about the 30-week lesson plan resource from which these lessons were pulled.

Skills

- Walking
- Running
- Skipping
- Galloping
- Hopping
- Leaping
- Balancing
- Trapping
- Catching
- Throwing
- Striking
- Kicking

Equipment

- Cones
- Bean bags
- Balls
- Floor markers
- Hula hoops
- A way to play music
- Balance beam
- Scarves
- Balloons
- Parachute
- Box or bucket

Printables

Throughout these lessons, there are printables to help with school to home connections or with incorporating math and language arts skills. The printables can be found at the end of each unit.

Books

- *The Dot*
by Peter H. Reynolds
- *Same, Same but Different*
by Jenny Sue Kostecki
- *A Color of His Own*
by Leo Lionni
- *Red, A Crayon's Story*
by Michael Hall
- *It's Okay to be Different*
by Todd Parr
- *Can I Play Too?*
by Mo Willems
- *Whoever You Are*
by Mem Fox
- *Can I Join Your Club?*
by John Kelly



UNIT 1

AGES 2-4

FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS

.....

Using the standards from the Society of Health and Physical Educators (SHAPE), this unit will introduce a variety of foundational motor skills. These skills include walking, running, hopping, skipping, side stepping, and galloping. This unit will also help to prepare students for skills such as following directions, working as a team, and learning about different types of sports equipment.



Walking

BASIC:

- High-guard, walks with hands and arms held out
- Toes point out, wide base of support
- Flat feet
- Independent steps are taken, no truck or pelvic rotation

PROFICIENT:

- Low guard, minimal reciprocal arm swing (opposite arm to opposite leg)
- Less toeing out, decreased base of support
- More fluid motion of legs
- Increased stride length

ADVANCED:

- Reciprocal arm swing (opposite arm to opposite leg)
- Maximum stride length and fast speed
- Narrow base of support
- Pelvic rotation
- Staying on task
- Listening actively
- Being a good sport

Running

BASIC:

- High-guard
- Short, limited leg swing
- Toeing out, wide base of support

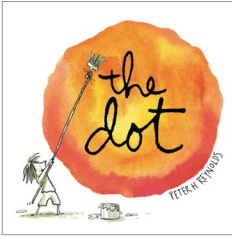
PROFICIENT:

- Increased stride and speed
- Arm swing increases
- Less toeing out
- Swinging foot crosses midline, placed near center of gravity with less base of support

ADVANCED:

- Maximum stride length and fast speed
- Arms swing in opposition, elbows at 90 degrees
- Toes contact ground on landing, followed by heel

LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[The Dot by Peter H. Reynolds](#) (page 9 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 1 Endurance](#)²

OR

[Two Foot Jump](#) (page 10 of link)³

1. "Stand with your feet together."
2. "Jump up and down on two feet and land softly."



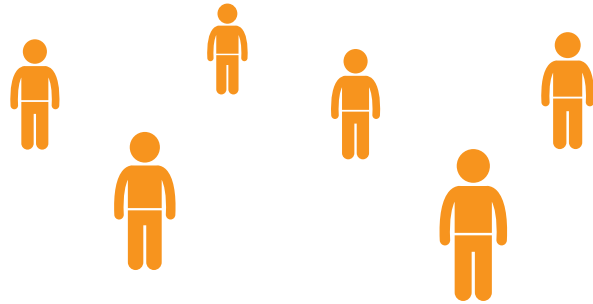
ANIMAL GAMES (5 MIN.)

Equipment

None needed

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space



Have students pretend to be different animals by moving their bodies in different ways.

“What would a bear look like?”

Have children bend down with their hands and feet on the ground. Encourage them to crawl or walk like a bear. Make sure the knees do not touch the floor. Growl for fun!

“What would a crab look like?”

Have children sit on the floor with feet flat on the floor and knees bent. Hands are flat on the floor, slightly behind the body. Ask them to lift their hips off the floor and walk their hands and feet backwards. Then try crawling in different directions.



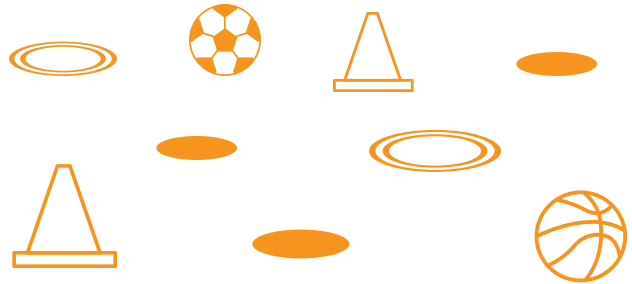
I SPY (10 MIN.)

Equipment

- Floor markers
- Beanbags
- Cones
- Hoops
- Balls
- Mix of athletic equipment

Setup

Scatter equipment randomly around the space



- *"Great warm-up! Now let's play I Spy with all of our new sports equipment."*
 - *"I spy with my little eye a green ball."*
 - *"Where is the green ball? Look around, find the ball and point to it first."*
 - *"Now, let's **walk** to the ball."*
 - *"Listen carefully! I spy with my little eye an orange cone."*
 - *"Where is the orange cone? Look around and find it."*
 - *"Hurry, let's **run** to the cone."*
- Encourage athletes to find an object that is visible and everyone races to the object by walking or running.
 - Focus on the equipment today. The next lesson will include different ways of moving.
 - Remind students to be aware of others when moving through the space and not to bump into each other
 - The I Spy game progresses as the teacher (or student) calls out the name and/or color of a piece of equipment and all athletes find that object.



COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a GoNoodle video (or a stretching exercise). Follow along with the video to work on your flexibility."

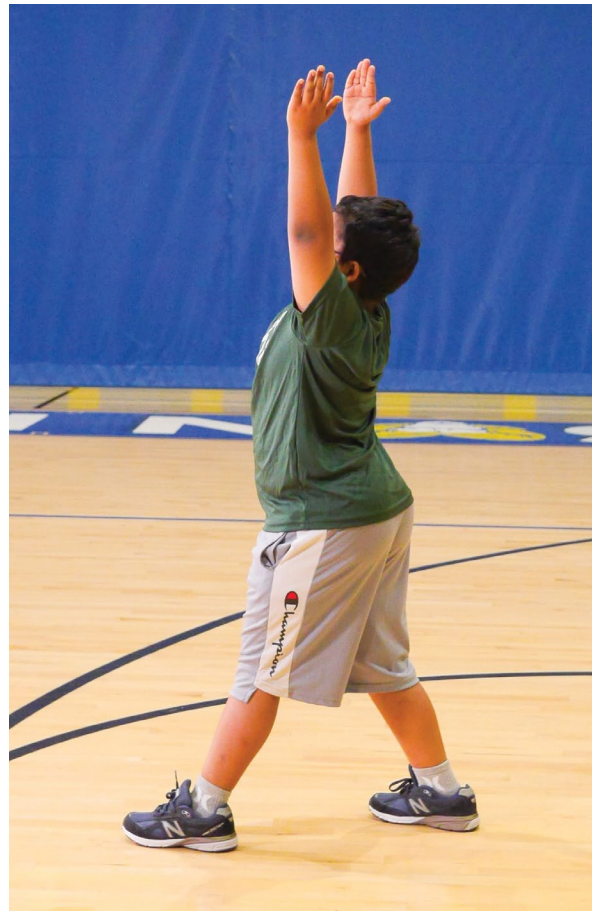
GoNoodle: Level 1 Flexibility¹

OR

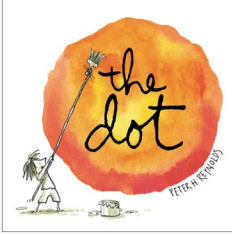
Warrior One Pose (page 6 of link)²

"It is important to cool down and stretch after a workout. We are going to learn how to do a Warrior One pose to help us cool down."

1. Take a big step forward with your right foot. Raise your arms up straight over your head with your palms facing each other.
2. Turn your left foot to the side so that your toes are pointed out. Bend your right knee.
3. Repeat with your left foot forward."



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[The Dot by Peter H. Reynolds](#) (page 9 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

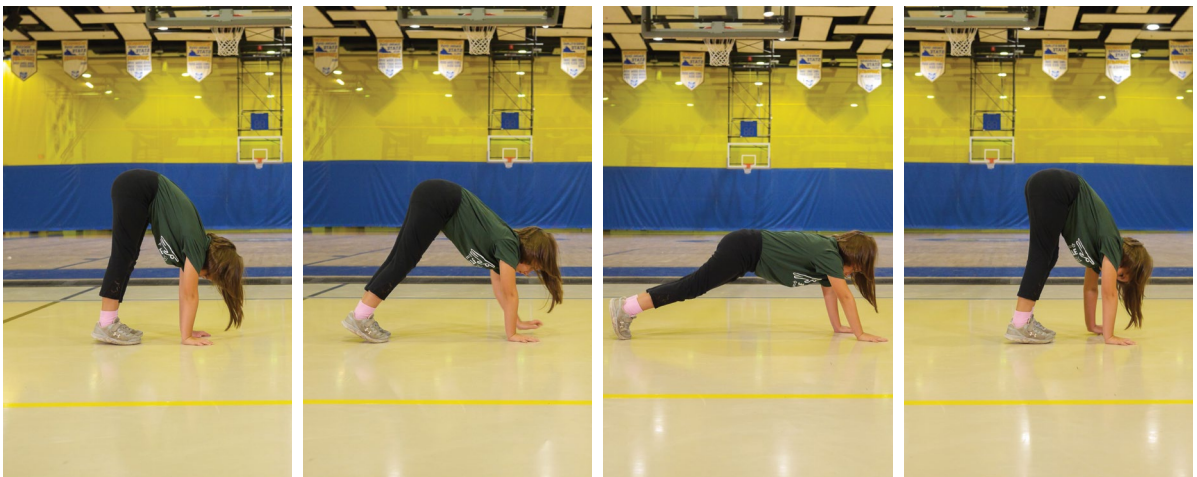
STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 1 Strength](#)²

OR

[Inchworms](#) (page 14 of link)³

1. "Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Bend forward and place your hands on the ground. Keep your knees a little bit bent."
2. "Walk your hands forward until you reach a plank position."
3. "Walk your feet back in to meet your hands."



SIDE STEPPING (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Floor markers

Setup

Floor markers should be lined up on two sides of the room. Students can start in all four corners of the space.



- *"Today we are going to practice side stepping."*
- *"You will start at one corner of the room and run to the next corner."*
- *"At that corner, you will side step along the floor markers."*
- *"When you side step, you will step to the side with your right foot first and then have your left foot come to touch right next to your right foot."*
- *"You will continue doing this the whole length of the floor markers."*
- *"When you reach the last floor marker, you will run to the next set of floor markers."*
- *"Let's see how many laps we can do!"*



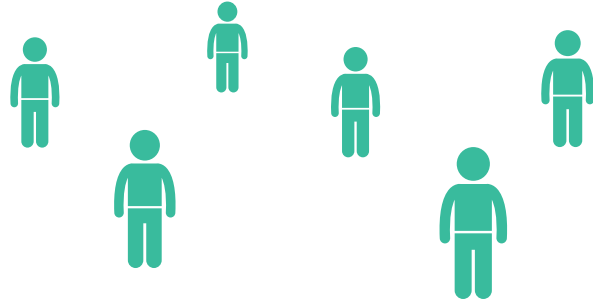
MOVE LIKE AN ANIMAL (5 MIN.)

Equipment

None needed

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space



- *"Today we will be moving like different animals."*
 - *"What are some of your favorite animals?"*
 - *"When I say an animal, you are going to think about how that animal moves and try to copy it."*
 - *"For example, if I said hop like a rabbit, you would show me how you can hop around the room."*
-
- Demonstrate each animal movement for the students.
 - » Flap your arms like a bird
 - » Crawl like a crab
 - » Stand like a flamingo
 - » Waddle like a penguin
 - » Stomp like an elephant
 - » Run like a cheetah

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

“To cool down today, we are going to practice doing some balancing and breathing. Follow along with the video to help bring our heart rate down and increase our balance.”

[Fit 5 Balance Level 1 Video](#)¹

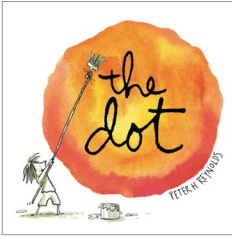
OR

[Fit 5 Balance Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 13-16 of link)²

- Tandem Stance
- Heel Raises
- Toe Raises
- Narrow Base Torso Twists



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[The Dot by Peter H. Reynolds](#) (page 9 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 1 Endurance](#)²

OR

[Two Foot Jump](#) (page 10 of link)³

1. "Stand with your feet together."
2. "Jump up and down on two feet and land softly."



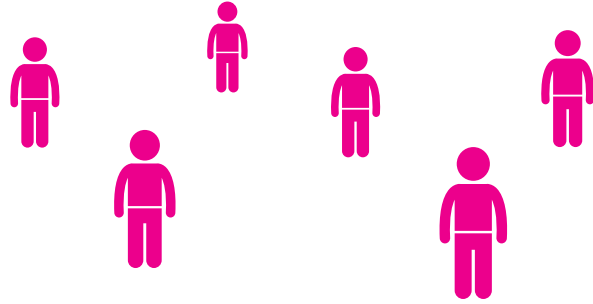
INCHWORM (5 MIN.)

Equipment

None needed

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space



- *"Let's play the Inchworm Wiggle!"*
- *"Watch me move like an inchworm."*
- Model while talking.
- Bend over and put your hands on the ground.
- Walk with your hands out then, walk with your feet to touch your hands.
- *"Let's do it again! Let's do the Inchworm Wiggle."*
- Walk with your hands; then walk with your feet.

Lead Up Activity

Have students stand against a wall in a wall pushup position and practice walking their hands up and down the wall to understand how to move one hand at a time up and down the wall.

Optional Activity

If Inchworm is challenging for students, follow these steps to help develop the downward dog position first:

1. *Start on all fours, hands shoulder width apart, with shoulders above your wrists.*
2. *Lift your knees off the floor and then straighten your knees fully.*
3. *Lift your hips high.*

RUN AND CARRY (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- 1 bean bag per student

Setup

Scatter bean bags on one side of the space and have students line up in teams on the other



- *"Today we are going to play Run and Carry."*
- *"In this game, when it is your turn, you are going to run from this side of the room to the other and pick up a bean bag and carry it back."*
- *"Once you drop it by the next person in line, it is their turn to run and pick up a beanbag and bring it back to the line."*
- *"We will continue until all the bean bags have been picked up."*

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a GoNoodle video (or a stretching exercise). Follow along with the video to work on your flexibility."

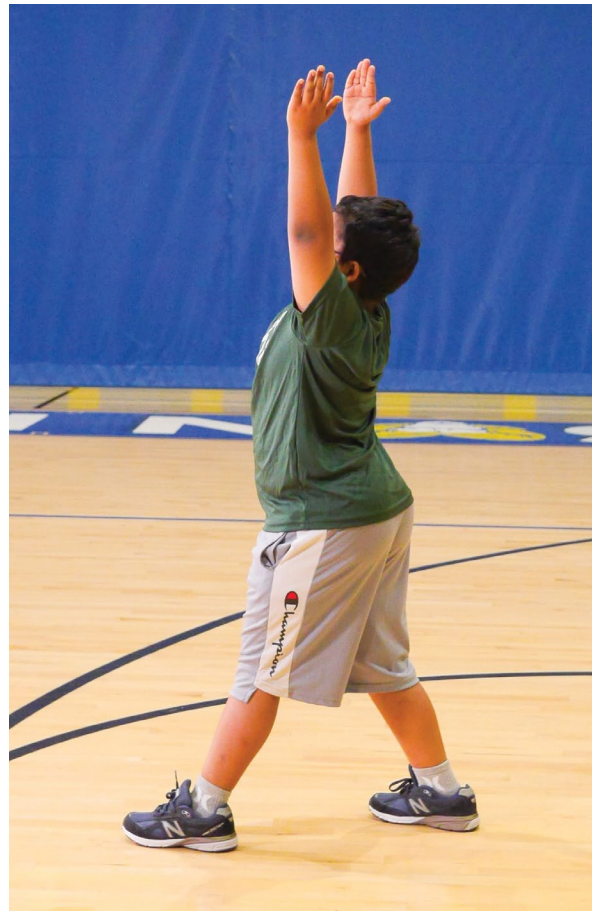
GoNoodle: Level 1 Flexibility¹

OR

Warrior One Pose (page 6 of link)²

"It is important to cool down and stretch after a workout. We are going to learn how to do a Warrior One pose to help us cool down."

1. Take a big step forward with your right foot. Raise your arms up straight over your head with your palms facing each other.
2. Turn your left foot to the side so that your toes are pointed out. Bend your right knee.
3. Repeat with your left foot forward."



FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS REVIEW

- *"We have learned a lot of new games and skills throughout this unit."*
- *"Can you remember some of the things we practiced during our Young Athletes time?"*
- *"Today we are going to wrap up our Foundational Skills unit with creating your own booklet."*
- *"This booklet is for you to help you remember some of the activities we worked on."*
- *"We did a scarf catch, played a variety of games, and acted like different animals."*

[Foundational Skills Booklet printable](#)

HOME CONNECTIONS

Games and activities to do at home:

Send home [the newsletter printable](#) and include this list of games and resources for parents.

Activities from skill cards that were covered in this unit:

- Follow the Leader
- Walk Tall
- Side Stepping
- Run and Carry
- Hidden Treasure
- Sticky Arms

[Additional Foundational Skills Cards for home](#)¹

Want to continue practicing these skills?

Check out [this video](#)² to learn how to do all the activities and more at home!





UNIT 1 PRINTABLES



Building Foundational Skills

Dear Family,

I have exciting news! We are participating in **Special Olympics Young Athletes**, an inclusive sport and play program that sets the stage for a life of physical activity, friendships and learning. Children with and without intellectual disabilities learn how to play with others as they develop basic sport skills, such as running, kicking and throwing. We'll send newsletters home from time to time to fill you in on the skills we're learning and how you can help at home.

We're starting the program with fun activities that develop **foundational skills**. Action songs are a great example. Did you know that doing motions with your child as you sing "If You're Happy and You Know It" has huge benefits? It's true. This classic song involves actions, such as clapping hands and tapping the head, which increase **body awareness**. Body awareness is an important factor in health and physical fitness. Encourage your child to join you and other family members in singing an action song after dinner or before bedtime. It's a wonderful way for the whole family to support your child's development.

Sincerely,

Teacher



Foundational skills promote body awareness, strength, flexibility, coordination and endurance.



Healthy Habits

Periodically set aside time for physical activity as a family. Take a walk, practice Young Athletes activities, or play some upbeat music and dance together. These times not only promote physical well-being, but they also increase family connections. Don't be surprised if they become much-anticipated activities for your entire family!

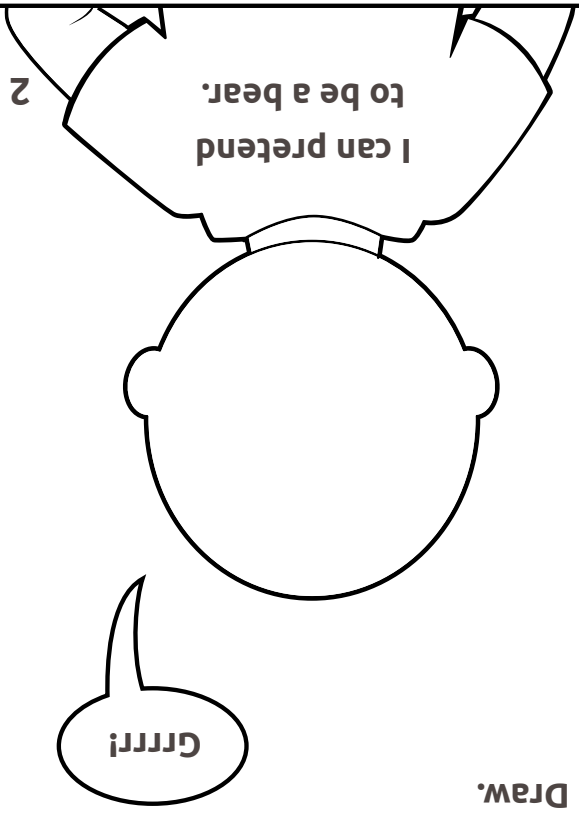


More Than Motor Skills

Motor development isn't the only benefit of Young Athletes activities. The program enhances many other abilities, including relationship skills. Children who participate learn how to share, listen to others, take turns and work in teams—all valuable lifelong skills.



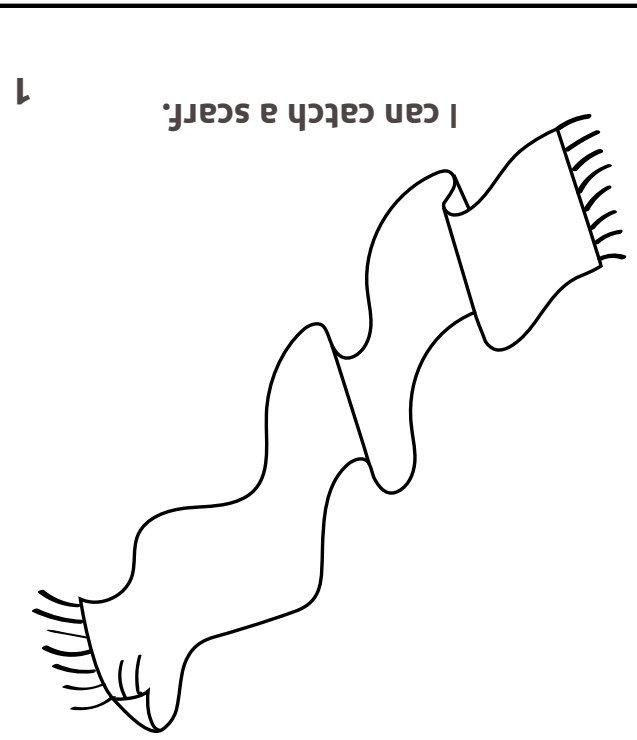
Class News



I can pretend to be a bear.

2

Draw.

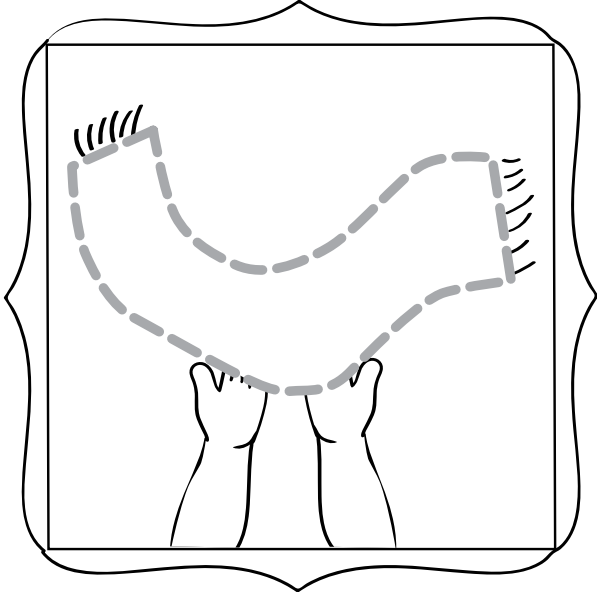


I can catch a scarf.

1

Color.

Trace.



I can play.

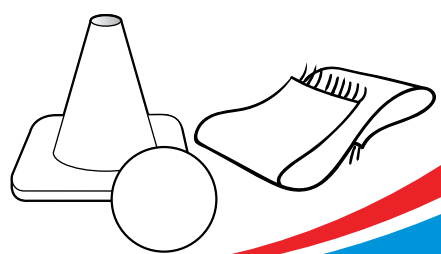
3

Let's Practice & Play

Name _____'s

Activities

Foundational Skills



Directions for families: Cut out the booklet on the bold line. Fold the page on the horizontal dashed line, then on the vertical dashed line so the cover is on the outside. Draw and color with your child to fill in the booklet. As you do, discuss the activities and how much fun they are. Reread the mini-book periodically, especially before or after you've practiced the activities together.



Special Olympics Young Athletes

An app for families and caregivers of young children, with and without intellectual developmental disabilities, 0-7 years old



Key Features



Personalized Activities

Get recommended gross motor activities for your child based on their development. All activities include written, visual and video instructions!



Health Resources

Access evidence-based articles and videos designed to support you in understanding your child's diagnosis, their unique abilities, and ways you can support their development from home.



Community Connection

Build your community by connecting directly with other families. Filter by location and message families in your local area to share experiences!



iPhone or iOS



Android



Questions? Contact ecd@specialolympics.org



UNIT 2

AGES 2-4

WALKING AND RUNNING

.....

Walking and running are basic locomotor skills that move a student from one place to another. Beginning walkers have their hands up at shoulder height (this is called highguard) and their feet wide apart and turned out at the toes, offering them a wide base of support. As children feel more balanced and secure, they will drop their arms, narrow their base of support by bringing their feet closer together and begin to rotate their trunk as they move. Most children begin to run around six to seven months after they begin to walk. As with beginning walkers, beginning runners will use a high-guard and wide base until they feel more balanced and secure. Walking and running are basic skills found in most sports and are important parts of social development as they allow for participation in recreational games and activities.



Walking

BASIC:

- High-guard, walks with hands and arms held out
- Toes point out, wide base of support
- Flat feet
- Independent steps are taken, no truck or pelvic rotation

PROFICIENT:

- Low guard, minimal reciprocal arm swing (opposite arm to opposite leg)
- Less toeing out, decreased base of support
- More fluid motion of legs
- Increased stride length

ADVANCED:

- Reciprocal arm swing (opposite arm to opposite leg)
- Maximum stride length and fast speed
- Narrow base of support
- Pelvic rotation
- Staying on task
- Listening actively
- Being a good sport

Running

BASIC:

- High-guard
- Short, limited leg swing
- Toeing out, wide base of support

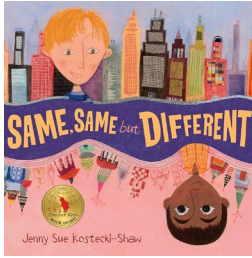
PROFICIENT:

- Increased stride and speed
- Arm swing increases
- Less toeing out
- Swinging foot crosses midline, placed near center of gravity with less base of support

ADVANCED:

- Maximum stride length and fast speed
- Arms swing in opposition, elbows at 90 degrees
- Toes contact ground on landing, followed by heel

LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Same, Same but Different by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw](#) (page 25 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 2 Endurance](#)²

OR

[Gallop](#) (page 21 of link)³

1. "Your right foot is the leader and your left foot follows behind."
2. "Take a big step forward with your right foot and then quickly bring your left foot next to it and repeat."
3. "Continue galloping and then switch to leading with your left foot."



LOCOMOTOR SKILLS: LEARN THE TERMS (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- [Locomotor skill cards](#)

Setup

Print out the cards



- *“We are going to be learning some new skills today.”*
- *“These skills are called locomotor skills.”*
- *“Locomotor skills are ways to move from one place to another.”*
- *“Walking, running, skipping, and sliding are all different types of locomotor skills.”*
- *“I am going to say a locomotor skill and we will all practice it together.”*

Skills:

- **Walking:** Use smooth, straight steps with your arms swinging gently in opposition of your feet. Practice different kinds of walks: low with bent legs, high on tippy toes, fast like a robot, or slow like moving through honey.
- **Galloping:** One foot is the leader, and the other foot follows behind. Don't forget to do both sides!
- **Jumping:** With feet close together, push off with both feet and land on both feet. Can you make the landing quiet? How high can you jump? How many times in a row? This is a good time to try jumping rope.
- **Hopping:** With one foot on the ground, push with toes. How fast can you hop? How slowly? Is one side harder than the other?
- **Side-sliding:** Move sideways with one foot leading (a sideways gallop). Have the student spread his or her arms wide and get some air in the middle of the slide.
- **Leaping:** Go over an object leading with one foot and landing on the other.
- **Skipping:** March with knees high; each time one knee is in the air, hop on the other foot — step/hop, step/hop, step/hop.

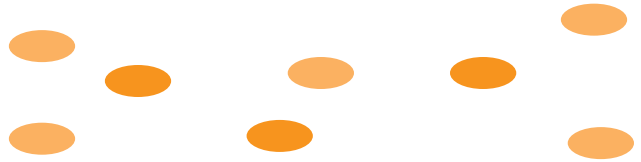
LILYPAD LEAPING (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Floor markers
- Chalk (if outside) or pieces of construction paper
- Tape

Setup

Connect this activity to what you are currently learning in class. Place the "lily pads" around the space so that they are a distance so students are able to leap from lily pad to lily pad. Space some out more than others.



- *"Today we are going to practice leaping to different lily pads."*
- *"Everyone will start on their own lily pad and leap to an open lily pad nearby."*
- *"You might need to practice being patient and waiting for a lily pad to open up near you before you can take your leap."*
- *"When you land on the lily pad, say the (name of the letter, number, sight word, answer to addition or subtraction problem)."*

Ideas of what to write on lily pads:

- Write a different letter of the alphabet on each piece of paper
- Write the numbers 1-20, one on each piece of paper
- Write a different sight word on each piece of paper
- Write an addition or subtraction problem on each piece of paper

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"To cool down today, we are going to practice doing some balancing and breathing. Follow along with the video to help bring our heart rate down and increase our balance."

[Fit 5 Balance Level 1 Video](#)¹

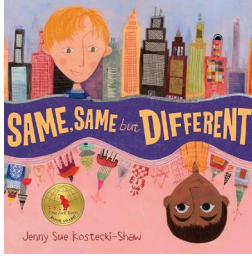
OR

[Fit 5 Balance Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 13-16 of link)²

- Tandem Stance
- Heel Raises
- Toe Raises
- Narrow Base Torso Twists



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Same, Same but Different by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw](#) (page 25 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

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STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 2 Endurance](#)²

OR

[Gallop](#) (page 21 of link)³

1. "Your right foot is the leader and your left foot follows behind."
2. "Take a big step forward with your right foot and then quickly bring your left foot next to it and repeat."
3. "Continue galloping and then switch to leading with your left foot."



HEAVY FEET, LIGHT FEET (5 MIN.)

Equipment

None needed

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space



- *"Today we will be practicing Heavy Feet and Light Feet."*
- *"First we will run with heavy feet and stomp as loud as we can."*
- *"Next we will practice light feet and run on our tip toes and not make any sound."*
- Run from one side of the room to the other and call out heavy feet and light feet and have students switch back and forth.



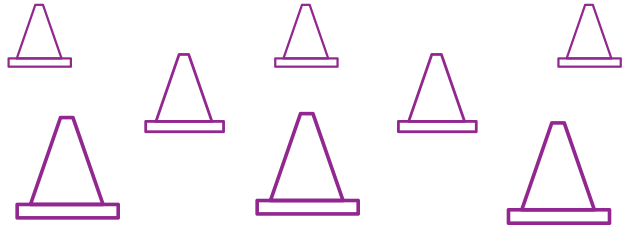
ROUND UP (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Cones, stuffed animals or pictures of animals

Setup

Scatter cones throughout the space



- *"We are going to be doing an animal round up today."*
 - *"You will need to round up all the wild animals in the field."*
 - *"You are going to gallop around the space and tag the different animals (or cones) in order to round them up."*
 - *"Try to see how many different animals you can gallop to."*
- You may also have pictures of animals scattered around the floor and they can collect them and bring them back to where they started or place in a bucket.

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[GoNoodle: Level 2 Flexibility](#)¹

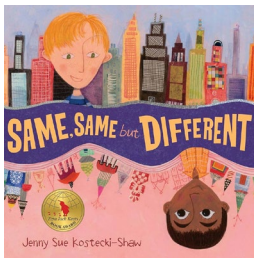
OR

[Upward Facing Dog](#) (page 16 of link)²

1. *"Lie face down with your legs straight and place your hands flat on the ground by your shoulders."*
2. *Push down with your hands and slowly straighten your arms.*
3. *Raise your head and upper body until you feel a stretch in your belly."*



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Same, Same but Different by Jenny Sue Kostecki-Shaw](#) (page 25 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 2 Endurance](#)²

OR

[Gallop](#) (page 21 of link)³

1. "Your right foot is the leader and your left foot follows behind."
2. "Take a big step forward with your right foot and then quickly bring your left foot next to it and repeat."
3. "Continue galloping and then switch to leading with your left foot."



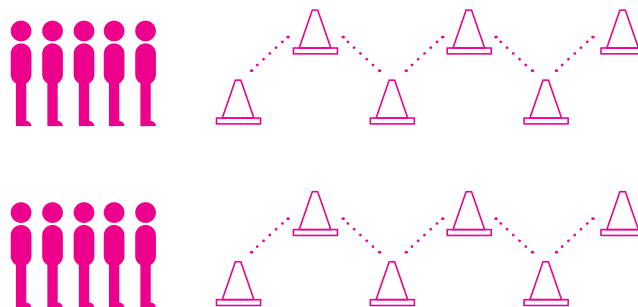
ZIGZAG (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Cones or floor markers

Setup

Set up the cones in a zig zag pattern and have students form a line behind each line of cones



- *"We have been practicing running, walking, skipping, and galloping."*
- *"Today we are going to practice running in different directions."*
- *"You will start at the first cone and run to the next cone and touch it, then you will change directions and run to the next cone."*
- *"This will be practice running in a zigzag pattern."*

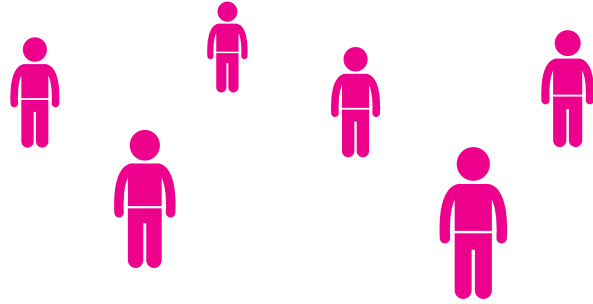
SKIPPING (5 MIN.)

Equipment

None needed

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space



- Skipping is a combination of a step and a hop on the same foot followed immediately by a step and hop on the opposite foot.
- Teach skipping using these steps:
 1. Start by taking a step forward with your right foot.
 2. Using your left foot, push off and hop off your right foot.
 3. Land on your right foot and place your left foot forward.
 4. Push off with your right foot and hop on your left foot, landing on your left foot.
 5. Repeat this, using the phrase “step, hop, switch” to help students remember what to do.

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[GoNoodle: Level 2 Flexibility](#)¹

OR

[Upward Facing Dog](#) (page 16 of link)²

1. *"Lie face down with your legs straight and place your hands flat on the ground by your shoulders."*
2. *Push down with your hands and slowly straighten your arms."*
3. *Raise your head and upper body until you feel a stretch in your belly."*



WALKING AND RUNNING REVIEW

- *"We have learned a lot of new games and skills throughout this unit."*
- *"Can you remember some of the things we practiced during our Young Athletes time?"*
- *"Today we are going to wrap up our walking and running unit with creating your own booklet."*
- *"This booklet is for you to help you remember some of the activities we worked on."*
- *"We played a game called hidden treasure where you had to run and lift a cone to find something underneath as well as did an obstacle course where we practice running in a zigzag pattern and around objects."*

[Walking & Running Booklet printable](#)

HOME CONNECTIONS

Games and activities to do at home:

Send home [the newsletter](#) and include these game ideas they can use at home with their flashcards:

- Future Skaters
- Hidden Treasure
- Run and Carry
- Heavy Feet, Light Feet
- Obstacle Course
- Fire Drill
- Animal Games

[Additional Walking & Running Skill Cards for home](#)¹

Want to continue practicing these skills?

Check out [this video](#)² to learn how to do all the activities and more at home!



UNIT 2 PRINTABLES



Walking and Running Skills

Dear Family,

Do you remember playing Follow the Leader as a child? It's not just a fun game; it's an engaging way to develop children's **motor skills** and help them connect **with other people**. It's also one of several games in Young Athletes that we play to develop **walking and running skills**. As children develop these skills, it becomes easier for them to explore their environment. Walking and running skills also allow children to take part in many different recreational activities and sport games.

We've been working on these skills through a variety of activities, and having a lot of fun along the way. Some of our favorite Young Athletes activities involve walking or running to an object; completing an obstacle course; and running forward, backward, and sideways. We'd love for you to reinforce walking and running skills at home with your child. Follow the Leader is a perfect game for the whole family. Lead your child in walking slowly, marching and walking with arms out to the side. After a round or two, invite your child to take a turn as the leader. It's sure to be a big confidence booster!

Sincerely,

Teacher



Young Athletes activities develop self-confidence in children.



Healthy Habits

Children love catchy songs, so why not use familiar tunes to encourage healthy habits? Try singing this song with your child to promote good hygiene.

Wash, Wash, Wash Your Hands

Sung to "Row, Row, Row Your Boat"

Wash, wash, wash your hands;

Wash the dirt away.

Before you eat, before you sleep

And after outdoor play.



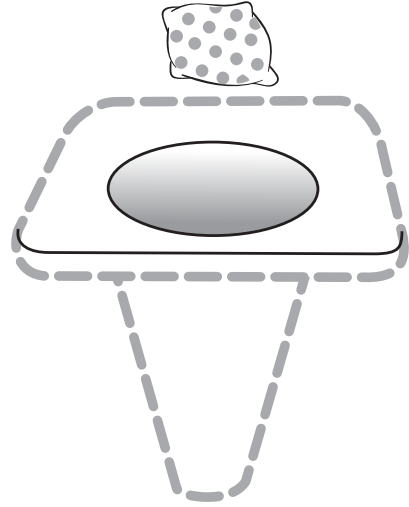
Great Gains

The benefits of Young Athletes activities are impressive. Children with intellectual disabilities who participated in the eight-week Young Athletes curriculum demonstrated seven months' development in motor skills. Children who did not participate showed a gain of three months' development.



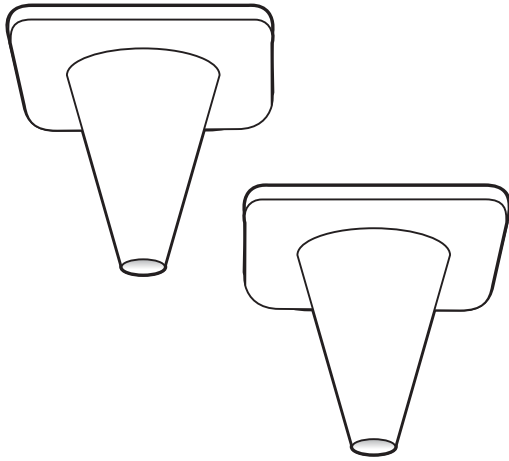
Class News

1 I can walk to a cone and look under.



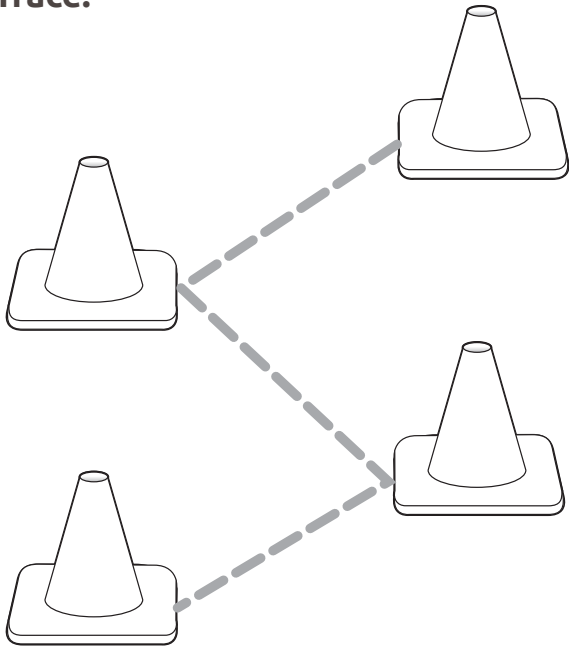
Trace.

2 I can go around.



Color.

Trace.



3 I can follow the cones.

Let's Practice & Play

Name _____

's

Activities

Walking and Running



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Directions for families: Cut out the booklet on the bold line. Fold the page on the horizontal dashed line, then on the vertical dashed line so the cover is on the outside. Draw and color with your child to fill in the booklet. As you do, discuss the activities and how much fun they are. Reread the mini-book periodically, especially before or after you've practiced the activities together.



RUN



HOP



JUMP



LEAP



GALLOP



MARCH



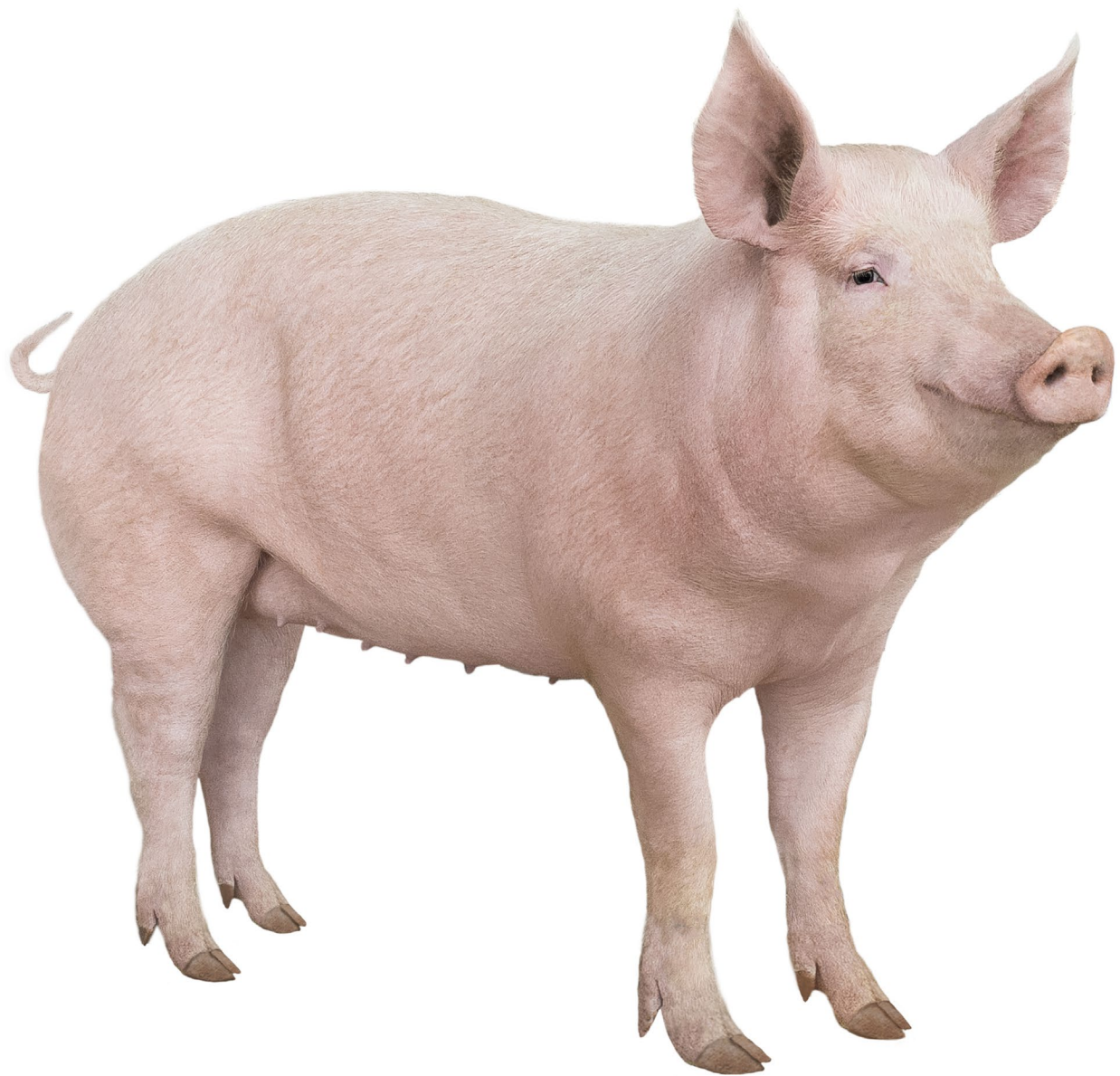
SIDE STEP



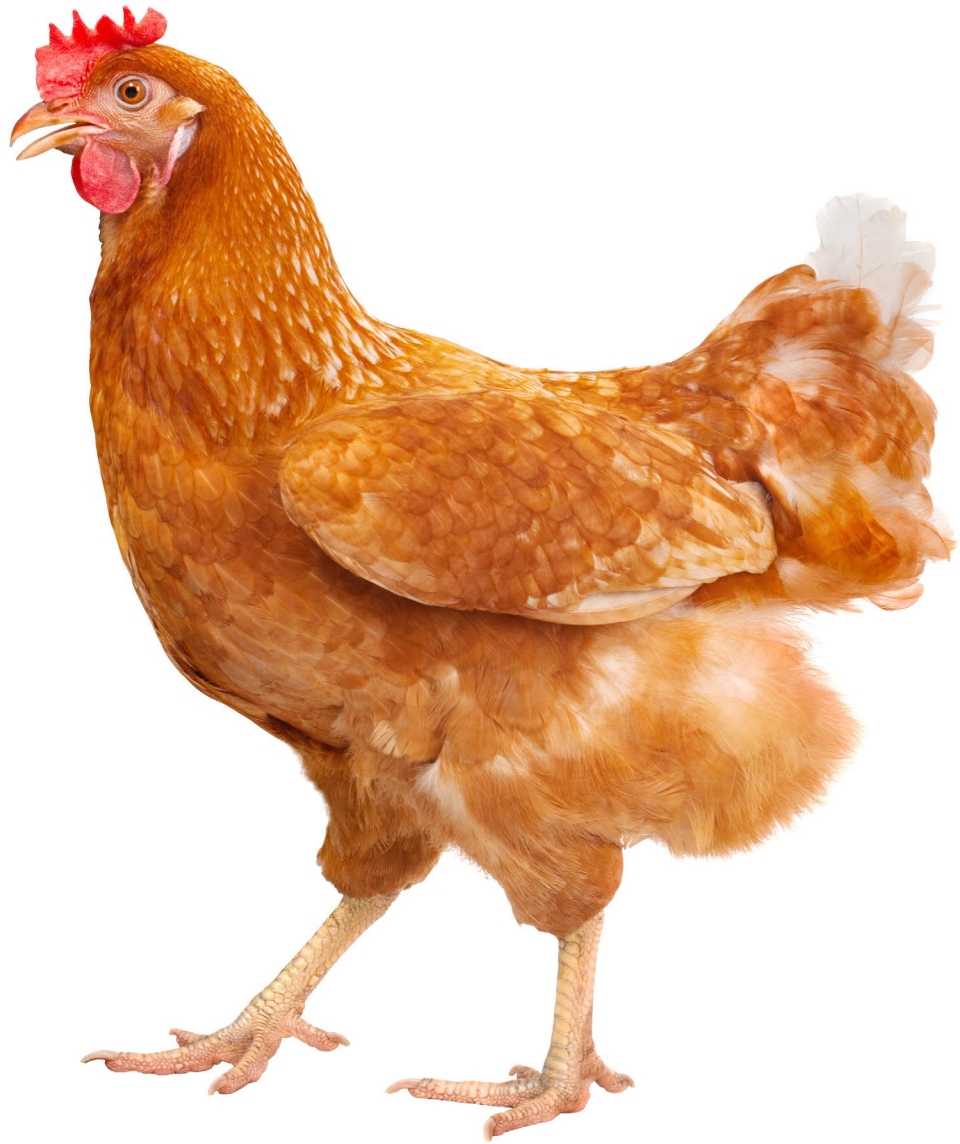


















UNIT 3

AGES 2-4

BALANCING & JUMPING

.....

Adequate balance is a requirement of many sports and gross motor activities. Poor balance can affect safety and mobility skills at home and at school.

Balance can affect a child's ability to:

- Get on and off the school bus
- Climb stairs
- Get in and out of a car
- Feel comfortable on playground equipment at school or a park
- Walk on grass or sand
- Walk up a curb
- Kick or throw a ball

There are many factors that can have an effect on balance including: visual impairments, vestibular difficulties and low muscle tone. A child will typically have the best balance when their eyes are open, feet are wide apart, they are close to the ground and the surface they are standing on is firm, even, and stable. Standing with their feet together or eyes closed will likely cause a child to sway.



Balancing

BASIC:

- Able to walk on a line
- Able to stand on a balance beam
- Able to stand on one foot for less than 10 seconds

PROFICIENT:

- Able to stand on one foot for 10 seconds
- Able to walk across a 4 inch balance beam

ADVANCED:

- Able to stand on one foot for 60+ seconds
- Able to balance on tiptoes with eyes closed for 10 seconds

Jumping

BASIC:

- Minimal arm action
- Feet do not leave or return to the floor simultaneously
- No preparation to jumping
- No bending of hip and knees on landing

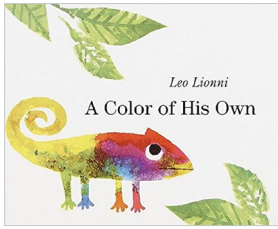
PROFICIENT:

- Arms used without full range
- Two foot takeoff, loses balance on landing
- Slight crouch when preparing to jump
- Bending of hips and knees on landing

ADVANCED:

- Arms extended backwards and upwards with deep crouch when preparing to jump
- Two foot takeoff and landing, balance maintained
- Hips and knees fully extended at takeoff
- Hips and knees bend on landing

LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[A Color of His Own by Leo Lionni](#) (page 27 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[Fit 5 Strength Level 1 Video](#)²

OR

[Fit 5 Strength Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 8-10 of link)³

- Straight Leg Raises
- Push-ups on the wall
- Curl-ups



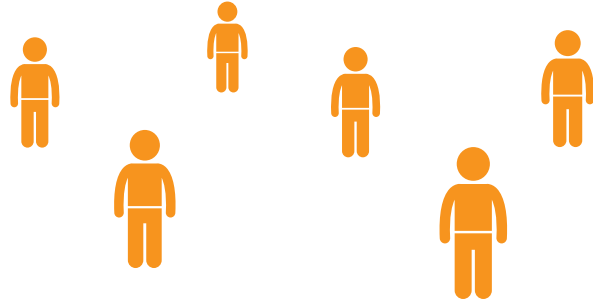
MOVING TO A BEAT (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- A way to play music

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space



- *"Today we are going to learn what a beat is."*
- *"We are going to check our pulse to help us learn what a beat is."*
- *"Use your index and middle finger and put it on your wrist 'this is how to find your pulse.'"*
- Show students how to tap out the pulse or beat on their leg.
- *"Your heartbeat is similar to the beat of music."*
- Tell students how they can listen to the beat as they listen to the music.
- Pick a song that has a good beat and have students practice stomping to the beat or clapping along.

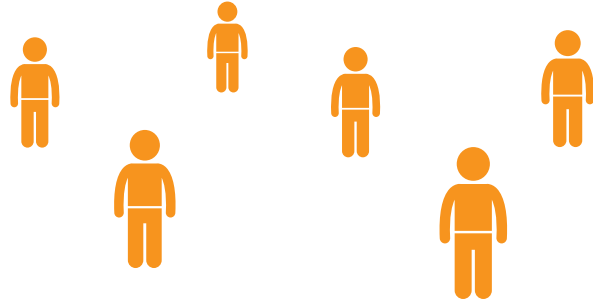
FREEZE DANCE (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- A way to play music

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space



- *“Today we are going to end our time with a game of ‘Freeze Dance.’”*
- *“You get to show off your favorite dance moves while you hear the music.”*
- *“When the music stops, you need to freeze.”*
- *“Every time the music starts again, you get to dance.”*
- *“Try to think of as many different dance moves as possible.”*

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

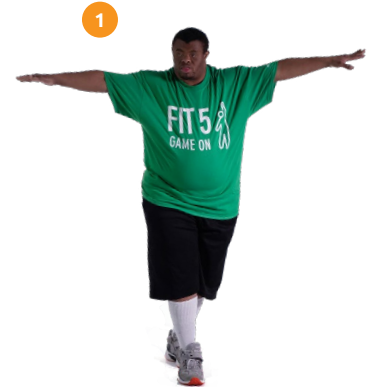
"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 1 Video](#)¹

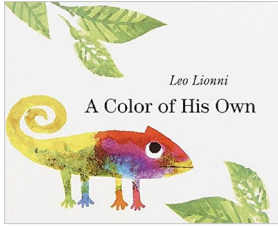
OR

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 11-13 of link)²

- Calf Stretch
- Child's Pose
- Knee to Chest
- Tandem Stance



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[A Color of His Own by Leo Lionni](#) (page 27 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

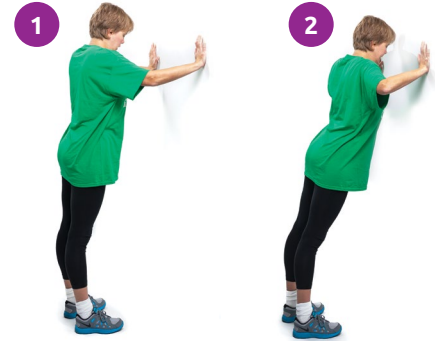
STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[Fit 5 Strength Level 1 Video](#)²

OR

[Fit 5 Strength Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 8-10 of link)³

- Straight Leg Raises
- Push-ups on the wall
- Curl-ups



SCARF DANCING (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- 1 scarf for each student

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space with a scarf



- *“Today we will be dancing with scarves.”*
- *“Before I turn on some music to dance to, let’s repeat after me.”*
- *“Copy what I do with your scarf.”*
- Turn on the music and let students move in different ways and try out different moves.
- Throughout the music call out the movements you practiced and let students incorporate them into their dancing.
- Possible Moves:
 - » Clockwise
 - » Counter clockwise
 - » Straight lines from top to bottom
 - » Wavy lines
 - » Zip zag lines
 - » Loops
 - » Draw a square
 - » Draw a triangle
 - » Draw different letters or numbers in the air

Handwriting Connection

These are all movements that relate to pre-writing skills and help them increase their gross motor movements.

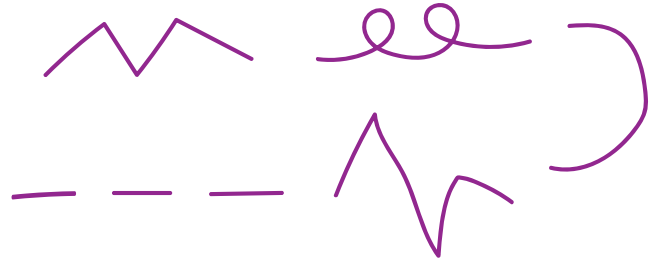
LINE WALKING (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Chalk or tape

Setup

Use chalk or tape to create a variety of lines that students will follow



- *"Today we are going to be doing some silly line walking."*
- *"You will start here and practice balancing along the different lines."*
- *"When you get to the end of a line, you can jump off and walk to the next one."*
- *"There are lots of lines in this obstacle course."*
- *"Try to balance on them all."*

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

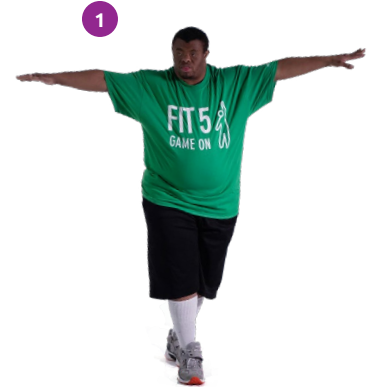
"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 1 Video](#)¹

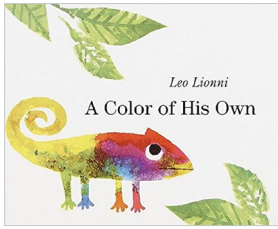
OR

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 11-13 of link)²

- Calf Stretch
- Child's Pose
- Knee to Chest
- Tandem Stance



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[A Color of His Own by Leo Lionni](#) (page 27 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[Fit 5 Strength Level 1 Video](#)²

OR

[Fit 5 Strength Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 8-10 of link)³

- Straight Leg Raises
- Push-ups on the wall
- Curl-ups



LINE JUMPING (10 MIN.)

Equipment

- Tape or chalk

Setup

Make 6 lines out of tape or chalk, one set of 6 lines for each partnership



- *"Today we will be line jumping."*
- *"You and your partner have a set of 6 lines that you will be using to help us practice jumping, stepping, reaching, and stretching."*
- *"First we will practice jumping from line to line."*
- *"Use both feet to jump and land on each line."*
- Encourage both partners or everyone in the group to go through it once or twice.
- *"Next we are going to try jumping backwards."*
- *"See if you can land on each line."*
- Try these other variations
 - » Jump on one foot
 - » Side step
 - » How far can you stretch? Keep your feet at the first line and walk your hands out to see how far you can stretch.
 - » How long are you? Lay down with your feet at the first line and see how long you are.

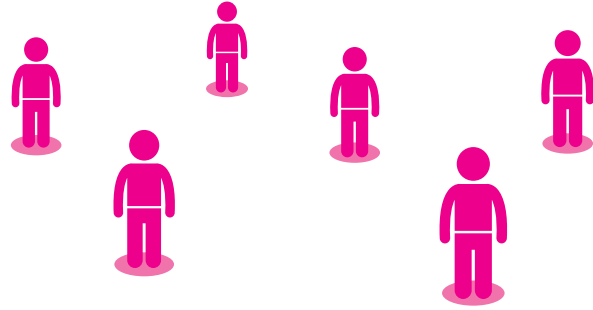
TREES IN THE FOREST (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Floor markers
- Scarves

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space on a floor marker



- *“Everyone needs to be standing on a floor marker for this activity.”*
- *“You are going to pretend to be a tree, and you are planted on your floor marker.”*
- *“We are going to have a few students be wind, and they are going to come around with a scarf.”*
- *“When you feel the scarf or it is close to you, pretend you are a tree, swaying in the breeze.”*



COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

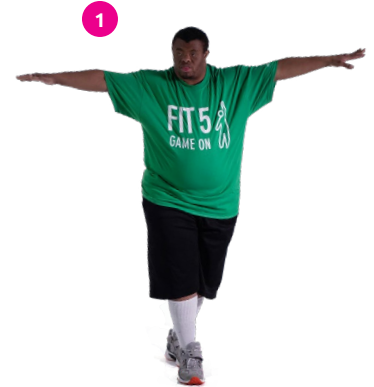
"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 1 Video](#)¹

OR

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 11-13 of link)²

- Calf Stretch
- Child's Pose
- Knee to Chest
- Tandem Stance



WALKING AND RUNNING REVIEW

- *“We have learned a lot of new games and skills throughout this unit.”*
- *“Can you remember some of the things we practiced during our Young Athletes time?”*
- *“Today we are going to wrap up our balance and jumping unit.”*
- *“We practiced balancing on one and both feet and how to jump high and far.”*
- *We even practiced jumping like different animals.”*
- *“Let’s complete the book to help remind us of some of our new skills.”*

[Balance & Jumping Booklet printable](#)

HOME CONNECTIONS

Games and activities to do at home:

Send home the newsletter and include these game ideas they can use at home with their flashcards.

- Balance Beam
- Follow the Coach
- Step, Jump and Grab
- Rock Hop
- Trees in the Forest
- Leaping Lizards
- Jumping High

[Additional Balance & Jumping Skill Cards for home¹](#)

Want to continue practicing these skills?

Check out [this video²](#) to learn how to do all the activities and more at home!





UNIT 3 PRINTABLES



Balance and Jumping Skills

Dear Family,

I am so pleased by the progress children have made with Young Athletes activities! We are working on our **motor, social and emotional skills**—all through play. I'm especially glad to see children having fun. Enjoying regular sport and play activities in childhood is a key part of establishing a strong foundation for lifelong physical fitness.

Currently, we're emphasizing **balance and jumping skills**. Having good balance helps a child develop confidence for jumping. Balance and jumping skills are important for many recreational activities and sports. A wide variety of Young Athletes activities focus on these skill areas, including walking heel-to-toe, walking on a balance beam, jumping forward and jumping over an obstacle. As always, we match the activities to each child's abilities to ensure success. A great way to help at home is to encourage your child to copy actions that require balance. For example, stand on tiptoes or stand on one foot and have your child imitate you. Try having your child stand on tiptoes as they brush their teeth. Just a few minutes of practice each day makes a difference!

Sincerely,

Teacher

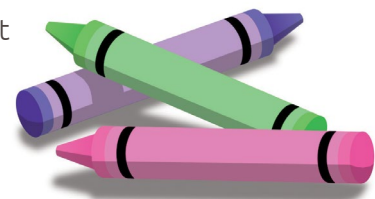


Balance helps children climb stairs and walk on uneven surfaces, like grass or sand.



Healthy Habits

Go screen-free a few afternoons each week or for a certain amount of time each day. Turn off the TV and set electronics aside. Then encourage your child to draw, color, dance, listen to music, play outside or enjoy other screen-free activities. There are countless possibilities!



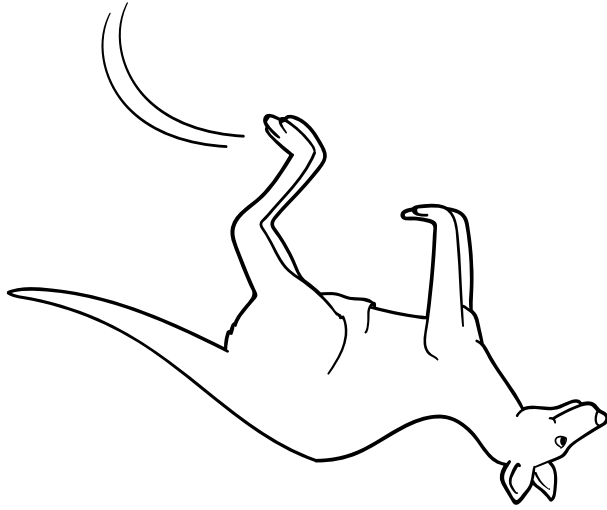
Benefits for All

Young Athletes inspires acceptance through inclusive play. When children with and without intellectual disabilities play together, they learn about and understand each other.



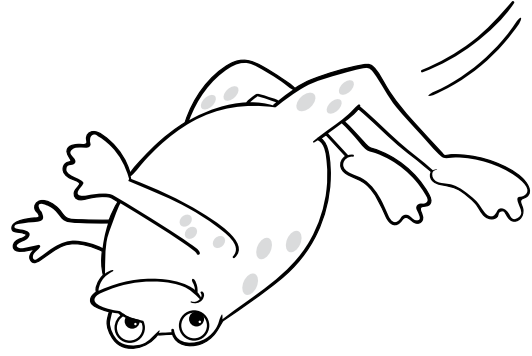
Class News

2 A kangaroo can jump.



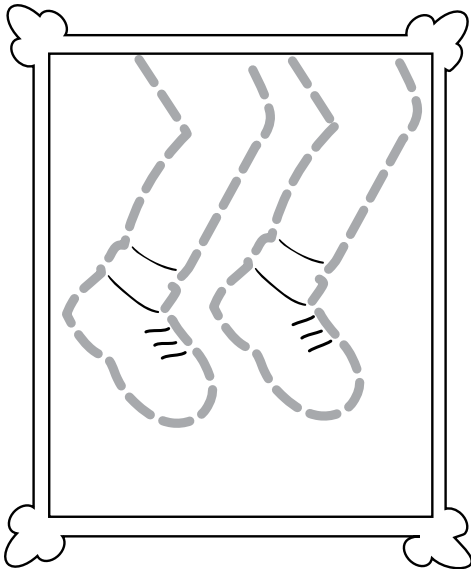
Color.

1 A frog can jump.



Color.

Trace.



I can jump too!

3

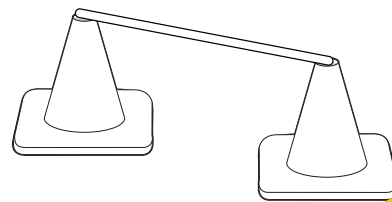
Let's Practice & Play

's

Name _____

Activities

Balance and Jumping



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Directions for families: Cut out the booklet on the bold line. Fold the page on the horizontal dashed line, then on the vertical dashed line so the cover is on the outside. Draw and color with your child to fill in the booklet. As you do, discuss the activities and how much fun they are. Reread the mini-book periodically, especially before or after you've practiced the activities together.



UNIT 4

AGES 2-4

TRAPPING & CATCHING

.....

Trapping is when a child stops a ball with their legs or feet. Catching is when a child uses his hands to receive a ball that is thrown, bounced or rolled.

Trapping and catching require:

- Visual tracking and eye-hand coordination
(Unit 1: Foundational Skills)
- Stability and strength
(Unit 1: Foundational Skills, Unit 3: Balance & Jumping)

Trapping and catching are required in many sports, such as soccer, basketball, and softball.



Catching

BASIC:

- Palms held upwards, thumbs pointing outwards
- Arms outstretched and stiff, fingers tense
- Trap ball on body
- Avoidance reaction (doesn't want to catch the ball)
- Body movement is limited, arms remain stationary while ball is in flight

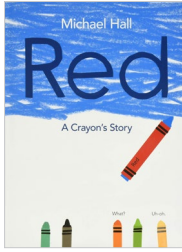
PROFICIENT:

- Palms face each other, thumbs point upwards
- Elbows flexed
- Hands and arms brought towards body
- Less avoidance reaction
- Adjusts arms and hands to flight of ball, eyes track the ball

ADVANCED:

- Eyes follow ball, hands and arms adjust to level of ball in flight
- Hands grasp ball in well-timed motion, arms "give" to absorb force of ball
- No avoidance reaction

LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Red, A Crayon's Story by Michael Hall](#) (page 29 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 3 Strength](#)²

OR

[Frog Squats](#) (page 34 of link)³

1. Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and your arms at your sides.
2. Bend your knees to squat down and touch the ground between your feet.
3. Return to the starting position.



ROLLING AND TRAPPING (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- 1 ball for each partnership

Setup

Put students in pairs and have them sit facing their partner with their legs stretched wide and feet touching



- *"Today we will be practicing the skill of trapping."*
 - *"Trapping is when you use your hands, arms, or body to stop a ball."*
 - *"In this first activity, you are going to roll and trap the ball with your partner."*
 - *"Sit facing your partner with your legs stretched wide and your feet touching."*
 - *"You will roll the ball to your partner and they will catch it or stop it with their hands and roll it back."*
- After students have had practice with this, bring them all into a circle and have them sit with their legs wide and feet touching and practice rolling the ball in the larger circle.

Lead Up Activity

Use a heavier ball or larger ball to help students practice trapping before moving on to a smaller one.

Additional Activity

Have students kneel during this game to increase the challenge.



GOALIE CIRCLE (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Ball

Setup

Students should all stand in a circle with their feet a little more than hip distance apart and touching the foot of the person next to them



- *"Today's game is called 'Goalie Circle' and you all get to be goalies."*
 - *"We are going to stand in a circle with our feet touching the person next to us."*
 - *"I will start passing the ball to someone and if it starts to roll towards your legs, you need to trap it before it goes through your legs."*
 - *"If the ball goes through your legs, you are out."*
- Once a student is out, wait for 2–3 more students to be out and have them start another circle of 'practicing' where no one is out and students can join as they get out in the original circle.

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

“To cool down today, we are going to practice doing some balancing and breathing. Follow along with the video to help bring our heart rate down and increase our balance.”

[Fit 5 Balance Level 1 Video](#)¹

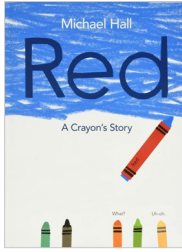
OR

[Fit 5 Balance Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 13-16 of link)²

- Tandem Stance
- Heel Raises
- Toe Raises
- Narrow Base Torso Twists



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Red, A Crayon's Story by Michael Hall](#) (page 29 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[Fit 5 Endurance Level 3 Video](#)²

OR

[Crab Kicks](#) (page 32 of link)³

1. Sit with your knees bent and your feet on the ground. Place your hands on the ground behind you with your fingers facing backward.
2. Raise your hips up so you are in a crab position.
3. Kick your right leg up, lower it down, and then kick your left leg up. Keep kicking and switching legs.



ROLLING PRACTICE (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Hula hoops
- Balls

Setup

Lay out the hula hoops on one side of the space on the floor and students line up on the other side



- *"We are going to practice rolling the ball today."*
- *"There are hula hoops on the ground and you are going to try to roll the ball into the hula hoop from this side."*
- *"If the ball goes into the hula hoop and stays there, you can leave it and run and pick up a ball that is not in a hula hoop."*
- *"The goal is to get all of the balls into the hula hoops."*

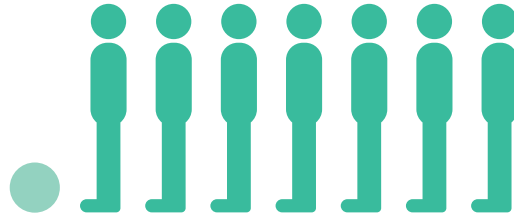
OVER UNDER (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Ball

Setup

Students should stand in a line, all facing the same direction with the ball starting on one end



- Have students stand in a line, all facing the same direction.
- Hand the ball to the student who is first in line.
- The first student will pass the ball over their head to the person behind them.
- The second student will pass the ball under their legs to the person behind them.
- Continue to alternate over, under until it gets to the end of the line.
- The student at the end can run the ball to the start of the line and start it all over again.
- **Optional:** Divide students into two lines and have them compete against each other to see who can do it faster.

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

“To cool down today, we are going to practice doing some balancing and breathing. Follow along with the video to help bring our heart rate down and increase our balance.”

[Fit 5 Balance Level 1 Video](#)¹

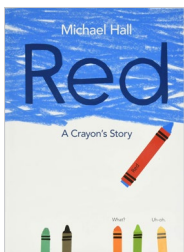
OR

[Fit 5 Balance Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 13-16 of link)²

- Tandem Stance
- Heel Raises
- Toe Raises
- Narrow Base Torso Twists



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Red, A Crayon's Story by Michael Hall](#) (page 29 of link)¹

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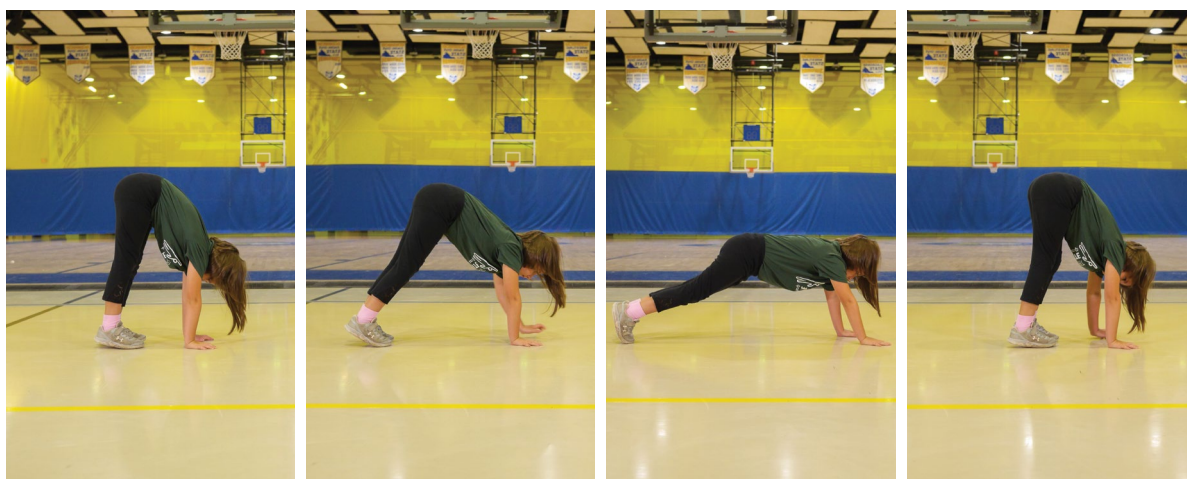
STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 1 Strength](#)²

OR

[Inchworms](#) (page 14 of link)³

1. "Stand with your feet shoulder width apart. Bend forward and place your hands on the ground. Keep your knees a little bit bent."
2. "Walk your hands forward until you reach a plank position."
3. "Walk your feet back in to meet your hands."



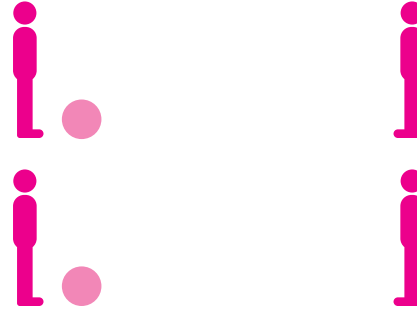
LOW BALL CATCH (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- 1 ball for each pair of students

Setup

Have students stand in a line, facing their partner and a ball for each pair of students



- *"Today we are going to continue to practice catching."*
- *"We also are going to practice some social skills while we do it."*
- *"Let's start off with facing your partner and introducing yourself."*
- *"I'm sure you already know each other, but this is good practice. You can say 'Hi, my name is _____'."*
- Let each partner introduce themselves.
- *"Now, we are going to practice tossing the ball at waist level or lower."*
- *"When you are catching the ball, keep your fingers pointing down and arms out."*
- Let students practice with their partner for a few minutes, throwing and catching the ball.
- *After a few minutes, signal that they should pause and say "Now we are going to rotate."*
- *"One line is going to move to the right so that you have a new partner. Before you rotate, you can say 'See you later' to your partner."*
- Have students continue practicing catching and throwing.



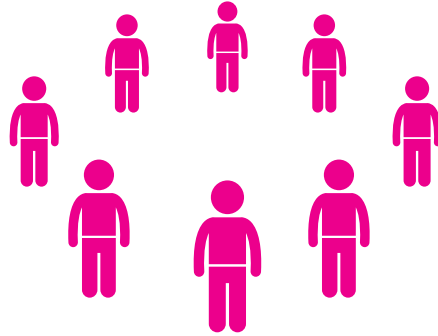
CIRCLE BALL (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- 2-4 balls

Setup

Students should stand in a large circle



- *"Today's activity is called 'Circle Ball.'"*
- *"I am going to start by passing the ball to the person next to me."*
- *"After they catch it, they will turn to the person next to them and toss it to them."*
- *"Once the ball is halfway around the circle, I will add another ball to the circle, so make sure you are paying attention to where the ball is."*
- Increase the size of the circle to challenge students.

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

“To cool down today, we are going to practice doing some balancing and breathing. Follow along with the video to help bring our heart rate down and increase our balance.”

[Fit 5 Balance Level 1 Video](#)¹

OR

[Fit 5 Balance Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 13-16 of link)²

- Tandem Stance
- Heel Raises
- Toe Raises
- Narrow Base Torso Twists



TRAPPING & CATCHING REVIEW

- *“We have learned a lot of new games and skills throughout this unit.”*
- *“Can you remember some of the things we practiced during our Young Athletes time?”*
- *“Today we are going to wrap up our Trapping & Catching unit.”*
- *“We have worked on skills that are important for a lot of different sports, like basketball, softball, and soccer.”*
- *“We will continue practicing these skills for the rest of the year.”*
- *“To help us remember what we worked on, we are going to create a booklet to bring home to talk about trapping and catching.”*

[Foundational Skills Booklet printable](#)

HOME CONNECTIONS

Games and activities to do at home:

Send home [the newsletter printable](#) and include these game ideas they can use at home with their flashcards.

Activities from skill cards that were covered in this unit:

- Rolling and Trapping
- Goalie Drill
- Bubble Catch
- Big Ball Catch
- Low Ball Catch
- High Ball Catch
- Bounce Catch
- Circle Ball

[Additional Trapping & Catching Skill Cards for home](#)¹

Want to continue practicing these skills?

Check out [this video](#)² to learn how to do all the activities and more at home!





UNIT 4 PRINTABLES



Trapping and Catching Skills

Dear Family,

Our Young Athletes activities continue to be wonderful learning experiences. We've been walking, running, balancing, jumping and more. Now we're introducing **trapping and catching skills**. Trapping is stopping a ball with the body and not hands, while catching is stopping a ball with just hands. Both skills require **strength, balance and hand-eye coordination**. That sounds complex, but we start with basic activities and build on each child's success. There is no failure in Young Athletes; we encourage children to have fun as they try new skills.

When it comes to fun, catching bubbles tops the list for many young children. Playing with bubbles is an entertaining activity for the entire family. It's also a no-fail way to strengthen hand-eye coordination. Blow bubbles toward your child and invite him or her to catch them. Ask your child to try catching bubbles with two hands and then with one. To reinforce language skills, say "Pop!" when a bubble bursts and "Splat!" when a bubble touches the ground. Playtimes like this are not only memorable for everyone involved, but they also help your child develop valuable skills.

Sincerely,

Teacher



Children need strength and balance to trap and catch a ball.



Healthy Habits

Playtime is even more enjoyable for a child when others join in. Invite siblings and other children in your community to play. There's no need for expensive equipment; just grab a ball or two and have children roll, toss and bounce. Everyone benefits by getting fit, learning acceptance, and gaining group play skills such as sharing and taking turns.



Lessons for Life

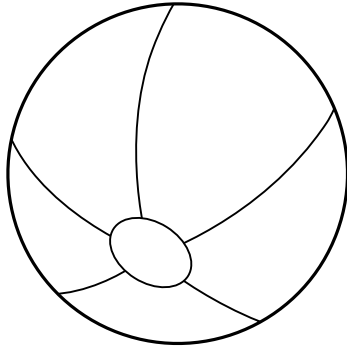
Physical activity is not only a great way to spend free time; it's good for you! That's a message children learn from Young Athletes. The program prepares children for Special Olympics activities that they can participate in when they are older. It also sets the stage for a life of physical activity and friendships.



Class News

2

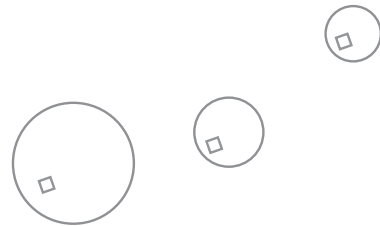
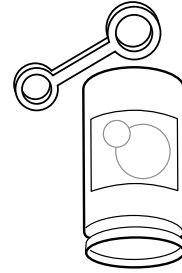
I can catch a big ball.



Color.

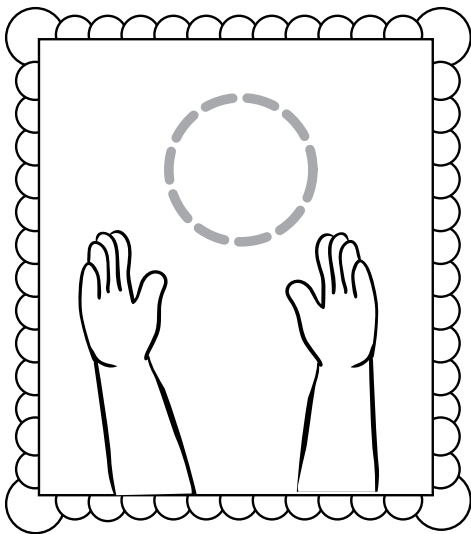
1

I can catch a bubble.



Circle a bubble.

Trace.



I like to play catch!

3

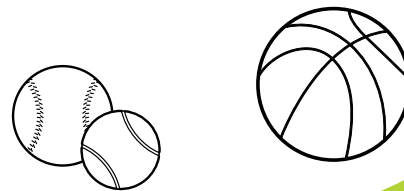
Let's Practice & Play

's

Name _____

Activities

Trapping and Catching



 Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Directions for families: Cut out the booklet on the bold line. Fold the page on the horizontal dashed line, then on the vertical dashed line so the cover is on the outside. Draw and color with your child to fill in the booklet. As you do, discuss the activities and how much fun they are. Reread the mini-book periodically, especially before or after you've practiced the activities together.



UNIT 5

AGES 2-4

THROWING

.....

Throwing requires strength, flexibility, balance, and coordination. Early development of grip and release begins with two-handed underhand tossing of a light weight, medium size ball. A good rule of thumb to determine if the ball is a good size, is the ball can be easily lifted above their head with two hands. Progression then continues to two-handed overhand throwing and then one-hand throwing. Throwing is an essential component in many sports and mastering it will allow children to feel comfortable joining in physical education classes and recess games.



Throwing

BASIC:

- The ball is held in the palm of the hand, fingers spread to release the ball
- Action is caused by bending the elbow without trunk rotation
- Trunk remains facing the target, no rotation
- Follow through is forward and downward, bending at the waist
- No weight transfer, feet remain stationary

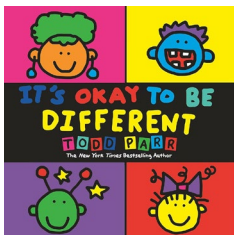
PROFICIENT:

- Arms move backwards and sideways behind their head
- Trunk and shoulders rotate towards the throwing side when preparing to throw
- Follow through with trunk bending and forward motion of body and arm

ADVANCED:

- Arm swings backwards and upward in preparation, elbow fully extended to release ball
- Shift weight to back foot when preparing to throw
- Full trunk rotation
- Follow through with hips, trunk and arm

LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[It's Okay to be Different by Todd Parr](#) (page 32 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

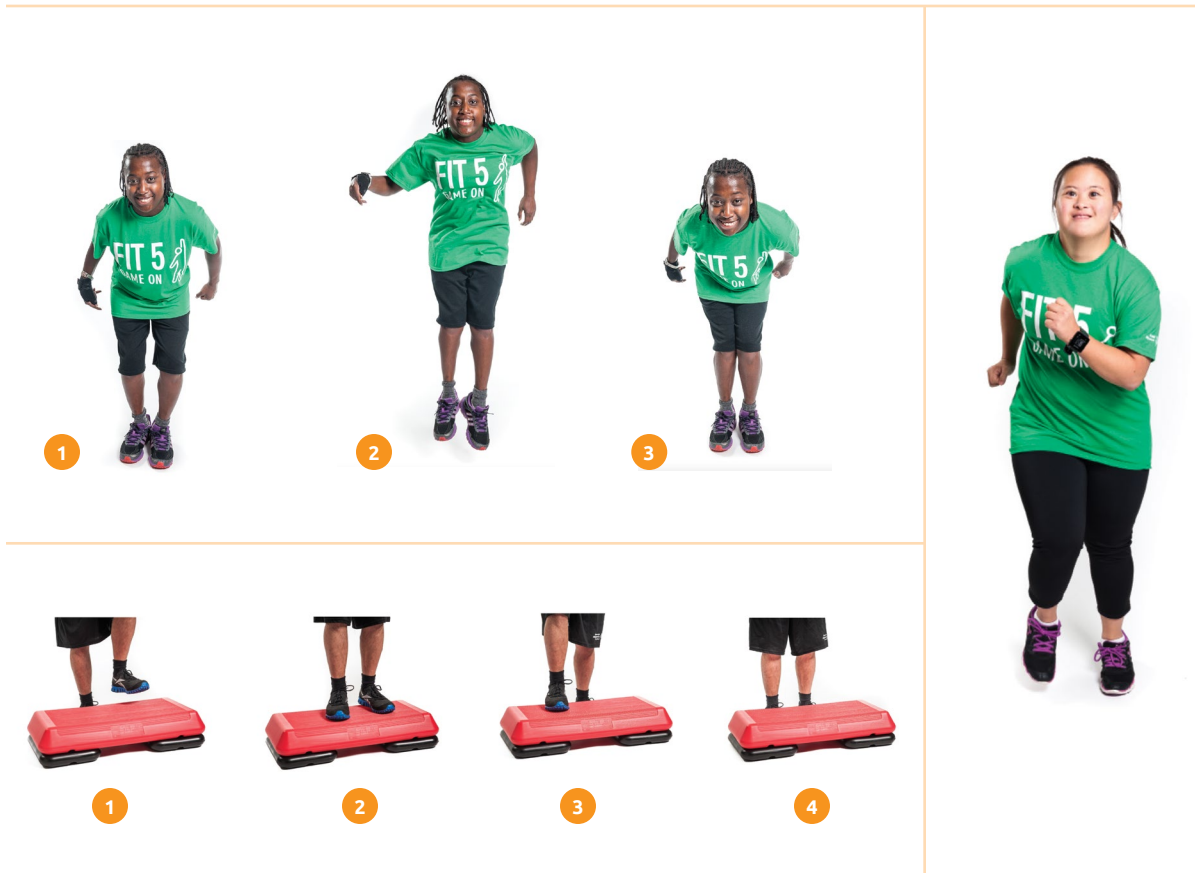
STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[Fit 5 Endurance Level 2 Video](#)²

OR

[Fit 5 Endurance Level 2 Cards](#) (pages 19-21 of link)³

- Side-to-Side Hops
- Jog in Place
- Step Ups



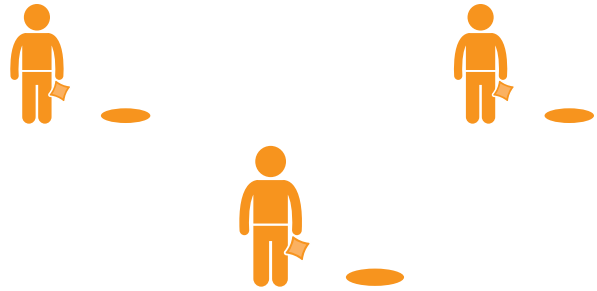
UNDERHAND THROWING (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Floor markers
- Bean bag

Setup

Students should place a floor marker a few feet away and hold their bean bag



- *“Today we are going to learn how to throw underhand.”*
- *“We will use this skill in a lot of different activities.”*
- Explain what dominant hand means.
- *“The first step in the underhand throw is to have the ball in your dominant hand and take a step forward with your opposite foot.”*
- *“Bring your arm back and swing it forward and release the beanbag as you swing your hand forward.”*
- *“Finally, end by pointing your hand in the direction that you want the bean bag to travel.”*
- *“Let’s practice underhand throwing your bean bag.”*
- *“Place your floor marker a few feet away from you and try to throw your bean bag to land on the marker”*
- *“As you practice, move the floor marker closer and farther away from you.”*



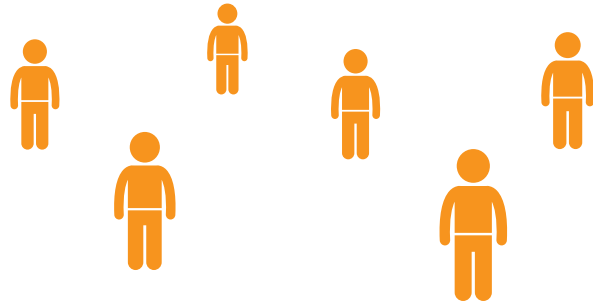
FREEZE TAG: UNDERHAND THROWING (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Bean bags

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space



- *"We are going to end our lesson by playing 'Freeze Tag.'"*
- *"We will have two students who are the taggers."*
- *"If they tag you, you need to freeze."*
- *"We will also have two students who will be able to unfreeze you."*
- *"In this game, the students who can unfreeze you will have a bean bag."*
- *"They will underhand throw the bean bag to you if you are frozen."*
- *"If you catch it, you are unfrozen."*
- *"If you drop it, they can keep tossing it to you until you catch it and become unfrozen."*



COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 3 Video](#)¹

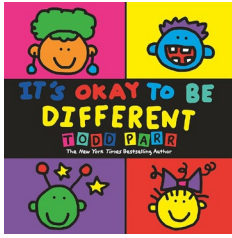
OR

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 3 Cards](#) (pages 41–42 of link)²

- Kneeling Hip Stretch
- Butterfly Stretch
- Triceps Stretch



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[It's Okay to be Different by Todd Parr](#) (page 32 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[Fit 5 Endurance Level 2 Video](#)²

OR

[Fit 5 Endurance Level 2 Cards](#) (pages 19-21 of link)³

- Side-to-Side Hops
- Jog in Place
- Step Ups



HOT POTATO (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Bean bags

Setup

Students should have a partner and face each other so you have two parallel lines. Give each pair one bean bag.



- *"Today's game is called 'Hot Potato.'"*
- *"You and your partner are going to throw your bean bag underhand to each other while I play music."*
- *"When the music stops, everyone freezes and stops throwing."*
- *"Whoever is holding the bean bag when the music stops has to do 5 jumping jacks."*

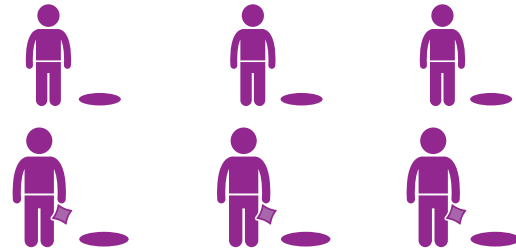
JUKSKEI (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Floor markers
- Bean bag

Setup

Students should partner up and stand in two parallel lines facing each other with a floor marker in front of each student and one bean bag per pair



- *“We will be practicing some skills used in the game Jukskei. This game is from the region of Africa.”*
- *“In the game of Jukskei, teams take turns tossing pegs at a stake. Whoever gets their peg the closest, gets points.”*
- *“Today we will be practicing underhand throwing, which is how you throw in this game.”*
- *“Your job is to underhand toss a bean bag and have it land as close to the floor marker as possible.”*
- *“Once your partner tosses the bean bag towards the floor marker, the other partner picks it up and tosses it back.”*

Jukskei is believed to have been created in the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa. Originally, people would use the wooden pins of yokes from their ox-drawn wagons as pegs to toss.



COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 3 Video¹](#)

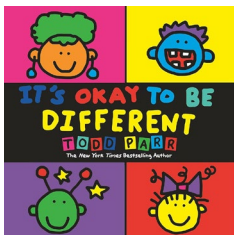
OR

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 3 Cards](#) (pages 41–42 of link)²

- Kneeling Hip Stretch
- Butterfly Stretch
- Triceps Stretch



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[It's Okay to be Different by Todd Parr](#) (page 32 of link)¹

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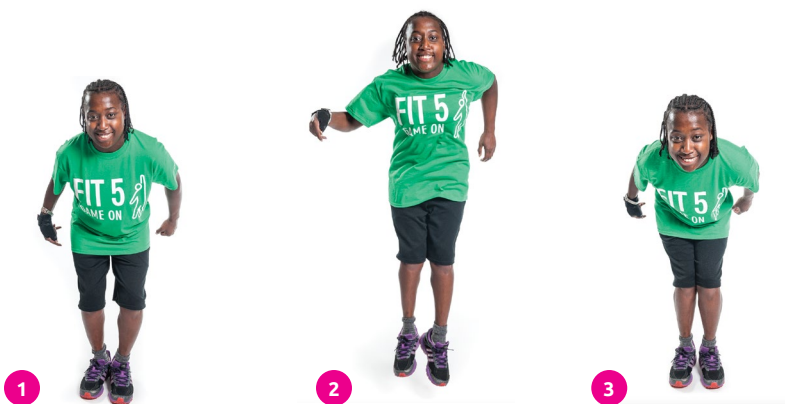
STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[Fit 5 Endurance Level 2 Video](#)²

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[Fit 5 Endurance Level 2 Cards](#) (pages 19-21 of link)³

- Side-to-Side Hops
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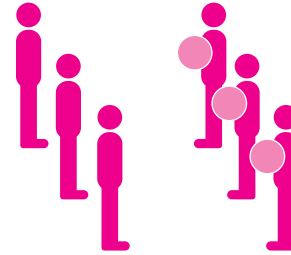
TWO-HAND UNDERTHROW (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Playground ball

Setup

Students should have a partner and be facing their partner so you have two parallel lines of students facing each other with one ball for each pair



- *“We will be practicing throwing this week.”*
- *“Our first activity will be doing a two hand underhand throw.”*
- *“Face your partner, hold the ball with two hands, and throw it underhand to your partner.”*
- *“Your partner will practice catching it and then use two hands to throw it back.”*
- *“Practice this for a few minutes and then we will increase the distance you throw.”*
- *“Take a step back and throw it again.”*
- *“See how far away from each other you can get and still catch the ball.”*



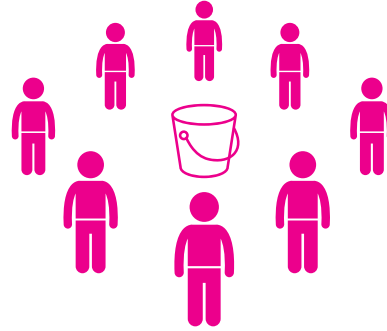
SHOOT TO SCORE BASKETBALL (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Ball
- Basket/hoop/bucket

Setup

Students should stand in a large circle around a bucket or hoop



- *"We are going to practice our throwing skills today with a game called 'Shoot to Score Basketball.'"*
- *"I am holding a basket and you are going to try to shoot the ball into the basket when it is your turn."*
- *"To start off, I will give everyone a number."*
- *"When I say a number you will pass the ball that many times around the circle."*
- *"Whoever ends up with the ball will get to throw the ball into the basket for a point."*
- *"We will keep going until the first person gets three points."*
- *"Then we will start the game over."*

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 3 Video](#)¹

OR

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 3 Cards](#) (pages 41–42 of link)²

- Kneeling Hip Stretch
- Butterfly Stretch
- Triceps Stretch



THROWING REVIEW

- *“We have learned a lot of new games and skills throughout this month.”*
- *“Can you remember some of the things we practiced during our Young Athletes time?”*
- *“Today we are going to wrap up our throwing unit.”*
- *“We practiced throwing a ball into a basket or hoop and used bean bags to throw at targets. Throwing is used in a lot of different sports!”*
- *“Let’s complete the book to help remind us of some of our new skills.”*

[Throwing Booklet printable](#)

HOME CONNECTIONS

Games and activities to do at home:

Send home [the newsletter](#) and include these game ideas they can use at home with their flashcards:

- Bowling
- Train Tunnel
- Two-Handed Underhand Toss
- One-Handed Underhand Toss
- Two-Handed Overhand Throw
- One-Handed Overhand Throw
- Target Practice
- Shoot to Score Basketball

[Additional Throwing Skill Cards for home](#)¹

Want to continue practicing these skills?

Check out [this video](#)² to learn how to do all the activities and more at home!



TEACHING TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Throwing and catching are closely linked, so you will often find yourself working on both at the same time.
- Beginner throwers will stand with their feet even, regardless of whether they are tossing underhand or throwing overhand.
- To advance the skill of throwing, encourage the student to have their feet hip-width apart with one foot slightly forward so that weight shifting and trunk rotation can occur. Floor markers can be used to encourage correct feet position.
- As throwing skills progress, the student's arm will move forward, bend at the elbow and then straighten when the ball is released. The wrist will also slap down as the ball is released.
- For the overhand throw, cue the student to have their elbow up and the hand near the ear to begin the throw.
- If the student is having difficulty releasing the ball, practice grasp and release with a beanbag or tennis ball, or release into a hoop or bucket.
- When the right hand is used for throwing, the left foot steps forward. When the left hand is used, the right foot steps forward.

UNIT 5 PRINTABLES



Throwing Skills

Dear Family,

Playing ball is a favorite pastime for many children, and it's a fabulous way to increase physical fitness. That's why I'm excited that our current Young Athletes focus is **throwing skills**. We're teaching children how to grip a ball and let go of it—key skills they'll use in sport and recreational activities when they are older. Being good at throwing helps children feel more comfortable joining in games with friends.

A great thing about this skill area is that it lends itself to **social interactions** and personal connections. Invite family members or children in the neighborhood to play catch. Older children or those with more advanced sport skills can be great models for your child. To ensure that your child achieves success throwing, try using different-size balls. If your child can easily lift a ball over his or her head with two hands, the ball is a good size. Foam balls are especially easy for young children to grip. You'll find that catching and throwing are such closely related skills, some games provide practice with both. Enjoy sharing in playtime at home and watching your child's skills grow!

Sincerely,

Teacher



Throwing involves strength, flexibility, balance and coordination.



Healthy Habits

Set the stage for nutritious food choices by talking about healthy foods during playtime. As you and your child toss a ball back and forth, name favorite healthy foods. Or tape pictures of fruit on the wall at various heights to serve as targets.

Apples

Oranges



Confidence Booster

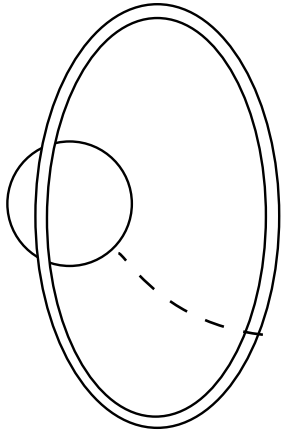
As children gain motor skills through Young Athletes activities, they also progress in social and emotional learning. They become more confident and enthusiastic. They play better with others and learn skills that they will use in school.



Class News

2

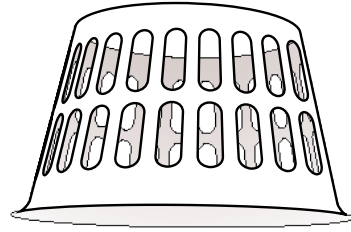
The ball goes through.



Trace the ball's path.

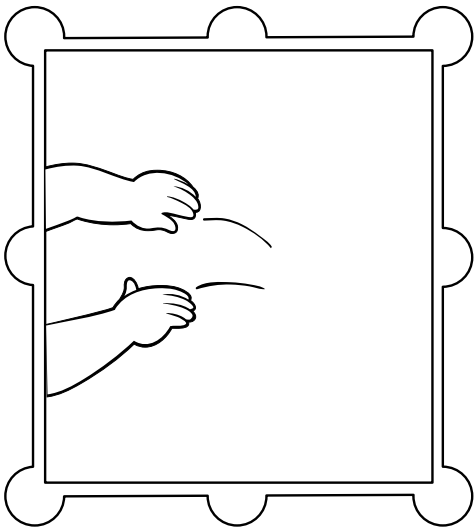
1

The ball goes in.



Color the ball.

Draw the ball.



I can throw a ball.

3

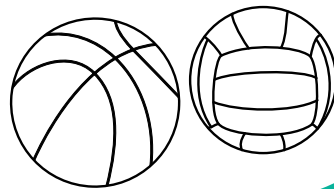
Let's Practice & Play

's

Name _____

Activities

Throwing Skills



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Directions for families: Cut out the booklet on the bold line. Fold the page on the horizontal dashed line, then on the vertical dashed line so the cover is on the outside. Draw and color with your child to fill in the booklet. As you do, discuss the activities and how much fun they are. Reread the mini-book periodically, especially before or after you've practiced the activities together.



UNIT 6

AGES 2-4

STRIKING

.....

Striking is a term used to describe an action of either hitting a ball or object with one's hand, stick, bat, paddle, or racket. Striking or even tapping a stationary ball with a fist or open hand encourages development of the skills necessary for sports such as tennis, golf, softball, volleyball, and hockey.

Striking requires many skills learned in previous units:

- Eye-hand coordination
- Spatial awareness
- Strength and flexibility
- Balance



Striking

BASIC:

- Faces the direction of the object
- No trunk rotation
- Feet stationary
- Force is applied by extending the arms and not from the core or from the rotation

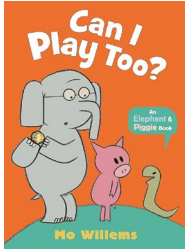
PROFICIENT:

- Some preparation by using back swing
- Trunk faces side-on in anticipation of the strike
- Some trunk rotation
- Weight shifts prior to strike
- Force is applied from extending the arms and from the rotation

ADVANCED:

- Full preparation by using a back swing
- Trunk faces side in anticipation of strike
- Rotation is in the hips and then torso
- Weight shifts to the back foot during the backswing and to the forward foot at contact

LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Can I Play, Too? by Mo Willems](#) (page 35 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 1 Endurance](#)²

OR

[Two Foot Jump](#) (page 10 of link)³

1. "Stand with your feet together."
2. "Jump up and down on two feet and land softly."

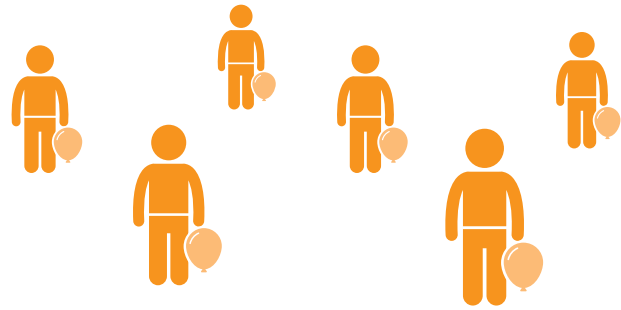


BALLOON STRIKING (5 MIN.)**Equipment**

- 1 balloon for each student

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space with a balloon



- *“This week we are going to work on a skill called striking.”*
- *“When we are striking, we use something such as our hand or a bat or racket to hit an object such as a ball or balloon.”*
- *“It is important to keep your eye on the object while you are striking to help you concentrate on what you are doing.”*
- *“Today we will start by striking a balloon.”*
- *“Using an open hand, try to hit the balloon up into the air as high as you can.”*
- *“See how many times you can do this without the balloon falling on the ground.”*

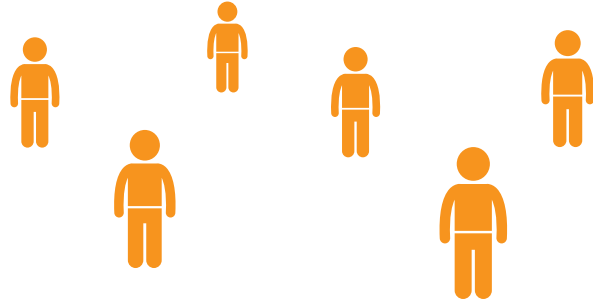
GROUP BALLOON STRIKING (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Balloon or beach ball

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space



- *“Now that we have had practice with striking a balloon on our own, we are going to work as a team to keep multiple balloons off of the ground.”*
- *“This will involve communication and teamwork.”*
- *“I am going to start off by throwing one balloon into the group and I will keep adding balloons.”*
- *“Let's see how many we can keep them all off of the ground.”*

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 2 Video](#)¹

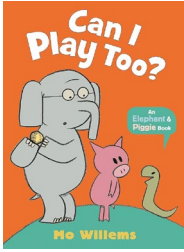
OR

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 2 Cards](#) (pages 26-28 of link)²

- Quadriceps Stretch
- Modified Hurdler's Stretch
- Chest Stretch



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Can I Play, Too? by Mo Willems](#) (page 35 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

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STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 1 Endurance](#)²

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[Two Foot Jump](#) (page 10 of link)³

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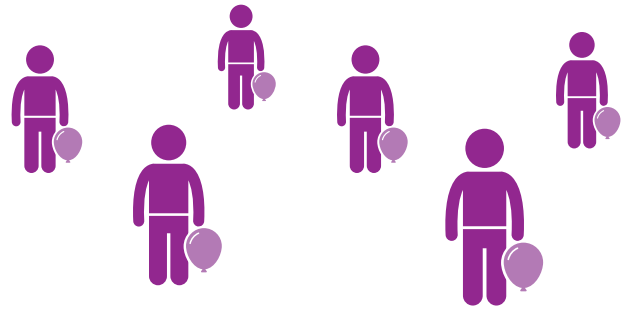
COACH SAYS (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- 1 balloon for each student

Setup

Students should spread out throughout the space with a balloon



- *“For our warm up activity today we are going to play ‘Coach Says.’”*
- *“I am going to call out a different body part and you are going to practice striking your balloon with that body part.”*
- *“For example, we will start off by striking the balloon into the air with our hand.”*
- *“Now switch to striking the balloon with your elbow.”*
- Other ideas:
 - » Finger
 - » Knee
 - » Foot
 - » Head
 - » Ear
 - » Heel
 - » Shoulder

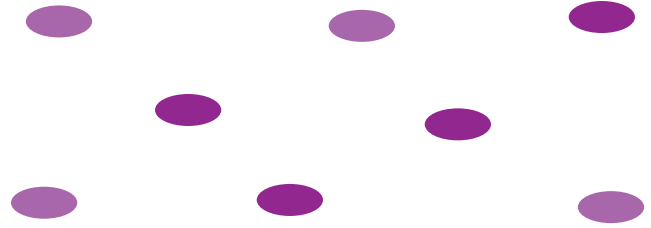
KEEP IT UP (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Balloons
- Floor markers

Setup

Scatter floor markers around the space



- *“Today we are going to play a game called ‘Keep It Up.’”*
- *“In this game, we are going to be working on striking the balloon into the air as many times as we can before it hits the floor.”*
- *“You will stand on your floor marker and hit the balloon straight up into the air.”*
- *“Try not to take your foot off of the marker.”*
- *“Count to see how many times you can hit your balloon before it hits the floor.”*
- *“Start now!”*

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 2 Video](#)¹

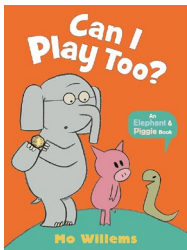
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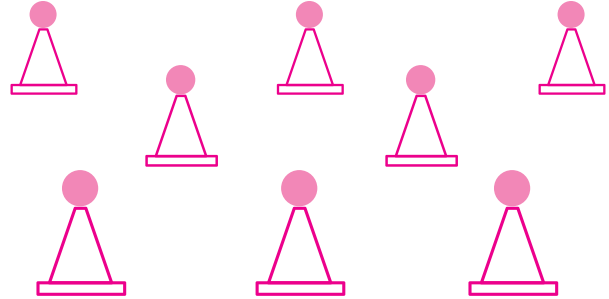
HANDBALL (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Balls
- Cones

Setup

Place a ball on top of a cone for each student



- *“Today we are going to work on skills you need to play the game of handball.”*
- *“We will continue to practice the skill of striking.”*
- *“Place the ball on top of the cone.”*
- *“We are going to practice keeping your hand open and striking the ball off of the cone as far as you can hit it.”*
- *“Try to do this 10 times.”*
- *“Now make a fist and hit the ball off of the cone.”*
- *“Try to do this 10 times.”*



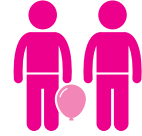
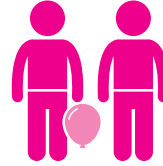
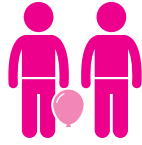
AIR BALL (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- 1 balloon per pair

Setup

Students should partner up and have one balloon per pair



- *This new game is called 'Air Ball.'*
- *"You and your partner will be working together to keep the balloon in the air as long as you can."*
- *"If you want to challenge yourself, try to only hit it two times before it is passed to your partner."*

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 2 Video](#)¹

OR

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 2 Cards](#) (pages 26-28 of link)²

- Quadriceps Stretch
- Modified Hurdler's Stretch
- Chest Stretch



STRIKING REVIEW

- *“We have learned a lot of new games and skills throughout this month.”*
- *“Can you remember some of the things we practiced during our Young Athletes time?”*
- *“Today we are going to wrap up our Striking unit.”*
- *“We practiced striking using different objects such as a bat, racket, and bowling pins (or pool noodles or plates).”*
- *“We also used our hands to practice striking a ball or balloon.”*
- *“Let’s complete the book to help remind us of some of our new skills.”*

[Striking Booklet printable](#)

HOME CONNECTIONS

Games and activities to do at home:

Send home the newsletter and include these game ideas they can use at home with their flashcards.

- Handball
- Ball Tap
- Beginning Floorball or Golf
- Beginning Tennis or Softball
- Beginning Volleyball

[Additional Striking Skill Cards for home](#)¹

Want to continue practicing these skills?

Check out [this video](#)² to learn how to do all the activities and more at home!



TEACHING TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Encourage students to keep their eyes on the ball to learn visual tracking.
- Encourage students to stand side-on to the ball with good balance.
- Using floor markers can help the students stand in the proper position. A side-on stance is important for good balance and rotation.
- Have the students twist their belly button forward when striking the ball to encourage follow through.
- Shifting weight is important to correct striking form. If the student is not shifting their weight, have them rock forward and backward while standing on floor markers.
- Large balls are easier to strike than small ones, and stationary objects are easier to strike than moving ones.
- When the student is first working to strike a moving object, throw the ball slowly and with a small arc.
- Increase the skill level by increasing the distance of the ball from the body. This allows the student to progress from using a hand to striking with a paddle and then to striking with a bat, golf club or hockey stick.
- If a student is unable to make contact with the ball, use a ball suspended at different heights for practice.

UNIT 6 PRINTABLES



Striking Skills

Dear Family,

There is something satisfying about hitting a ball. Many of us have childhood memories of stepping up to a ball, making contact with it, and being thrilled to see that we sent it into the air. I'm excited that your child has the same opportunity for success with Young Athletes activities. We are currently working on **striking skills**, which involve hitting a ball or an object with a hand, stick, bat, paddle or racket.

It's always rewarding to introduce a new skill area to students. One of the most impactful things about Young Athletes activities is that they allow children to experience **challenges** in a **supportive and encouraging environment**. Children learn that trying something new is an **opportunity to grow**. That's a lesson they'll benefit from all their lives. I'm sure your child is eager to share his or her progress in striking skills with you. One way your child can do that is with a popular balloon game. Toss a balloon up in the air and have your child and the rest of the family try to keep it from touching the ground by tapping it upward. It's a fun activity for children and adults alike!

Sincerely,

Teacher



Successfully striking a ball is a pride-boosting achievement.



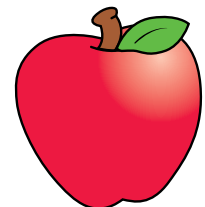
Healthy Habits

Here's a song that encourages children to eat fruit instead of sugary snacks after playtime. For extra fun, invite your child to think of motions to add to the song. Substitute the names of different fruits that grow on trees for additional verses.

Apple, Apple, Way Up High

Sung to "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star"

Apple, apple, way up high,
I can reach you if I try.
Climb a ladder,
Hold on tight.
Pick you quickly
Take a bite.



Important Interactions

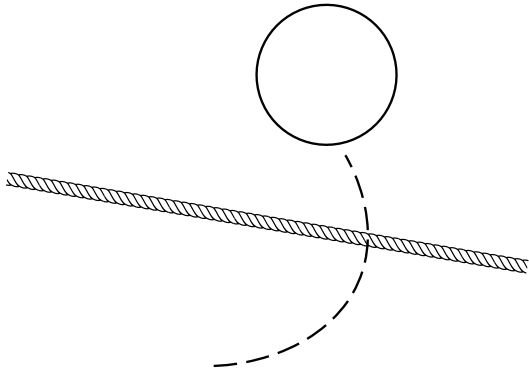
Taking turns and appreciating each other's differences are just two aspects of social awareness that children develop during Young Athletes. These skills play a big part in helping children get along with others during family, school and community activities.



Class News

2

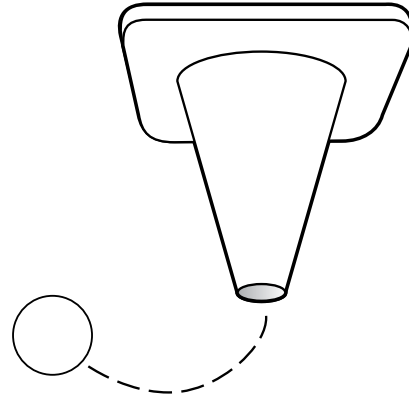
I can tap a ball over.



Color.

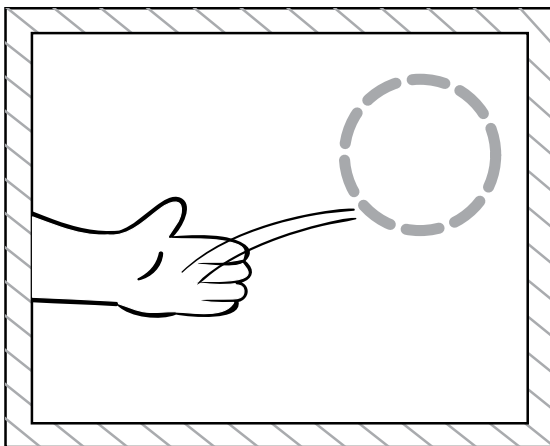
1

I can tap a ball off.



Color.

Trace.



I can tap a ball.

3

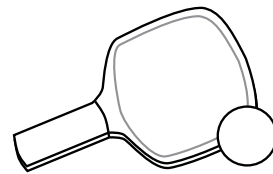
Let's Practice & Play

's

Name _____

Activities

Striking Skills



 Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Directions for families: Cut out the booklet on the bold line. Fold the page on the horizontal dashed line, then on the vertical dashed line so the cover is on the outside. Draw and color with your child to fill in the booklet. As you do, discuss the activities and how much fun they are. Reread the mini-book periodically, especially before or after you've practiced the activities together.



UNIT 7

AGES 2-4

KICKING

.....

Similar to striking, kicking a stationary, medium or large sized ball is easier than kicking a small or moving ball. Unlike striking, however, kicking requires the ability to balance, at least for a moment, on one foot. Beginner kickers will lean forward when they are kicking a ball. More advanced kickers will lean their body back just before contacting the ball. Most beginners will be successful in kicking if they run up to a stationary ball to kick it, because they will essentially run through the ball with one foot. Once your students master running and kicking, have them stand behind a stationary ball and practice kicking it. This challenges the students to stand on one foot and disassociate one leg from another. The kicking leg should bend at the knee for a back swing, then straighten at contact. The opposite arm swings forward with the kick to allow for stabilization and power. Advanced kickers will have more bend in their knee and will swing the opposite arm forward as the ball is kicked.



Kicking

BASIC:

- Arms are held at sides
- Prepares for kicking with kicking leg
- Pushes leg forward into the ball
- No trunk rotation

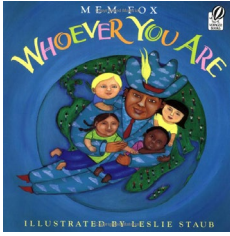
PROFICIENT:

- Some arm movement
- Steps forward with the non-kicking foot
- Minimal windup with kicking leg
- Minimal trunk rotation
- Knee bent on contact

ADVANCED:

- Opposite arm swing
- Steps forward with non-kicking foot
- Winds up kicking leg prior to kick
- Trunk rotation
- Knee extended on contact

LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Whoever You Are by Mem Fox](#) (page 39 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[Fit 5 Strength Level 1 Video](#)²

OR

[Fit 5 Strength Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 8-10 of link)³

- Straight Leg Raises
- Push-ups on the wall
- Curl-ups



STATIONARY BALL KICK (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Playground or soccer balls

Setup

Students should be put into pairs. Have them form two parallel lines facing each other with one ball for each pair.



- *“Today we will start learning a new skill, called kicking.”*
- *“Kicking involves balancing on one foot while swinging the other foot to come in contact with the ball.”*
- *“Watch as I demonstrate kicking.”*
- *“You and your partner will practice stationary ball kicks today.”*
- *“Stationary means that the ball is not moving when you kick it.”*
- *“You will kick the ball to your partner and your partner will stop the ball and then kick it back to you.”*
- *“Focus on being in control when you kick it so it goes to your partner.”*



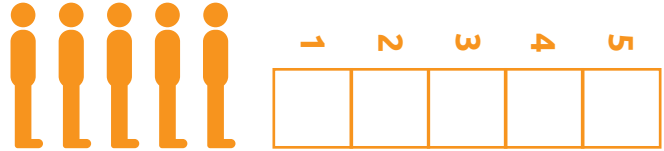
HAJLA (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Stone or ball (something to kick)

Setup

Students stand in line at the start of the column (you do not need to write down numbers)



- *“Today we will be playing a game from the Middle East/North Africa region called Hajla!”*
- *“We will be practicing controlling the power of our kicking.”*
- *“The goal of this game is to kick the stone so it lands in the farthest box, but not over.”*
- *“The player’s score is based on where the stone or ball lands. The further the square, the higher the point value, but be careful not to kick the stone too far!”*
- *“If the stone rolls beyond the column, no points are received.”*
- *“We will take turns kicking.”*

This game is popular throughout countries like Palestine and Syria. In Palestine, this is the most popular game among girls, and a game called Jalul is most popular among boys.



COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

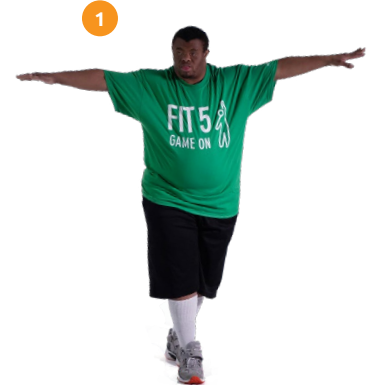
"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 1 Video](#)¹

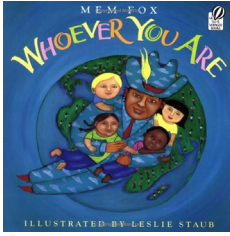
OR

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 11-13 of link)²

- Calf Stretch
- Child's Pose
- Knee to Chest
- Tandem Stance



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Whoever You Are by Mem Fox](#) (page 39 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[Fit 5 Strength Level 1 Video](#)²

OR

[Fit 5 Strength Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 8-10 of link)³

- Straight Leg Raises
- Push-ups on the wall
- Curl-ups



KICKING TARGETS (10 MIN.)

Equipment

- Balls
- Cones

Setup

Divide students into 4-5 groups. Place 3 cones on the opposite side of the room as a line with a ball.



- *“We are going to practice kicking to a target together.”*
- *“You and your team are going to try to knock all the cones down.”*
- *“The first student in line will kick the ball at the cones.”*
- *“If they knock the cone down, leave the cone knocked down, get the ball and give it to the next person in line.”*
- *“They will then go to the back of the line.”*
- *“If they miss, they get the ball and hand it to the next person in line and go to the back of the line.”*
- *“The goal is to be the first team to knock over all of their cones.”*
- *“Your team will sit down when they get all their cones down.”*

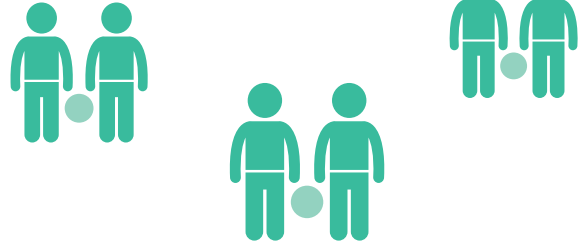
FOLLOW THE LEADER (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- 1 ball per pair
- Whistle

Setup

Pair up students and give each one a ball.



- *“We will be playing ‘Follow the leader’ today to continue to practice kicking.”*
- *“Whoever is the youngest in each group will go first and be the leader.”*
- *“The leader will dribble their ball around the space and the second student will follow them.”*
- *“Everyone needs to keep control of their ball.”*
- *“When I blow the whistle, you will stop in place.”*
- *“Now we will switch who the leader and who the follower is.”*

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 1 Video](#)¹

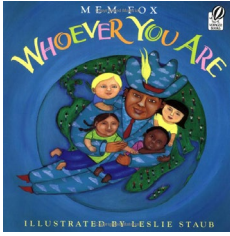
OR

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 11-13 of link)²

- Calf Stretch
- Child's Pose
- Knee to Chest
- Tandem Stance



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Whoever You Are by Mem Fox](#) (page 39 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[Fit 5 Strength Level 1 Video](#)²

OR

[Fit 5 Strength Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 8-10 of link)³

- Straight Leg Raises
- Push-ups on the wall
- Curl-ups



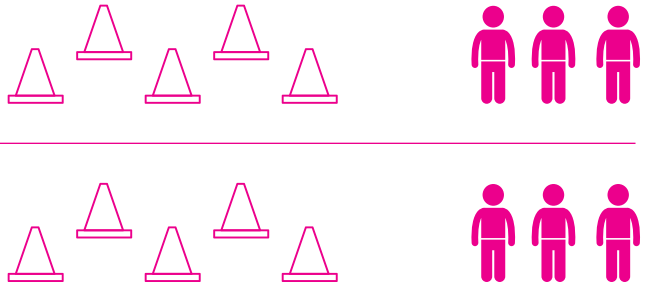
DRIBBLING PRACTICE (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Ball
- Cones

Setup

Set up the cones in a zigzag pattern and have students form a line behind each line of cones



- *“We are going to practice dribbling the ball with our foot today.”*
- *“When it is your turn, you will tap the ball with your foot while you run around each of the cones.”*
- *“You will have to change directions when you get to each of the cones. Make sure to stay in control of the ball.”*
- *“When you get to the last cone, dribble your ball in a straight line back to the next student in line and go to the end of the line.”*

PENALTY KICK (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Ball
- 2 cones

Setup

Place two cones several feet apart from each other to make a goal. Place students in a single file line. If you have a large group, make 2 lines.



- *“Soccer is a skill that uses a lot of kicking.”*
- *“One important skill is called a penalty kick.”*
- *“In soccer, a penalty kick is where one athlete gets to kick the ball at the goal all by themselves without the other players around.”*
- *“Today we are going to end our lesson with practicing a penalty kick.”*
- *“You will kick the ball and try to make a goal between the two cones.”*
- *“Once you kick, you will run to get the ball and hand it to the next student in line.”*
- *“Let’s practice good sportsmanship and cheer each other on during this activity.”*



COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

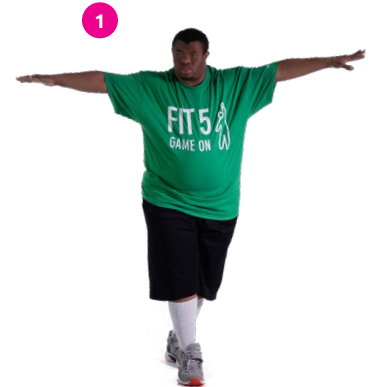
"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 1 Video](#)¹

OR

[Fit 5 Flexibility Level 1 Cards](#) (pages 11-13 of link)²

- Calf Stretch
- Child's Pose
- Knee to Chest
- Tandem Stance



KICKING REVIEW

- *"We have learned a lot of new games and skills throughout this month."*
- *"Can you remember some of the things we practiced during our Young Athletes time?"*
- *"Today we are going to wrap up our Kicking unit."*
- *"We practiced kicking the ball to each other as well as into the goal."*
- *"Remember, it's important to look at the goal when you are kicking."*
- *"Let's complete the booklet to help remind us of some of our new skills."*

[Kicking Booklet printable](#)

HOME CONNECTIONS

Games and activities to do at home:

Send home [the newsletter printable](#) and include this list of games and resources for parents.

Activities from skill cards that were covered in this unit:

- Stationary Ball Kick
- Penalty Kick
- Passing Practice
- Give and Go
- Pinball
- Three-Pin Bowling
- Cone Dribble

[Additional Kicking Skills Cards for home](#)¹

Want to continue practicing these skills?

Check out [this video](#)² to learn how to do all the activities and more at home!



TEACHING TIPS FOR SUCCESS

- Encourage the students to keep their eyes on the ball and then on the target.
- Use a ball that is the student's favorite color or a ball with a bell inside.
- Weight shifting to the non-kicking leg is necessary for control and balance.
- Use verbal and visual cues to identify and differentiate the right foot and the left foot, one as the kicking foot and one as the stabilizing foot.
- If the student loses their balance while kicking, use a lightweight ball or volleyball floater. You can also have the student hold your hand while kicking.



UNIT 7 PRINTABLES



Kicking Skills

Dear Family,

A ball is one of the most popular children's toys, and it's no wonder. You can roll it, catch it, strike it, kick it and more. That amounts to hours and hours of entertaining physical activity and playtime. As we focus on **kicking skills**, your child will gain abilities sure to enhance his or her participation in playtime activities at home, at school and in the community.

Motor skills are only part of what is needed for success in sport and play activities, though. Following rules and directions is another essential element. We reinforce **responsible decision-making** whenever we practice Young Athletes activities. Like other **social-emotional skills**, learning about the importance of making good decisions is a lesson that has lifelong relevance. You can support this learning by talking with your child about rules or safety tips before practicing Young Athletes activities at home. For example, before kicking a ball back and forth with your child, discuss the importance of playing in an open area where the ball can't hit breakable objects. It's a simple way to help set the stage for a lifetime of thoughtful choices.

Sincerely,

Teacher

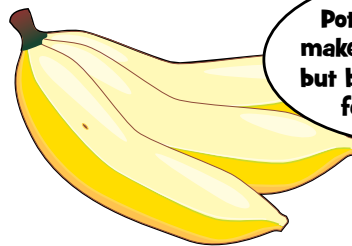


Kicking a ball requires balance and eye-foot coordination.



Healthy Habits

It's never too early to teach your child about good nutrition. Point out how nutritious foods help our bodies grow and stay fit, while junk foods don't. Guide your child to select healthy snacks, and praise his or her good choices.



Potato chips don't make strong muscles, but bananas are good for your body.



Long-Lasting Impact

The benefits from Young Athletes continue even after participation ends. At 5- and 10-month follow-ups, children who participated in Young Athletes maintained a 4-month advantage in development.



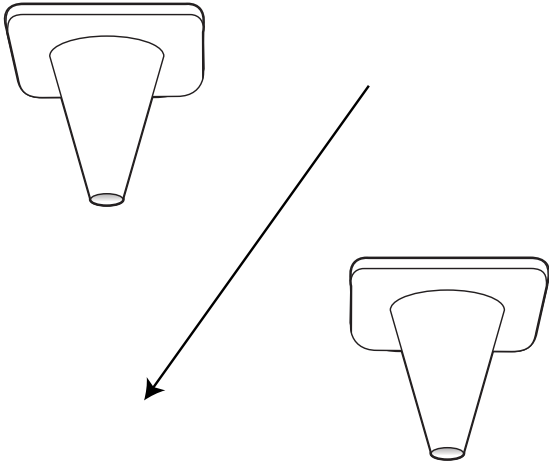
Class News

1 I put my ball on the floor.



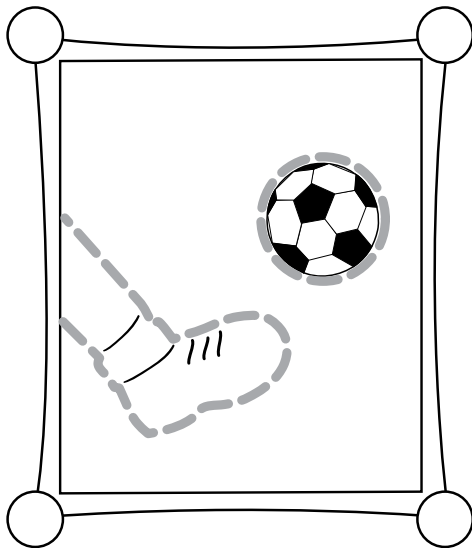
Color.

2 I look at the goal.



Circle a cone.

Trace.



I kick the ball.

3

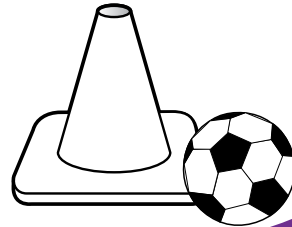
Let's Practice & Play

Name _____

's

Activities

Kicking



Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Directions for families: Cut out the booklet on the bold line. Fold the page on the horizontal dashed line, then on the vertical dashed line so the cover is on the outside. Draw and color with your child to fill in the booklet. As you do, discuss the activities and how much fun they are. Reread the mini-book periodically, especially before or after you've practiced the activities together.



UNIT 8

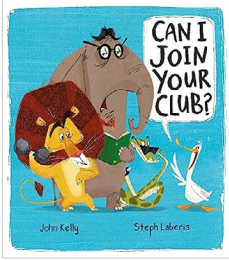
AGES 2-4

ADVANCED SKILLS

.....

Advanced skills encompasses all the skill areas we have been working on throughout the year into sports. These skills will challenge students and introduce them to different types of sports. Some of these skills will be more advanced for students. Mastery is not the goal in these lessons. Through these lessons we will introduce students to a variety of sports areas and give them opportunities to use their skills in a fun and supportive environment.

LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Can I Join Your Club? by John Kelly](#) (page 44 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 2 Strength](#)²

OR

[Seated Leg Lifts](#) (page 24 of link)³

1. "Sit tall with your right leg out straight and your left leg bent with your foot flat on the ground."
2. "Hug your arms around your bent leg."
3. "Raise your right leg up a few inches and hold."
4. "Lower your leg down and repeat."
5. "Switch to raise your left leg."



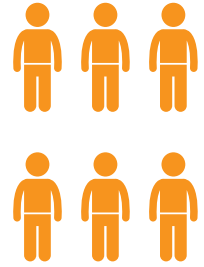
RUN AND CARRY (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Bean bags

Setup

Scatter bean bags on one side of the space and have students line up in teams on the other



- *"Today we are going to play 'Run and Carry.'"*
- *"Divide students up into equal lines on one side of the space."*
- *"When it is your turn, you are going to run from this side of the room to the other and pick up a bean bag and carry it back."*
- *"Drop it next to the next person in line, it is their turn to run and pick up a beanbag."*
- *"Keep going until all the bean bags have been picked up."*



LADDER JUMP (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Tape or sticks

Setup

Make 6 lines out of tape or chalk, one set of 6 lines for each partnership



- *“We are going to be practicing jumping over the lines today.”*
- *“The first time you will leap over the line by using one foot to jump first and have the other foot follow.”*
- *“The second time, you will use two feet together and jump with both feet and land.”*
- *“Try hard not to touch the line when you jump.”*

COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[GoNoodle: Level 2 Flexibility](#)¹

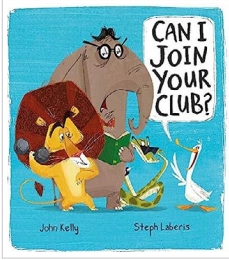
OR

[Upward Facing Dog](#) (page 16 of link)²

1. *"Lie face down with your legs straight and place your hands flat on the ground by your shoulders."*
2. *Push down with your hands and slowly straighten your arms.*
3. *Raise your head and upper body until you feel a stretch in your belly."*



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Can I Join Your Club? by John Kelly](#) (page 44 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle Level 3 Endurance](#)²

OR

[Leaping](#) (page 30 of link)³

- Place cones about 3 leaps away from each other.
- Practice leaping from one cone to the other and turn around and go back.
- Do this for 30 seconds.



BOUNCING WARM UP (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Jump rope for each student
- Floor marker for each student

Setup

Place floor markers throughout the space. One for each student. Have a jump rope on the floor coming from the poly spot



- *"Today we get to practice jumping rope."*
- *"We are going to learn how to do it slowly and then increase our speed as we practice."*
- *"Before we start with our jump ropes, let's practice some jumping."*
- *"Lay your jump rope on the ground in front of you."*
- *"You are going to start on one end of your jump rope and jump from side to side all the way to the end."*
- *"First, we are going to do a single bounce."*
- *"Single means one, so you will jump one time on one side of the rope and then one time to the other side of the rope."*
- *"Now we are going to do a double bounce."*
- *"Double means two, so you will jump two times on one side of the rope and then over it and then two times on the other side."*
- *"Continue this all the way to the end of the rope."*
- *"Let's practice this a few times."*
- *"Finally, we are going to try jumping backwards."*
- *"You can either try a single jump or a double jump, but try to do it while moving backwards."*

STAND, ROLL AND TRAP (5 MIN.)

Equipment

- Ball

Setup

Students should stand in a large circle



- *“Each time we meet this week, we will be learning a different sport.”*
- *“Today we will be practicing some soccer skills.”*
- *“We will start off in a circle.”*
- *“I will kick the ball to a student in the circle and they will trap the ball with the bottom of their foot to stop the ball.”*
- *“Then they will kick the ball to someone else in the circle.”*
- *“We will practice counting during this activity.”*
- *“There are ___ students in our class so let’s count up to ___.”*

Math Connection

Have students skip count instead of counting by one while they kick the ball.

Literacy Connection

Start off saying a word. The next student needs to say a word that rhymes with the last one. If a student can’t think of a word, they can pick a new word to rhyme with.



COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a few cool down stretches to work on our flexibility."

[Fit 5 Balance Level 3 Video](#)¹

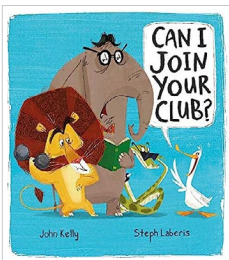
OR

[Fit 5 Balance Level 3 Cards](#) (pages 43-45 of link)²

- Leg Swings
- Lateral Step Down
- Single Leg Stance with Rotation



LEADERSHIP TIME (5 MIN.)



[Can I Join Your Club? by John Kelly](#) (page 44 of link)¹

Lesson 1: Read the book

Lesson 2: Review book and answer questions

Lesson 3: Review book and pick one activity

STRENGTH & ENDURANCE (5 MIN.)

[GoNoodle: Level 2 Strength](#)²

OR

[Seated Leg Lifts](#) (page 24 of link)³

1. "Sit tall with your right leg out straight and your left leg bent with your foot flat on the ground."
2. "Hug your arms around your bent leg."
3. "Raise your right leg up a few inches and hold."
4. "Lower your leg down and repeat."
5. "Switch to raise your left leg."



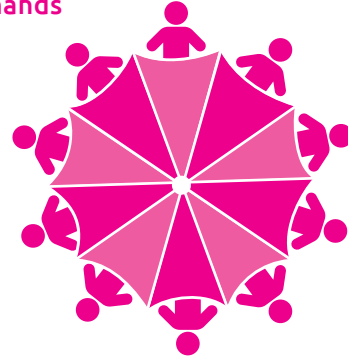
PARACHUTE GAMES (15-20 MIN.)

Equipment

- Parachute
- Foam or beach ball

Setup

Students should each hold on to the parachute with both hands



- *"Today we get to do some fun activities with a parachute."*
- *"This is a parachute. We will make a big circle around it and hold onto the handles or parachute during our activities."*
- *"To start off, we are going to lift the parachute as high as we can over our head and then bring it all the way down to the ground."*
- *"Let's practice! Make sure you hold on tight."*

Under the Parachute If...

- *"Now I am going to call out instructions and if you are someone who matches what I say, you will run under the parachute and find another spot to hold on."*
- *"Example: If you are touching a blue piece of the parachute, run underneath."*
- *"The rest of us will lift the parachute up high while they run underneath."*

Other categories:

- Wearing green
- Have a dog
- Like broccoli
- Wear glasses
- Take the bus to school
- Name starts with...

continued on next page



PARACHUTE GAMES (CONTINUED)

Follow the Leader:

- *"Our next game is called 'Follow the Leader.'"*
- *"Listen to what to do and follow along."*
- *"We will take turns giving directions."*

Examples:

- Walk to the left
- Shake the parachute quickly
- Hold up high

Cooperation Roll:

- *"Everyone needs to hold onto the parachute at about waist height."*
- *"Place a ball in the middle of the parachute."*
- *"The goal is to work together to try to roll the ball around the outside edge of the parachute without it falling off."*
- *"It should pass in front of each athlete."*
- *"See how many times you can have it go around the circle without it falling off."*

Skip Counting:

- *"Everyone needs to hold onto the parachute at about waist height."*
- *"When we lift the parachute up we will start counting by tens. When it goes up we will say 10."*
- *"We will bring the parachute all the way to the ground and then bring it up again and say 20."*
- *"We will continue counting all the way to 100."*



COOL DOWN/FLEXIBILITY (5 MIN.)

"Let's end Young Athletes with a GoNoodle video (or a stretching exercise). Follow along with the video to work on your flexibility."

[GoNoodle: Level 3 Flexibility](#)¹

OR

[Spider Pose](#) (page 28 of link)²

1. Stand with your feet wider than shoulder width apart and bend your knees.
2. Bend forward and place your hands on the ground between your feet.
3. Reach behind your legs and grab your heels. Keep your feet flat.



ADVANCED SKILLS REVIEW

- *“We have learned a lot of new games and skills throughout this month.”*
- *“Can you remember some of the things we practiced during our Young Athletes time?”*
- *“Today we are going to wrap up our Advanced Skills unit.”*
- *“Throughout this unit, we learned how to dribble and shoot a basketball, kick and pass a soccer ball, and play softball.”*
- *“Let’s use this booklet to help us remember these skills and be able to share about them when we get home.”*

[Advanced Skills Booklet printable](#)

HOME CONNECTIONS

Games and activities to do at home:

Send home [the newsletter](#) and include these game ideas they can use at home with their flashcards:

- Punting
- Galloping
- Skipping
- Stand, Roll, and Trap
- Two-on-One
- One-on-One
- Dribble
- Pass and Shoot
- Dribble and Shoot
- Run the Bases



[Additional Advanced Skills Cards for home](#)¹

Want to continue practicing these skills?

Check out [this video](#)² to learn how to do all the activities and more at home!

UNIT 8 PRINTABLES



Advanced Sports Skills

Dear Family,

Walking, running, balancing, jumping, trapping, catching, throwing, striking and kicking—these are just some of the many skills featured in Young Athletes activities. I'm incredibly proud of each child's progress. Students have worked hard to learn new skills. As we introduce **advanced sports skills**, children will use previously taught skills in a sports context. These activities may be challenging for some children; that's expected. Whenever children need more practice with an easier skill, we'll revisit familiar activities to strengthen their abilities.

Regardless of skill level, there are many opportunities for your child to participate in physical activities throughout his or her life. Young Athletes activities might continue to be a good fit for some children. Other options include training for a specific sport or becoming a **competitive Special Olympics athlete**. Special Olympics provides over 30 individual and team sports to people age 8 and older with intellectual disabilities. **Special Olympics Unified Sports** joins people with and without intellectual disabilities together on the same team, promoting friendship and understanding. To learn more, visit SpecialOlympics.org.

Sincerely,

Teacher

PS: Here's how you can get in touch with our local Special Olympics office: _____



As children learn and practice new skills through Young Athletes, they gain confidence and pride in their growth.



Healthy Habits

To encourage your child to keep physically active, give extra playtime as a reward instead of candy or snacks. Invite the whole family to practice Young Athletes activities together. Focus on how fun it is to try new skills, and praise your child's efforts.

**I'm proud of you
for keeping your eye
on the ball!**



All in the Family

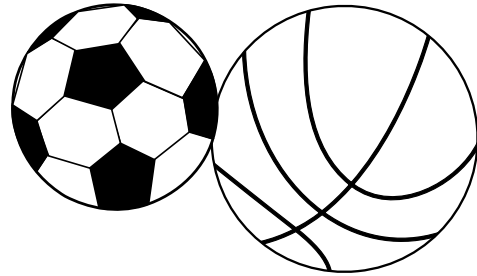
Special Olympics positively impacts entire families, not just athletes. In fact, the siblings of many athletes feel that participation in Special Olympics brings their family closer together.



Class News

Basketball and soccer
are games.

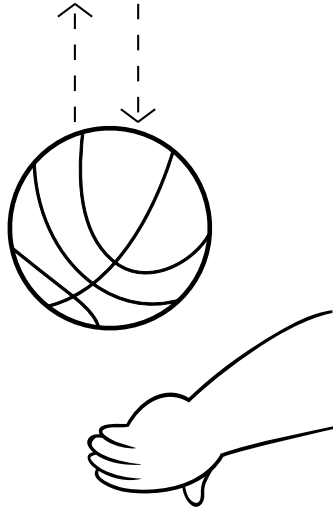
1



Draw one more ball.

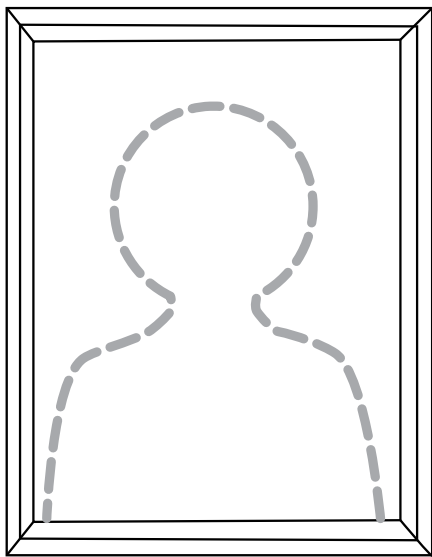
To play basketball,
I bounce the ball.

2



Trace.

Trace and draw to complete.



I like to play sports.

3

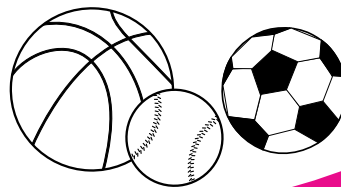
Let's
Practice
& Play

Name _____

's

Activities

Advanced Sports



 Special Olympics
Young Athletes



Directions for families: Cut out the booklet on the bold line. Fold the page on the horizontal dashed line, then on the vertical dashed line so the cover is on the outside. Draw and color with your child to fill in the booklet. As you do, discuss the activities and how much fun they are. Reread the mini-book periodically, especially before or after you've practiced the activities together.

