

## Young Athletes Registration and Liability – School-Model

*The following information can be used to determine registration, liability and procedures for Young Athletes activities being conducted in a school.*

	School-Operated Activity	Special Olympics-Operated Activity on School Campus
Overview	School is primarily responsible for organizing and overseeing the Young Athletes activities.	Special Olympics is primarily responsible for organizing and overseeing the activity, with the school only serving as a location for activities.
Insurance/ Liability	School's insurance applies to all activities. Additionally, the school's policies and procedures apply.	Special Olympics Corporate Insurance Program (SOCIP) applies to all activities. Special Olympics policies and procedures apply.
Registration	School must complete <u>YA School Registration Form</u> with specific roster information and generic details for Young Athletes participants.	All participating Young Athletes must complete a <u>YA Individual Registration Form</u> to participate in any activity.
Trainers/ Volunteers	School's policies for supervision and mandatory training are in place for all coaches, trainers and volunteers.	All coaches, trainers or volunteers are required to complete Program's volunteer registration form and Class A volunteer training.
Photo	SO will not have access to participant photos during school activities, unless participants complete "School Photo Release Form"	Photo release included in registration form for promotional use of likeness.
Medical	Students must comply with school's medical requirements for participation. No SO medical required.	Basic medical background compiled through registration form. No SO medical required.

**Important Note:** If a child who participates in a school-operated activity wants to attend a Special Olympics-operated event (i.e., a Young Athletes Demonstration at State/National Games), they must complete the required YA registration form to participate.

## Young Athletes Registration and Liability – Community and School Models

*The following information can be used to determine registration, liability and procedures for Young Athletes activities being conducted in a community or home.*

	Community Young Athletes	Home-Based Young Athletes
Overview	Special Olympics is primarily responsible for organizing and overseeing the activity, with the community site (gym, sport club, etc.) serves as a location for activities.	Young Athletes takes place in the home in a one-to-one setting with family members, potentially engaging siblings or neighborhood children.
Insurance/ Liability	<b>Special Olympics Corporate Insurance Program (SOCIP) applies to all activities.</b> Special Olympics policies and procedures apply.	Families retain all liability and responsibility for their children while participating in activities in the home.
Registration	All participating Young Athletes must complete a <b><u>YA Individual Registration Form</u></b> to participate in any activity.	Families are encouraged to complete a <b><u>YA Individual Registration Form</u></b> for their children to receive information and resources from SO.
Trainers/ Volunteers	All coaches, trainers or volunteers are required to complete Program's volunteer registration form and Class A volunteer training.	Parents and family members are not required to complete volunteer training when working with their own children.
Photo	Photo release included in registration form for promotional use of likeness.	Photo release included in registration form for promotional use of likeness.
Medical	Basic medical background compiled through registration form. No SO medical required.	Basic medical background compiled through registration form. No SO medical required.

**Important Note:** To participate in a Special Olympics-operated event (i.e., a Young Athletes Demonstration at State/National Games), all Young Athletes participants are required to complete a YA registration form.

# YOUNG ATHLETES REGISTRATION



## YOUNG ATHLETES PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Name		Date of Birth
<u>Gender</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	<u>Has an Intellectual or Developmental Disability</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	<u>T-Shirt Size</u> <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Small <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Youth Large

Please mark items you would like Special Olympics to know about:

- ☐ Requires Wheelchair Accessible Locations
- ☐ Language Needs: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Medical Conditions: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Special Diet: \_\_\_\_\_
- ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

## PARENT/GUARDIAN INFORMATION

Name		Relationship
Street Address		
City	State/Province	Postal Code
Email		Phone

EMERGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION (other than Parent/Guardian; Parent/Guardian will be contact first in an emergency)

Contact Name	Relationship	Phone
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## SPECIAL OLYMPICS PROGRAM INFORMATION

Local Program Name
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**SCHOOL CONTACT INFORMATION**

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Administrator Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Main School Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Address: \_\_\_\_\_

School Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ School Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Main Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Main Contact Phone/Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Educational Level (i.e., Preschool, Primary School, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_

**PARTICIPANT INFORMATION**

Please provide the number of students you anticipate participating in Young Athletes in your school. *Special Olympics will follow up at the conclusion of activities to confirm actual participation numbers.*

Age	Special Education Students		General Education Students	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
2 – 4				
5 – 7				
8 +				
<b>Total</b>				

**WAIVER OF LIABILITY**

On behalf of the school named above, I agree that the school assumes all liability, including proper insurance coverage and full responsibility for any risk of loss, property damage, or personal injury in connection with Special Olympics Young Athletes activities occurring under the school's supervision.

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of School Administrator**\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print Name**\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature of Main School Contact**\_\_\_\_\_  
**Print Name**\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

## YOUNG ATHLETES RELEASE FORM



I am the Parent or Guardian of the Young Athletes participant named below and agree to the following:

1. **Able to Participate.** The Young Athlete is able to take part in Special Olympics. I understand there is a risk of injury.
2. **Photo Release.** Special Olympics organizations may use the Young Athlete's picture, video, name, voice, and words to promote Special Olympics.
3. **Emergency Care.** If a medical emergency should arise during the Young Athlete's participation in Special Olympics activities at a time when a parent or guardian is not present to make medical decisions, I consent to medical care for the Young Athlete if needed, unless I check one of these boxes:
  - ☐ I have a religious or other objection to the Young Athlete receiving medical treatment.
  - ☐ I consent to emergency medical care, but I do not consent to blood transfusions for the Young Athlete.  
(If either box is checked, an EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE REFUSAL FORM must be completed.)
4. **Health Programs.** If the Young Athlete takes part in a Special Olympics health program, I consent to health activities, exams, and treatment for the Young Athlete. This should not replace regular health care. I can say no to treatment or anything else any time for the Young Athlete.
5. **Personal Information.** I understand personal information may be used and shared by Special Olympics to:
  - Make sure the Young Athlete can participate safely;
  - Run trainings and events and share results;
  - Put the Young Athlete's information in a computer system;
  - Provide health treatment, make referrals, consult doctors, and remind me about follow-up services;
  - Research, share, and respond to needs of Special Olympics participants (identifying information removed if shared publicly); and
  - Protect health and safety, respond to government requests, and report information required by law.I can ask to see and change the Young Athlete's information. I can ask to limit how the information is used.
6. **Concussions.** I understand the risk of concussions and continuing to play sports with a concussion. The Young Athlete may have to get medical care if a concussion is suspected. The Young Athlete also may have to wait 7 days or more and get permission from a doctor before they start playing sports again.

**YOUNG ATHLETE NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

### PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

I am a parent or guardian of the Young Athlete. I have read and understand this form. By signing, I agree to this form on my own behalf and on behalf of the Young Athlete.

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_



## EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE REFUSAL FORM – PARENT OR GUARDIAN COMPLETION

(To be completed by parent or guardian of participant who is under 18 years old or otherwise has a legal guardian)

**Instructions:** Only complete this form if you do not consent to emergency medical care on religious or other grounds and have checked a box under the Emergency Care provision on the Participant Release Form.

**I am the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ (the “Participant”) and agree to the following:**

1. **No Consent to Emergency Medical Care.** I understand that Special Olympics’ standard registration form requires participants or their parents or guardians to consent to emergency medical care for the Participant if needed in an emergency. Based on religious beliefs or other reasons I am not consenting to emergency medical care as follows.

**YOU MUST CHECK THE BOX AND WRITE YOUR INITIALS NEXT TO ONE STATEMENT TO CONFIRM YOUR INTENT:**

☐ **I DO NOT CONSENT TO ANY KIND OF MEDICAL TREATMENT, EVEN IN A LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY.** INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

☐ **I DO NOT CONSENT TO BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS, EVEN IN A LIFE-THREATENING EMERGENCY. I CONSENT TO ALL OTHER KINDS OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL CARE.** INITIALS: \_\_\_\_\_

2. **Accompaniment of Participant.** I agree to be present with the Participant at all times during any Special Olympics activity, so that I can be readily available to take personal responsibility for the Participant if a medical emergency arises. This includes during meal times, in overnight accommodations, at training sessions and competitions, and during travel to and from Special Olympics activities. I understand that if I am not present at all times, the Participant will not be permitted to participate in Special Olympics activities, and that no exceptions will be made.

3. **No Guarantee.** I understand that Special Olympics cannot guarantee that emergency medical care will be withheld if I am not present and actively taking personal responsibility for Participant during a medical emergency.

4. **Liability Release.** On behalf of myself and the Participant, I release Special Olympics, its employees, and its volunteers from all claims that may arise out of taking or failing to take measures to provide the Participant with emergency medical care. I am agreeing to this release because I have refused, knowingly and voluntarily, to give Special Olympics permission to take emergency measures, and I am expressly directing Special Olympics not to do so on religious or other grounds.

**I am authorized to enter into this Release on the Participant’s behalf. I have read and understand this release and have explained the contents to the Participant as appropriate. By signing, I agree that this Release shall be binding upon me, the Participant, and our respective heirs and legal representatives.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Relationship: \_\_\_\_\_



### **CLASS A VOLUNTEER REQUIREMENTS**

Special Olympics Pennsylvania requires all coaches to be registered as Class A volunteers. This includes coaching Young Athletes.

By definition, a Class A volunteer is:

- Someone who is or may be in immediate contact with athletes such as coaches, Unified Sports partners, chaperones, drivers, as well as volunteers with administrative and event management team members.
- Class A volunteers are required to have background checks completed before assuming their role. This will be a part of the online registration process. Class A volunteers will also be required to complete training.

All new volunteers must register via this link: <https://vsys.specialolympicspa.org/pages/app:newvolapp>

Current volunteers needing their background checks updated must follow the instructions provided in this link: <http://specialolympicspa.org/ways-to-help/volunteer/background-checks>

All Class A volunteers are also required to complete the following trainings:

- General Orientation: <http://specialolympicspa.org/ways-to-help/volunteer/general-orientation>
  - Expires: Never
- Protective Behaviors: [http://www.specialolympics.org/protective\\_behaviors.aspx](http://www.specialolympics.org/protective_behaviors.aspx)
  - Expires: Every Three Years
- Concussion Training: <http://specialolympicspa.org/ways-to-help/volunteer/concussion-training>
  - Expires: Every Three Years

For more information on Class A volunteer requirements, please visit this link: <http://specialolympicspa.org/ways-to-help/volunteer/volunteer-center>

**For more information regarding Young Athletes, please contact Jordan Schubert at [jschubert@specialolympicspa.org](mailto:jschubert@specialolympicspa.org) or 610-630-9450 ext. 236.**





Special Olympics Young Athletes

# Activity Guide



Special Olympics  
**Young Athletes**



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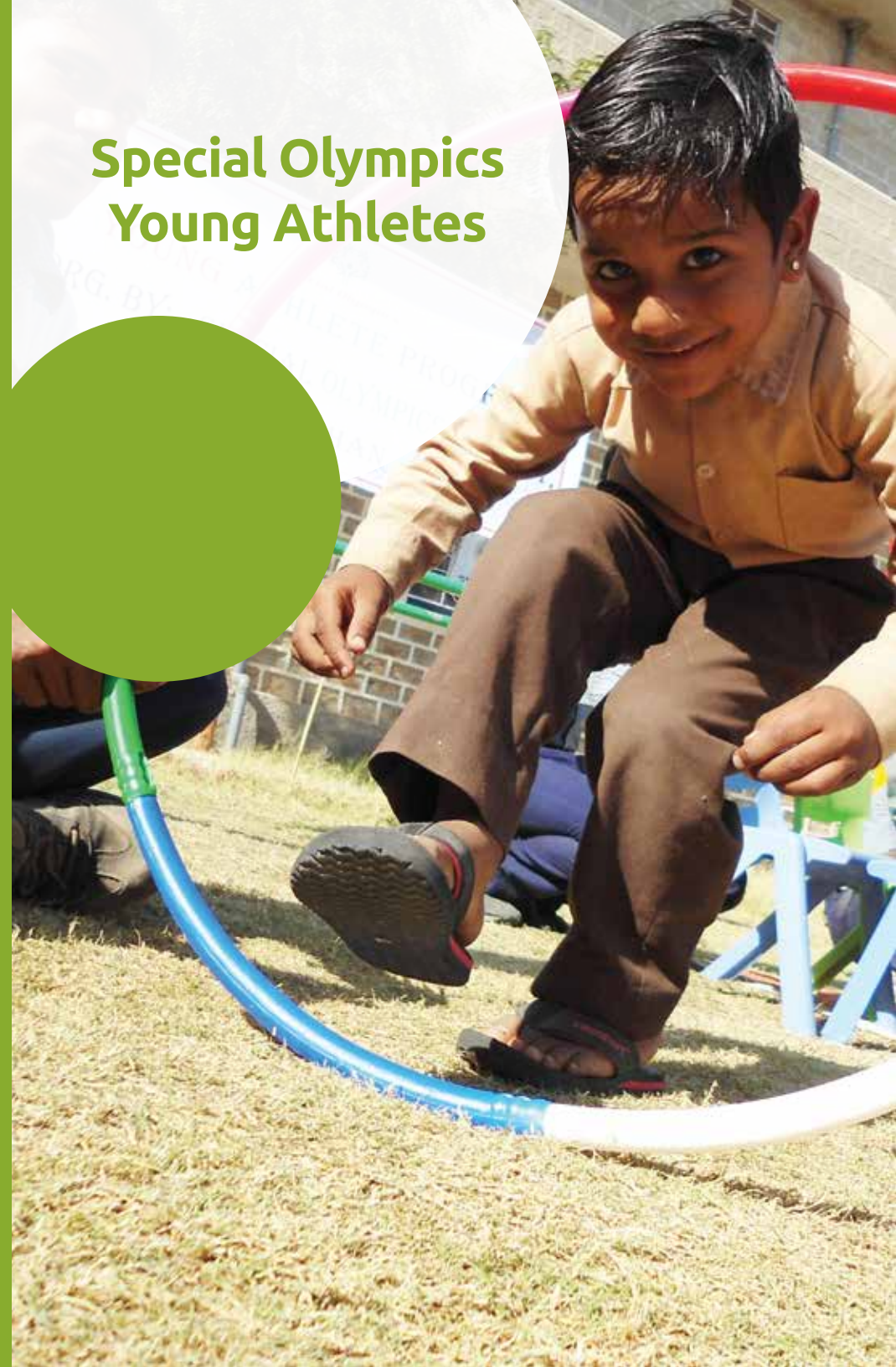
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# Special Olympics Young Athletes



## Special Olympics Young Athletes

Special Olympics Young Athletes is a sport and play program for children with and without intellectual disabilities (ID), ages 2 to 7 years old. Young Athletes introduces basic sport skills, like running, kicking and throwing. Young Athletes offers families, teachers, caregivers and people from the community the chance to share the joy of sports with all children.

Children of all abilities take part, and they all benefit.

**Children learn how to play with others and develop important skills for learning.** Children also learn to share, take turns and follow directions. These skills help children in family, community and school activities.

**Young Athletes is a fun way for children to get fit.** It is important to teach children healthy habits while they are young. This can set the stage for a life of physical activity, friendships and learning.

**Young Athletes is easy to do and fun for all.** It can be done at home, in schools or in the community using the Young Athletes Activity Guide and basic equipment.

Through Young Athletes, all children, their families and people in the community can be a part of an inclusive team.



“When my baby was born and I found out that he had an intellectual disability, my world fell apart. At Young Athletes, I see him move about, smiling, mixing freely with others and not holding on to the tail end of my skirt. It makes me cry tears of happiness and restores my hope that he can be independent one day. **Now I dare to dream** and plan to play baseball with my son when he grows up.”

- Misae, Japan

### Young Athletes welcomes children and their families into the world of Special Olympics. Goals for the program include:

- Let children with and without intellectual disabilities play together to learn about and understand each other;
- Support social inclusion and inclusive play in schools, communities and homes;
- Provide children with activities and games that meet their skill and ability levels;
- Share how Special Olympics can support families;
- Show that all children should be valued for their talents and abilities;
- Promote fitness and teach children about staying active, eating a healthy diet and drinking water.

Everyone benefits from Special Olympics Young Athletes.

- **Motor skills.** Children with ID who took part in an eight-week Young Athletes curriculum saw seven month's development in motor skills. This is compared to a three-month gain in motor skills for children who did not participate.
- **Social, emotional and learning skills.** Parents and teachers of children who took part in the Young Athletes curriculum said the children learned skills that they will use in pre-primary school. The children were more enthusiastic and confident. They also played better with other children.<sup>1</sup>
- **Expectations.** Family members say that Young Athletes raised their hopes for their child's future.
- **Sport readiness.** Young Athletes helps children develop important movement and sport skills. These skills get them ready to take part in sports when they are older.
- **Acceptance.** Inclusive play has a benefit for children without ID as well. It helps them to better understand and accept others.

<sup>1</sup> Favazza, P. C., Siperstein, G. N., Zeisel, S., Odom, S. L., & Moskowitz, A. L. (2011). Young Athletes intervention: Impact of motor development. Washington, DC: Special Olympics, Inc.

## Getting Started

The Activity Guide has all the information to run Young Athletes. It has four sections:

1. Introduction
2. Young Athletes Activities
3. Resources for Implementers
4. Additional Resources

Be sure to read the Introduction and Activities sections. These are for all teachers, coaches and family members. It is also important to think about where activities will take place – in a school, community or home – and review the related section. Then review the activities. Make sure to have the equipment or materials that are needed before starting.

### Three Models for Special Olympics Young Athletes



- **School (Page 63):** Led by educators in a school setting. Activities take place during the school day. Activities are done at least once a week, but three times a week is best. It can be part of pre-primary or primary school lessons.
- **Community (Page 73):** Led by Young Athletes coaches and volunteers. It gives parents, siblings and friends a chance to get together. Activities can be done in a sport club, recreation center or other community facility. Activities take place at least one time per week, with families doing at-home play at least twice a week.
- **Home (Page 81):** Parents, siblings and friends play together at home. The Activity Guide is used for tips and suggestions. Family activities take place at least three times per week in the home. The activities can be one-on-one or in small groups.

## Using the Young Athletes Activity Guide

The Young Athletes Activity Guide has games and activities that help children learn movements they will use in sports and daily life.

There are eight skill areas in the Activity Guide. Each skill area includes activities that can be done with one child or a group of children. There are tips in the Activity Guide on how to adapt the activities to match the skills or needs of each child.

Within each skill area, activities are listed by ease and difficulty. The activities are in order of normal development, from basic skills to more complex skills. Match each activity to the ability of the child. As a child gets more comfortable with a skill, move on to a more difficult activity.

For example, in Trapping and Catching, the first suggested activity is Rolling and Trapping. In the activity, children are seated on the floor. This allows children to work on hand-eye coordination with a moving object. Because they are seated, they do not have to worry about strength, balance or fear.

The third activity, Bubble Catch, builds on the basic skills needed to catch a ball. Bubbles float slowly so children can easily follow the bubbles as they fall. They can clap or catch a bubble in their hands. In this activity, they do not worry about using their arms or bodies to catch, like in later activities.

Additional resources and videos to support Young Athletes can be found on the Young Athletes web page.

**[resources.specialolympics.org/  
YoungAthletes](https://resources.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes)**





Young Athletes sessions do not need to follow the order listed in the Activity Guide. It may be best to focus on one skill area for one or more sessions or do basic activities from multiple skill areas. For example:

- **School:** Teachers may want to run Young Athletes sessions with the most basic skills from all skill areas. As children progress in the basic skills, teachers can advance to skills that are more difficult over several sessions.
- **Community:** A program held at a basketball sport club may run Young Athletes sessions that include one activity from Foundational Skills, one from Running and Walking, and all the Throwing activities. Children with different skill levels can all take part and grow in the way that works best for them.
- **Home:** Parents may want to pick activities that their children enjoy the most or ones that allow siblings and friends to participate.

It is key to adapt to the needs of individual children to ensure Young Athletes has the greatest impact on all children.

### Key Terminology

There are many helpful tips and suggestions in the Activity Guide to support the needs of each child.

- **Group Play** – Activity variations that get children playing together and support inclusion.
- **Healthy Play** – Variation to the activity that teaches children about nutrition and fitness.
- **Optional Activity** – Additional activity that uses equipment not found in the primary equipment list.
- **Tips for Observation** – Ideas to support adults, coaches or volunteers working with or leading Young Athletes.

## Young Athletes Equipment

Young Athletes activities use equipment to help children focus on each skill. Equipment can be substituted for materials that can be found around the house.

### Equipment

### Suggested Substitutions

#### Balance Beam

Tape  
Rope



#### Small Foam Ball



Tennis ball  
Any small ball

#### Beanbags



Small, soft toys or figures  
Bags filled with rice, sand or beans  
Natural items, like flowers or leaves

#### Sport Cones



Boxes  
Plastic soda bottles filled with sand

#### Large Plastic Blocks



Foam or wood blocks  
Bricks

#### Plastic Dowels



Stick  
Paper towel roll

#### Paddle



Short stick

### Equipment

### Suggested Substitutions

#### Floor Markers



Stickers or tape  
Carpet squares  
Chalk-drawn shapes

#### Hoops



Hula hoops  
Bicycle tubes  
Old tires

#### Scarf



Dish towel  
Small piece of cloth

#### Slow Motion Ball



Beach ball  
Any lightweight ball  
Balloon

### Additional equipment may be used to run Young Athletes:

- Junior sized sports equipment:
  - basketball, plastic golf club, floorball stick, tennis racket, football (soccer ball), plastic bat and baseball tee.
- Playground ball
- Rope
- Stacking cups
- Agility ladder
- Tunnels
- Parachutes
- Floor markers, beanbags, and balls with food images
- Play food items



# Foundational Skills

Foundational skills help children become aware of themselves and their relationship to their surroundings. They also support basic health and physical fitness.

Body awareness, strength, flexibility, coordination and endurance are important for motor and social skills. Foundational skills promote development in all of these areas, which are essential for mobility at home and in school and the community.

## Activities in this section include:

Scarf Games

Children's Songs

I Spy

Obstacle Course

Musical Markers

Tunnels and Bridges

Animal Games

Parachute Games

Magic Carpet Ride



## Scarf Games

Encourage children to follow the movement of the scarf with their head and eyes. Drop the scarf and encourage children to “catch” the scarf with their hand, head, foot or other body part.

**Group Play:** Children can play together by tossing scarves to one another, calling out numbers, colors or names of animals with every toss.

For a greater challenge, encourage children to listen carefully for what to do with the scarf. For example, “If you have a green scarf, pass it to the person next to you” or “pass the scarf behind your back to the person next to you.”

**Healthy Play:** Have children try to name different fruits, vegetables or other healthy foods each time they toss the scarf.



*EQUIPMENT NEEDED:* Scarf

## Children’s Songs

Encourage children to sing songs that associate words with actions and body awareness, such as “Wheels on the Bus” or other familiar action songs.

A song such as “If You’re Happy and You Know It” can be used to encourage children to perform different activities like clapping, rubbing the belly, tapping the head and more. Have fun and ask children for ideas about what to do and how to move!

**Healthy Play:** Adapt locally popular songs to teach healthy habits, while also building body awareness. See the “Additional Resources” section for healthy lyrics to “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.”

## I Spy

Encourage children to look around and notice different items in the space. Ask children to look for certain items and encourage them to run, walk or crawl to those items.

Progress by asking children to identify colors, shapes or healthy food items. Children can work in pairs to promote social skills.

*EQUIPMENT NEEDED:* Floor markers, beanbags

## Obstacle Course

Set up a basic obstacle course with any equipment you have, for example, hoops, beams, chairs or benches. Introduce various concepts as the children complete the course, including:

- On and off
- Over and under
- Fast and slow



*EQUIPMENT NEEDED:* Cones, floor markers, hoops, dowels, beams

## Tips for Observation

Make note of children’s ability to remember lyrics, activities, body parts or other important concepts. Reinforce those areas in other activities or self-help skills.

## Musical Markers

While music is playing, ask children to run, walk backwards, crawl or twist. When the music stops, have children find a floor marker to stand on (sharing markers is allowed). Remove markers until there is only one large hoop in the center that all the children can share.

**Healthy Play:** When using floor markers, consider having floor markers that are shaped like healthy foods (like fruits and vegetables), printing out pictures, or associating various colors with fruits and vegetables. In the activity, when the music stops, ask children to stand on the fruits or vegetables to reinforce making healthy decisions with food.

*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Hoop, floor markers*

## Tunnels and Bridges

Adults and children make tunnels by touching the ground with their feet and hands, sending their hips into the air. Other children crawl through the tunnels.

Adults and children make bridges by getting down onto hands and knees. Other children try to climb over the bridges.



## Animal Games

Ask children to pretend that they are different animals by moving their bodies in different ways. Picture books can help children see the animals and their movements.

- **Bear Crawl:** 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!



- **Crab Walk:** 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.



- **Crabs and Fishes:** Children pretend to be the Crab (see Crab Walk) and a ball is the Fish. The coach begins the game by rolling the ball under children's bottoms so that the fish is swimming through a sea of crabs. The ball can be pushed or kicked by the children to keep the game going.

### Optional Activities

#### Parachute Games

Children and adults hold the edges of a parachute. Working together to move the parachute up and down, have an adult throw a ball or beanbag on top. The children try to keep the parachute moving, while keeping the ball or beanbag from falling off.



**Group Play:** Parachute games are a great way to end sessions with a group of children. Have children make big waves with the parachute by slowly moving it up and down. Then have children let go of the parachute when their hands are above their head. Have children run to the center while a volunteer collects the parachute as it falls over the children.

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**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Parachute (option: flat sheet), ball

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#### Magic Carpet Ride

The child sits on a blanket, holding the edges.

An adult grasps the other end of the blanket and pulls it so that the child slides along the floor. The adult can pull the blanket faster as the child becomes comfortable.

Safety is important with this activity. Demonstrate the activity and ensure the child is able to hold on tight to the blanket to prevent them from falling off.

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**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Blanket (option: sheet)

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**“My future dreams are for children to one day participate and be a Special Olympics athlete and star.”**

**- Tracy, Southern California**





# Walking and Running

Walking and running are skills that allow children to explore their environment. Both skills allow children to participate in a variety of recreational activities, sport games and learning experiences.

## Activities in this section include:

Follow the Leader

Walk Tall

Side Stepping

Run and Carry

Hidden Treasure

Sticky Arms

Heavy Feet, Light Feet

Obstacle Course

Fire Drill

Future Skaters

## Follow the Leader

Encourage children to “follow the leader” as you walk in different ways (like slow, fast or march) and move different parts of your body (like arms up or arms out). Then encourage children to take turns as the leader.

**Group Play:** Set up a path using hoops, cones, floor markers or other available equipment and encourage children to follow the path.

## Walk Tall

Have children walk from one floor marker to another, standing tall with beanbags on their heads. Once children can do this without the beanbag falling, have them jog or run with the same tall posture.

Placing a beanbag on the child’s head while walking or running encourages good posture and balance.



**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Beanbags, floor markers (option: cones)

## Side Stepping



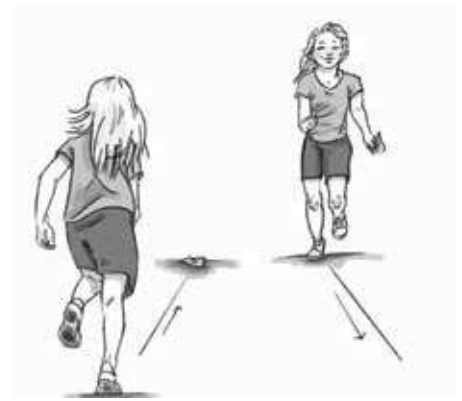
Encourage children to face forward and step to the right or left onto a variety of floor markers.

Beanbags can be placed on some markers. Children can pick up the beanbags and move to different markers as they side step from one floor marker to the next.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Floor markers, beanbags (option: soft toys)

## Run and Carry

Encourage children to run a distance, pick up an object from the ground and run back to the starting point. Repeat several times for endurance. When playing with two or more children, they can pass the object to each other after running a distance. With large numbers of children, try relay teams and races.



**Group Play:** Have an adult stand in the middle of the space. Have children run by the adult, trying to get beanbags from one side to the other. The adult can only move along a straight line. If the adult tags a child, the child must “freeze”. The child stays frozen until another child tags them. Then both children can run to drop off beanbags on the opposite side.

**Healthy Play:** Use real, plastic or cloth foods as objects in the activity. Ask children to pick up the object and run with it to a set of baskets labelled “healthy” or “unhealthy”. Ask children to categorize the food item. Use the activity to discuss what makes the food item healthy or unhealthy.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Beanbags

## Hidden Treasure

Set up cones throughout the space. Under a few of the cones, hide a beanbag treasure.

Ask children one at a time to walk or run (forward, backward or sideways) to a cone and see if there is a hidden treasure. If a treasure is found, it should be placed in the “treasure chest” box. If no treasure is found, the child should run to the end of the line. If all of the items or treasures are found before the last child has gone, the entire group wins.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Cones (option: stacking cups), beanbags, box



## Sticky Arms

Create a zigzag course with cones. Have children run through the course with their arms “glued” to their sides. Then have children run the course with their elbows bent and arms swinging. Time the children and talk about which way was easier and faster.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Cones  
(option: floor markers, tape or rope)



## Heavy Feet, Light Feet

Have children run from one end of the room to another with “heavy feet”, or lots of stomping noises. Then have children run back with “light feet”, running on their toes and being as quiet as possible.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Floor markers

### Tips for Observation

Encourage children to look in the direction they are walking or running and to keep their hips and feet facing forward.

## Obstacle Course

Set up cones, floor markers, hoops and other equipment, and encourage children to walk, crawl, climb, jump or run through and around a series of obstacles. Begin with a straight course with similar activities at each “station” and progress to including a variety of movements, such as, zigzags or reversals.

Demonstrate different types of running (like slow, fast, backward, and forward) and incorporate them throughout the obstacle course.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Cones, floor markers, hoops, dowels

## Fire Drill

Ask all but one child to stand in a line. While the children are passing a ball from one end of the line to the other, the one remaining child runs around the line. The child must try to get back to the start before the ball reaches the end. If the child is unsuccessful, give the child another try and make the passing more difficult by passing behind the back or between the legs.

Children should take turns running around the line.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Ball (option: beanbag)

### Optional Activity

## Future Skaters

Encourage children to move around a room without lifting their feet. Have them wear skates made from paper plates.

Skating can be done with music or added to other games.



**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Paper plates (option: cardboard cartons cut in half or shoeboxes)

### Tips for Observation

If the child's arms are swinging across the body or not in opposition of the legs, correct this while standing or running in place.

# Balance and Jumping

Good balance is important for many activities and sports. Balance helps children climb stairs and walk on uneven surfaces, like grass or sand. Good balance will help develop confidence for jumping and leaping.

## Activities in this section include:

Balance Beam

Follow the Coach

Step, Jump and Grab

Rock Hop

Trees in the Forest

Leaping Lizards

Jumping High



## Balance Beam



Encourage children to walk heel-to-toe next to a straight, narrow path marked by a chalked line. Progress to having children walk directly on a line and then on a low balance beam.

**Group Play:** Have children walk heel-to-toe in a straight line and pick up a beanbag. Have them place the beanbag on their head, shoulder, elbow or other body parts, and continue heel-to-toe walking until the beanbag can be placed in a bucket or hoop.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Balance beam (option: rope), chalk line (option: line of tape)

## Follow the Coach

Ask children to copy your movements and positions. Encourage children to perform actions that require balance, such as:

- Standing on tiptoes or heels
- Standing with one foot directly in front of the other
- Standing on one foot

## Tips for Observation

To track a child's progress in an activity, note how they do at the beginning of Young Athletes and then every four weeks to see if the child improves. Use these assessments to know when children need more practice and when they can move on to harder skill areas.

## Step, Jump and Grab

Encourage children to step up onto a block or beam and then jump down from it. Use floor markers to keep blocks from moving on slippery surfaces.

Progress by having children:

- Jump from the box to a floor marker placed further out.
- Jump up high and grab a scarf as they jump off the block.
- Jump down from higher surfaces.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Block (option: low beam), floor markers, scarf (option: beanbag)

## Rock Hop



Set out blocks and/or floor markers and pretend they are rocks in a river. Tell children to pretend there is a crocodile in the river and that they need to get across by stepping on the "rocks" without falling in the water. Increase the difficulty by having the blocks further apart or varying the size and shape of the blocks.

Progress the activity by having two children hold hands and work together to get across the river. Or have children cross the river using only one color of blocks or floor markers.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Blocks, floor markers



## Trees in the Forest

Have the children pretend to be trees in the forest by having them stand with their feet on two floor markers. Ask one child to be the wind and walk or run through the trees, fanning them with a scarf. Encourage the trees to bend and sway in the breeze.



Increase the difficulty by having the children put both feet on one floor marker, stand on one foot or stand up on a block.

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*EQUIPMENT NEEDED:* Floor markers, scarf

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### Tips for Observation

Be consistent with verbal cues and demonstrations. Repetition helps children learn and master new skills.

## Leaping Lizards

Encourage children to jump forward from one floor marker to the next.

Progress by encouraging children to run forward and leap into the air either over or onto a floor marker.

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*EQUIPMENT NEEDED:* Floor markers

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## Jumping High

Encourage children to jump over a dowel. Raise the height of the object to increase difficulty.

---

*EQUIPMENT NEEDED:* Plastic dowel (option: rope, floor marker), cones

---



### Tips for Observation

New jumpers will push off or land with one foot leading to the other, rather than both feet pushing off and landing at the same time. It will take some time, so encourage children to progress to jump off and land with both feet at the same time.

A young girl with dark skin, wearing a green and white checkered dress with a white collar, is smiling and holding a red and white soccer ball. She is standing outdoors on a gravel surface. In the background, there is a corrugated metal building and another person in a bright green shirt.

# Trapping and Catching

Trapping is when children stop a ball with their body and not their hands. Catching is when children use only their hands to stop a ball that is thrown, bounced or rolled. Both skills require children to watch the ball as it moves and hand-eye coordination. Children also need strength and balance to trap and catch.

## Activities in this section include:

### Rolling and Trapping

Goalie Drill

Bubble Catch

Big Ball Catch

Low Ball Catch

High Ball Catch

Bounce Catch

Circle Ball

### Rolling and Trapping

Have children sit opposite each other with legs stretched wide so that their feet touch to form a diamond shape. Encourage children to roll the ball to each other and to catch or stop it with their hands.



Progress this activity by decreasing the size of the ball or rolling it faster. Have children kneel to increase the challenge.

**Group Play:** Ask children to sit in a circle and roll a ball to each other. As the ball is rolled, have children shout out something that fits into the theme of the day or week (for example, animals, colors, fruits or vegetables).

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Slow motion ball (option: small foam ball, tennis ball)*



### Goalie Drill

Have children stand in front of two cones that have been set up to form a goal. Encourage children to stop the ball with their hands so that the ball does not roll between the cones.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Ball, cones (option: junior-sized sports goal, soda bottles)*

### Optional Activity Bubble Catch

Ask children to stand in a circle. From the middle of the circle, blow bubbles to the children and have them catch the bubbles with one or two hands.



**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Bubbles*

### Big Ball Catch

Stand facing the child and slowly bring the ball toward them, at the level of their waist. Repeat several times, moving more quickly each time. Next, drop the ball right before it reaches their hands and encourage them to catch it with their hands and not let the ball hit the ground.

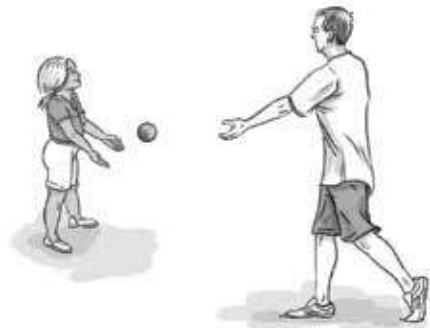
**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Slow motion ball (option: beach ball)*



### Tips for Observation

Encourage older children or those with high skill levels to model activities and support the other children. This promotes communication, leadership and friendship.

## Low Ball Catch



Stand facing the child, who is about three steps away. Gently toss a ball to the child making sure the ball gets to the child at waist level or below. Encourage the child to catch the ball with fingers pointing down.

Progress by moving further away.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Slow motion ball (option: beach ball, playground ball)*

## High Ball Catch

Kneel facing the child, who is about three steps away. Gently toss a ball to the child, making sure the ball gets to the child at chest level or higher. Encourage the child to catch the ball with fingers pointing up.

Progress by moving further away and increasing the size of the ball's arc.



**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Slow motion ball (option: beach ball, playground ball)*

## Bounce Catch

Face the child and bounce a ball, so the child can catch the ball without moving. Encourage the child to bounce pass the ball back to you.

Progress by moving further away and using smaller balls.



**Group Play:** Have children stand in a circle and bounce-to-pass the ball to one another.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Slow motion ball (option: playground ball)*

## Circle Ball



Ask children to stand in a circle and pass the ball with short tosses to the next person. Add a second ball when the first ball has made it halfway around the circle. Have children step backward to increase the size of the circle for a greater challenge.

**Group Play:** Make it a game. Encourage children to see how many catches the group can make without dropping the ball.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Slow motion ball (options: beach ball, playground ball)*

## Tips for Observation

Bubbles and beach balls have longer flight times than other balls. This will help some children achieve early success in catching. Be sure to pick the right-sized ball for each child – not too big and not too small.



# Throwing

Throwing requires strength, flexibility, balance and coordination. Children learn how to grip and let go of an object by tossing something small and light. If a child can easily lift a ball over their head with two hands, the ball is a good size.

Throwing is important in many sports. Being good at throwing helps children feel comfortable joining in games with friends.

## Activities in this section include:

Bowling

Train Tunnel

Two-Handed Underhand Toss

One-Handed Underhand Toss

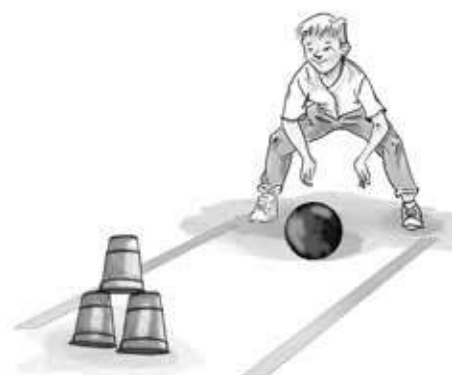
Two-Handed Overhand Throw

One-Handed Overhand Throw

Target Practice

Shoot to Score Basketball





### Optional Activity

#### Bowling

Create your own bowling lane with two balance beams. Arrange cups in a pyramid shape and have children roll a ball towards them to knock the cups down.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Stacking cups (option: plastic bowling pins, empty soda bottles), soft balance beams (option: tape, sticks), ball

#### Train Tunnel

Have children stand in a line with one child in front of the other and their legs apart, making a "tunnel" with their legs.

Ask the child at the end of the line to roll a ball forward through the tunnel, pretending the ball is a train. The ball or "train" will usually not make it through everyone's legs, because it "needs to pick up passengers." Whoever is closest to the ball should pick it up. Then, all the other children move in front of the child with the ball so that he or she is at the back of the line and can roll the ball through everyone else's legs.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Ball

#### Tips for Observation

Throwing and catching are closely linked, so you will often find yourself working on both skills at the same time.

#### Two-Handed Underhand Toss

Encourage the child to stand with bent knees and hold a ball with two hands. Ask the child to look at your hands and toss the ball underhand to you.

Progress by having the child toss the ball into a basket, over a low barrier or through a hoop.

**Group Play:** Have children stand in a circle and two-handed toss the ball to one another.



**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Slow motion ball (option: beach ball, playground ball), hoop (option: low net, basket)

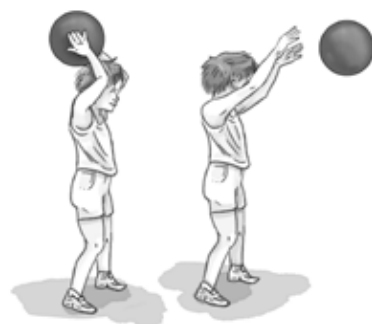
#### One-Handed Underhand Toss

Encourage the child to stand with bent knees, holding a small ball with one hand. Ask the child to look at your hands and underhand toss the ball into your hands. Progress by having the child toss the ball into a basket, over a barrier or through a hoop.

**Healthy Play:** Consider using food-shaped beanbags or beanbags with photos of food taped to them. Ask children to toss the beanbag into a "healthy" hoop or basket and an "unhealthy" hoop or basket, based on the food displayed on their beanbag.



**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Small foam ball (option: beanbag, tennis ball), hoop (option: low net, basket)



## Two-Handed Overhand Throw

Have children stand with one foot in front of the other, hip-width apart, and encourage them to rock forward and back. As children rock to the back foot, have them raise their arms up over the head. When rocking forward, have them bring the arms forward to throw the ball.

Progress by having children throw the ball into a basket, over a barrier or through a hoop.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Slow motion ball (option: beach ball, playground ball), hoop (option: low net, basket)*

## One-Handed Overhand Throw

Using the same technique as two-handed overhand throw, encourage children to use one hand, bringing their arm back and forward overhead to throw a small ball towards you.

Progress by having children throw the ball into a basket, over a barrier or through a hoop.



**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Small foam ball (option: tennis ball, beanbag), hoop (option: low net, basket)*

## Tips for Observation

With tossing and throwing, encourage children to step forward with the opposite foot as the arm that is throwing.

## Target Practice

Tape pictures to the wall at various heights to serve as targets. The targets can reinforce shapes, colors, animals, healthy habits and other relevant topics.

Use floor markers to encourage proper foot placement. Have children stand on the floor markers and throw small balls at the targets.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Pictures, tape, floor markers, small foam balls (option: beanbags)*

## Shoot to Score Basketball

Have children stand in a circle around an adult who is holding a hoop. Ask the children to pass the ball around the circle a certain number of times. The child who ends up with the ball should shoot the ball into the hoop for a point.



**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Hoop (option: basket), ball*

# Striking

Striking means hitting a ball or object with one's hand or with an object, like a stick, bat, paddle or racket. Striking helps develop the hand-eye coordination skills needed for tennis, golf, softball, volleyball and floorball.

## Activities in this section include:

Handball

Ball Tap

Beginning Floorball or Golf

Beginning Tennis or Softball

Beginning Volleyball



## Handball

Place a ball on a cone. Have children hit the ball with a fist or open hand.

*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Slow motion ball (option: beach ball), cone (option: softball tee)*



## Ball Tap

Tap a ball in the air toward children and have them tap the ball back toward you, or toward each other, with an open hand.

Count the number of taps before the ball hits the floor.

*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Slow motion ball (option: beach ball, balloon)*

### Tips for Observation

Large balls are easier to strike than small ones.  
Stationary objects are easier to strike than moving ones.

## Beginning Floorball or Golf

Place a ball on the ground. While holding a dowel, have children stand sideways facing the ball. Encourage children to strike the ball with the dowel. Have children hold the dowel with thumbs pointing down.



**Group Play:** Set up two cones to be the goal and have the children shoot on goal. Children can also practice catching by taking turns as goalie.

*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Slow motion ball (option: beach ball, small foam ball, tennis ball), dowel (option: junior size floorball stick, junior size golf club), cones*

## Beginning Tennis or Softball

Place a large ball on a cone. While holding a paddle, have children stand sideways facing the ball. Encourage children to strike the ball with the paddle.

For a greater challenge, gently toss a ball to children and encourage them to strike it with a paddle.

**Group Play:** Create “bases” for the children to run around after they hit the ball, mimicking the sport of softball.



*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Ball, cone (option: softball tee), paddle (option: racket, bat)*

### Tips for Observation

Balls thrown slowly and with small arcs of flight are easier to hit than balls thrown at a fast pitch or with a high arc.



## Beginning Volleyball

Divide children into two groups, separated by a balance beam. Encourage children to tap or hit a ball with an open hand from one side of the barrier to the other.

*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Balance beam (option: rope, low net), slow motion ball (option: beach ball, balloon)*

## Tips for Observation

Shifting weight is important to correct striking form. If children are not shifting their weight, have them rock forward and backward and side-to-side while standing on floor markers.



"Being a part of Young Athletes means a lot to my son Mateo because he loves sports. As a family, we are more united because my other two kids without intellectual disabilities participate also. In his school he can be part of more activities now and has the support & recognition of his mates."

- Melisa, Mexico

# Kicking

Kicking describes when an object is hit with the foot. Kicking requires eye-foot coordination. It also requires the ability to balance, at least for a moment, on one foot. Being able to kick a ball is important for football (soccer), and allows children to play with others.



## Activities in this section include:

Stationary Ball Kick

Penalty Kick

Passing Practice

Give and Go

Pinball

Three-Pin Bowling

Cone Dribble

## Stationary Ball Kick

Place a ball on the ground and have children stand behind it. Encourage children to kick the ball toward you with the toe of their preferred foot.



For a greater challenge, encourage children to kick for distance by having them kick past various floor markers. Or kick the ball between two cones or markers to score a goal.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Slow motion ball (option: beach ball, junior football (soccer ball), playground ball), floor markers (option: cones)*

## Penalty Kick

Place a ball on the ground and have children run up to the ball and kick it toward you.



For greater challenge, encourage children to run up to the ball and kick it between two cones to score a goal. Other children can practice trapping and catching by taking turns as goalie.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Slow motion ball (option: beach ball, junior football (soccer ball), playground ball), cones*

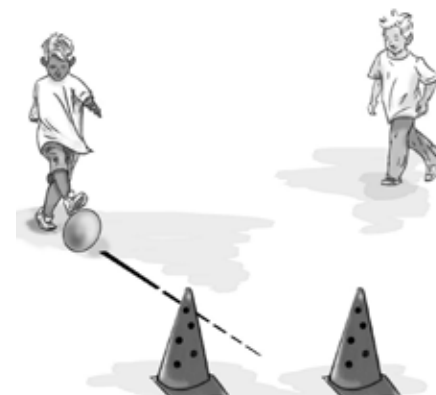
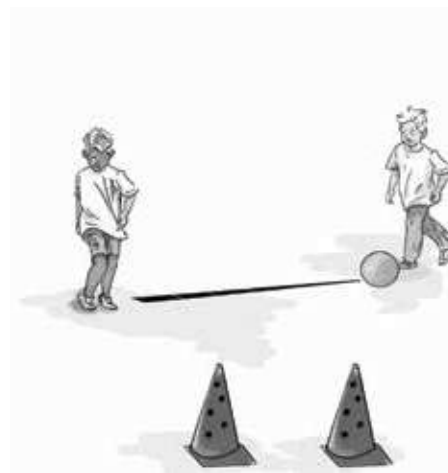
## Passing Practice

Have children stand in a circle and encourage them to kick a ball to each other. Make sure to keep the ball in the circle.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Slow motion ball (option: beach ball, junior football (soccer ball), playground ball)*

## Give and Go

Kick a ball to the child and encourage them to kick the moving ball between two cones to score a goal.



**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** *Slow motion ball (option: beach ball, junior football (soccer ball), playground ball), cones (option: goal, floor markers)*

## Tips for Observation

Children should focus their eyes on the ball before kicking and on the target as they kick.

## Pinball

Use the balance beams to create the rectangular frame of a pinball machine. Place cones and blocks within the rectangle to create obstacles.

Have children stand on the balance beams and gently kick the ball to each other, letting the frame and obstacles change the direction of the ball.



**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Balance beams, cones, blocks (option: cups), slow motion ball (option: playground ball, sports ball)



### Optional Activity

#### Three-Pin Bowling

Construct a bowling lane with two balance beams and set up three empty plastic bottles at the end of the lane. Have children take turns kicking a ball to move or knock down the bottles.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Balance beams, plastic bottles (option: stacking cups), slow motion ball (option: playground ball, sports ball)

## Cone Dribble

Set up cones randomly in the play space. Ask children to lightly kick the ball as they move around the space without hitting the cones. Children can take turns or several children can dribble at the same time.

**EQUIPMENT NEEDED:** Cones, slow motion ball (option: junior football (soccer ball), playground ball)

### Tips for Observation

When kicking, the body leans back just before contact with the ball. The opposite arm swings forward with the kick. The kicking leg should follow through.



# Advanced Sports Skills

Advanced sports-specific skills require children to use the skills they have developed earlier in the Guide and put them into a sports context. This requires a high level of connection, strength, power, coordination, teamwork and awareness.

## Activities in this section include:

Punting  
Galloping  
Skipping

## Football (Soccer) Skills:

Stand, Roll and Trap  
Two-on-One  
One-on-One

## Basketball Skills:

Dribble  
Pass and Shoot  
Dribble and Shoot

## Softball Skills:

Run the Bases



## Punting

Encourage the child to practice balancing on one leg, with their kicking leg in the air in front of their body and their arms out to the sides. Then, have the child swing their leg backward and forward. Have the child hold a ball in both hands, drop it when the leg is back and kick it by swinging the leg forward.



*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Slow motion ball (option: beach ball, playground ball)*

## Galloping

Place a series of floor markers on the ground in a straight line. Have children leap onto a marker with their preferred foot and bring the back foot up to the marker. Continue leading with the preferred foot.

*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Floor markers*

## Skiping

Place a series of floor markers on the ground in a straight line. Have children step onto the marker and then perform a low hop on that foot. As the hopping foot lands, place the other foot on the next marker.

*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Floor markers*

## Tips for Observation

These skills require strength, balance, vision, coordination and teamwork. Observe which components are a struggle for children and return to activities described earlier in the Guide.

## Football (Soccer) Skills

### Stand, Roll and Trap

Ask children to stand in a circle and roll a ball to each other. Have children stop or trap the ball with the bottom of their feet. Make the activity more exciting by including counting or rhyming each time the ball is rolled.



*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Slow motion ball (option: junior football (soccer ball), playground ball)*

### Two-on-One

One child is the goalie and stands in front of the goal. Two other children are teammates who want to score a goal. On a clap or whistle, one child kicks the ball to his or her teammate, then that child shoots the ball towards the goal created by two cones.

After each child practices being the goalie, passing and shooting, the drill is run again or with other children.

*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Slow motion ball (option: junior football (soccer ball), playground ball), cones (option: junior-sized sports goal)*

### One-on-One

Encourage two children to run and kick to pass the ball three times. The child with the ball after the third pass should be encouraged to shoot on goal. After the shot, the ball is passed to the next two children.

*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Slow motion ball (option: junior football (soccer ball), playground ball), cones (option: junior-sized sports goal)*

## Basketball Skills

### Dribble

Stand behind the child and assist them in bouncing a ball with two hands. Let the ball hit their hand without catching it. Provide less assistance as child's skill improves.

Progress to different types of balls and then progress to bouncing or dribbling the ball with one hand.

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*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Slow motion ball (option: junior basketball, playground ball)*

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### Pass and Shoot

Have children stand in a circle and put a hoop in the middle. Encourage children to throw, bounce-to-pass, or pass the ball three times so that the third person ends up with the ball. They shoot the ball into the hoop.

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*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Slow motion ball (option: junior basketball, playground ball), hoop (option: basket)*

---

### Dribble and Shoot

Have children stand in a line in front of a hoop. When they have the ball, have children dribble three times, take a shot. Then, collect the ball from the hoop and then pass it to the next child in line.

---

*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Slow motion ball (option: junior basketball, playground ball), hoop (option: basket)*

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## Softball Skills

### Run the Bases

Use floor markers for bases. Have one child stand on each base. Set up a cone at home plate and have one child bat a ball off it. The batter is encouraged to run around the bases before the ball is passed between three different players. The trainer or coach rotates the children to different positions.

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*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Floor markers, slow motion ball (option: soft foam ball, softball), cone (option: softball tee), dowel (option: bat, stick)*

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## Young Athletes in Schools



**As children explore the world around them through play, they learn many concepts of life. Adding movement and physical activity into the classroom leads to a lifetime of activity.**

The benefits of physical activity and play go beyond sports. Special Olympics Young Athletes helps children interact with each other and develop important communication, learning and self-help skills. Starting motor activities early is very important for children with intellectual disabilities. Children who receive support at an early age will be more capable of doing challenging movements as they grow older.

#### Structure in Schools

- **Frequency:** at least one time per week, three times per week is best

Young Athletes has the greatest impact on motor skills when run more than once per week. Schools should strive to offer activities three times per week.

All three lessons can be conducted in the classroom, or can be enhanced with at-home activities. For example, if Young Athletes takes place twice per week in the classroom, family members may conduct activities once per week at home.

- **Timing:** 30 – 45 minute session
- **Setting:** Indoors or outdoors

Young Athletes can be run in many safe settings. These include a gym during physical education time or in the classroom/outdoors during a time dedicated to motor development or play.

## Family Engagement

While families may not be involved with Young Athletes in schools, it is important for families to participate with their child. Families can participate in a variety of ways, including:

- **Initial Meeting.** Schools are encouraged to host an introduction for parents at the start of the school year. Parents and family members can learn about Young Athletes. They can also learn how to support their child at home during the school year.
- **Weekly newsletters and emails.** Connect with parents weekly to share the activities and progress with families.
- **Volunteers.** Invite family members to participate as volunteers and support the Young Athletes lessons.
- **At-home activities.** Share the Activity Guide with families. Provide suggestions of everyday items that could be used as equipment. This allows families to replicate activities with their child at home.
- **Demonstration or Celebration event.** At the conclusion of Young Athletes, plan an inclusive celebration event or field day. Invite family members to come see the different activities learned in class.



## Additional Resources

The Young Athletes Curriculum is a secondary resource that provides scripted lesson plans for use over an eight-week period in schools. For each week, there are three days of lesson plans, for a total of 24 days of activities. The lessons are designed to be offered in order to help children become familiar with the activities. Children build skills through repetition.

The Young Athletes Curriculum was developed from the activities in the Activity Guide. It introduces how to run Young Athletes in schools.

The Young Athletes Curriculum and other resources for educators can be found at [resources.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes](https://resources.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes).

## Building a Lesson Plan

Use the structure below to develop individual lessons for Young Athletes in the classroom. It will help provide repetition. It also emphasizes individual growth and support social interactions.

- **Warm Up:** The warm up gets children moving and prepared for the upcoming activities. A fun warm-up can include songs, games and stretching.
- **Individual Skill Development:** This section allows children to focus on their individual growth and success. Select a skill and activity from the Guide and run it as a singular activity. Or, select several activities and set up different stations.
- **Group Games/Activity:** These games and activities are a fun and effective way to practice skills. They reinforce classroom lessons, encouraging communication, and social interaction.
- **Cool Down and Closing Song:** This section helps children to slow down and prepare to return to other classroom activities. With a closing song, review the activity or skills learned. Complete the lesson with a good stretch.

On the next page, you will find a sample lesson template for developing Young Athletes lessons in the classroom.

### Tips for Adults

- Using words, pictures or other visuals, share the individual activities on a white board or chalkboard. This provides visual cues for children as they complete the day's lesson.
- Find a blank Lesson Plan Template at: [resources.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes](https://resources.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes)



## Young Athletes Lesson Plan

### Sample Lesson for "Walking and Running" Activities



#### Warm Up (5 minutes)

- Song - Wheels on the Bus
- Follow the Leader



#### Skill Development/Stations (10- 15 minutes)

- Side Stepping
- Run and Carry
- Sticky Arms



#### Group Activity (10-15 minutes)

- Fire Drill
- Obstacle Course



#### Cool Down/Closing Song (5 minutes)

- Song - If You're Happy and You Know it

## 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.



### Leadership and Volunteers

Along with many other benefits, Young Athletes can help to create inclusion, acceptance and respect in classrooms and schools. Consider adding to sessions by giving children the chance to lead and learn.

- After repeating songs multiple times, encourage children to lead the warm-up and cool down songs.
- Within the activities, identify ways for children to begin taking on leadership roles. For example, let children take turns being the leader in “Follow the Leader” or setting the path in “Obstacle Course”.
- Use classroom time to discuss important topics that help children become better members of their classroom or community. Topics can include concepts like inclusion, respect, abilities and friendship.

Young Athletes can also support older individuals in developing leadership skills. Consider the following suggestions:

- Older primary school children can support Young Athletes by demonstrating or modeling skills and helping younger children to complete activities.
- Secondary school students can serve as volunteers for the activities. Volunteers are great to run individual stations or support children as they move from one activity to the next.
- Partner with a local university to enhance the Young Athletes activities. Consider working with relevant departments, such as, education, special education, physical therapy, or coaching. University students can serve as volunteers or coaches, and can even take leadership in creating lesson plans.
- Have Special Olympics athlete leaders serve as assistant coaches and volunteers.

### Demonstration or Celebration Events

As they learn and practice new skills, children will gain confidence and pride in their growth. Celebration events, like a Unified Field Day, Unified Game Day or Young Athletes demonstration, offer schools the chance to engage children of all ages and abilities. They also highlight the program for families and the community.

To ensure a valuable experience for all, consider the following suggestions for planning an event:

- Invite families and community members so they can share in the success. Also, invite other classes in the school to the event. This way, all children can experience the fun of inclusion.
- Older students in the school can serve as volunteers and take leadership in running the various activities.
- Consider making the event feel more festive by having a small opening and closing ceremony.
- Host a celebration event at the end of the school year or after sessions are complete. The event should celebrate children’s individual successes and progress.
- Set up stations during the event that reflect the activities and games children did in Young Athletes.





## Young Athletes in Communities



Youth sport and recreation programs are where children come together with a “coach” for organized play. They can be found in many communities. Special Olympics Young Athletes can provide that same inclusive opportunity for children with and without intellectual disabilities.

Young Athletes in the community allows parents to share in the fun their children have while playing with others. They also observe their children achieving skills that will help them in sports and in life.

### Structure in Communities

When determining how to conduct community Young Athletes sessions, the following details can serve as a guide for set-up and structure.

- **Frequency:** one time per week, plus two times per week at home
- **Timing:** 45 minute – 1 hour session
- **Setting:** Indoors or outdoors
- **Locations:** Community center, sport club, university campus, public recreation space, library, or other venues
- **Coaches:** Community volunteer, specialized professional, family member or university student
- **Inclusion:** Siblings or local community children
- **Volunteers:** Family members, Special Olympics athlete leaders, local sport club members, university students or community volunteers

Volunteering or assistant coaching is a great leadership opportunity for older Special Olympics athlete leaders. Interaction with athlete leaders is also valuable for families as they can get inspired about future possibilities for their child.

### Community Session Structure

Use the structure below to develop individual sessions for Young Athletes in the classroom. It will help provide repetition. It also emphasizes individual growth and supports social interactions.

- **Warm Up:** The warm up gets children moving and prepared for the upcoming activities. A fun warm-up can include songs, games and stretching.
- **Individual Skill Development:** This section allows children to focus on their individual growth and success. Select a skill and activity from the Guide and run it as a singular activity. Or, select several activities and set up different stations.
- **Group Games/Activity:** These games and activities are a fun and effective way to practice skills. They reinforce classroom lessons, encouraging communication, and social interaction.
- **Cool Down and Closing Song:** This section helps children to slow down and prepare to leave. With a closing song, review the activity or skills learned. Complete the lesson with a good stretch.





## Key Points to Consider in a Community Program

### 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.** Depending on the number of children and volunteers, trainers can divide a large group into smaller groups, sometimes by age or ability and run two groups at the same time.



### Structure

- **Establish a routine.** Routines provide clear expectations, consistency and comfort for many children.
- Create different skill stations to accommodate children of different ages and ability.
- Add group games and activities into the session when children are of similar age or ability.
- **Encourage different modes of movement to transition between activities.** This strengthens different muscles and encourages children to learn a new skill.
- Invite siblings, parents or children without ID to support children by modeling activities.
- **Use music to signal transition.** Songs can be used to signal when one activity is finished and another is about to begin.
- **Plan for rest breaks.** Provide a space where children can rest if they become tired or too excited by the activity or environment.
- Offer water and fruit at the end of the session, if available. Good hydration and nutrition is important for physical health and learning.



## Family Engagement

It is important for families to participate with their child in Young Athletes. It is a chance for families to connect with members of their community and other families. This supports growth, development and a feeling of acceptance.

Families can engage in a community program in a variety of ways, including:

- **Weekly newsletters and emails.** Connect weekly to share the activities and progress with families.
- **Session supporters.** Invite family members to participate in the weekly sessions, supporting their children through the various activities, or encourage families to take the next step and become coaches.
- **At-home activities.** Share the Activity Guide with families. Provide suggestions of everyday items that could be used as equipment. This allows families to replicate activities with their child at home.
- **Family support groups.** Provide families with a space to talk and connect while their children are in Young Athletes. Families can be the best support system for one another.

## Family Forums

Family Forums involve families in Special Olympics. They offer a setting for parents and caregivers to gain access to health information, resources and support.

Consider the following ideas when planning a Family Forum:

### Frequency and Timing

Plan a Family Forum monthly or once every three months. Families can gather with guest speakers while coaches and volunteers conduct that week's Young Athletes session.

### Potential Topics

Family Forums need to address the questions and concerns of local family members. They should also be sensitive to the cultural and religious needs of the community. Below are some suggestions for valuable Family Forum topics. Meet with family members first and get their input before deciding on final topics.

- Advocating for your child's rights and access to services
- Your child's medical and dental care
- Accessing follow-up care – how to identify the right professional for your child
- School opportunities – what is available for children with ID in the community
- Nutrition, healthy eating and cooking demonstrations
- General health topics related to the overall community, such as malaria prevention
- Learning through play
- Healthy sibling relationships
- Promoting independence at an early age

### Guest Presenters

When leading Family Forums, use community partners, university professors or industry experts to lead the conversations. For example, bring in a pediatrician to talk about working with your child's doctor. Have a nutritionist come to speak about healthy eating.

## Young Athletes in the Home





Family involvement in the lives of young children is important. Parents, grandparents, caretakers, brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles and cousins should have every opportunity to be involved in Young Athletes. Through Special Olympics Young Athletes in the home, families can play together in a fun and caring environment.

When run at home, Young Athletes can be a stand-alone program or can support the activities children are doing in a school or community program.

### Stand-Alone Activities

A great way to start Young Athletes is simply to play with children, using the Young Athletes Activity Guide to structure playtime. The activities in the Guide can be used one-on-one with an adult and a child. Or invite siblings and neighborhood children to participate in the fun.

Start by having 20 to 30 minutes of structured play, at least three times per week. Select two to three activities to focus on in each play period. Make sure to keep things fun. Adapt the activities as your child progresses in each skill area.

### Support for Community or School Programs

Practicing Young Athletes at home can help support the skills children are learning as part of Young Athletes in their school or community.

To achieve the growth recognized in the Young Athletes curriculum study – where children gained seven months of motor skills over eight weeks – children should repeat skills and activities three times per week.

Families can support this growth by using Young Athletes as a guide for play at home. Ask your child's teacher or coach to share the lessons they are doing each week and follow along at home.

### Key Points to Consider in your Home-Based Activities

- **Do not feel limited by the suggested equipment.** Official sports equipment is not required. Most equipment can be replaced with things you can find at home. Like tape for a balance beam or empty soda bottles for cones. Use your creativity and have fun!
- **Invite siblings and other children in your community to play.** All children love the activities and games in the Activity Guide. There is no better way to have fun and get fit than to play with others.
- **Get creative.** As you start to do the activities in the Guide, come up with new activities that play to your child's strengths and weaknesses. Connect to your child's favorite sports or activities.
- **Connect with other families.** Find a local Special Olympics Family Support Network to connect with other families. Become a family leader by volunteering or starting a community Young Athletes program.
- **Have fun!** While there are many benefits to Young Athletes, one of the main goals is to support parents in playing with their child in a fun setting. Enjoy this time playing together. Make a connection through physical activities, fitness and sports.



# Additional Resources





**The Young Athletes Activity Guide is just the beginning. Online you can find more information and resources to help support Young Athletes. These resources include:**

- Individual videos displaying proper form for all activities in the Guide
- The Young Athletes Curriculum, with 24 scripted lessons based on the Activity Guide
- Other resources to help program leaders run Young Athletes in the school, community and home
- Information to support and engage family members
- Additional health and fitness activities
- Marketing materials to promote Young Athletes in the community

[resources.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes](https://resources.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes)

### 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.



## Modifications for Children with Motor Challenges

Young Athletes provides a space for children of all abilities to be successful. In some cases, changes may need to be made to ensure all children benefit from the experience.

Regardless of ability level, it is important to adapt activities to meet the individual needs of each child.

### For children who are unable to walk:

- Select activities that focus on sitting on the floor with and without support. These activities include “Rolling and Trapping”, “Scarf Games” and more.
- Modify activities so that children can crawl, rather than walk or run.

### For children who are unsteady on their feet:

- Allow children to use walkers or push a cart to participate in activities.
- Hold children at the waist so they can work on balance, striking and throwing skills.

### For children who use a wheelchair or stroller:

- Allow children to hit off a softball tee.
- Lower nets, targets or barriers.
- Use larger balls that allow children to kick from the wheelchair.
- Position the wheelchair at a side angle to the ball or target for overhead throwing and side striking activities.
- Allow other children to assist by pushing the wheelchair or stroller during group activities.

### For children with limited movement:

- Provide hand-over-hand assistance to complete the activities.
- Provide physical support at the torso or hips.

## 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 (like the template seen on page 68) 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.



## Developing Healthy Habits Early

It is important to introduce healthy habits for children at an early age. Young Athletes includes health and fitness information while focusing on motor skills.

### Some key healthy habits to focus on include:

- Handwashing
- Healthy foods and beverages
- Reducing screen time (TV, computer, video games, smart phones)
- Daily physical activity
- Healthy daily habits, like brushing teeth

In this Guide, many “Healthy Play” ideas share easy activity modifications that address key health and fitness messages.

To support the “Healthy Play” activities, additional equipment can be purchased. These items include floor markers with images of fruits and vegetables, food-shaped beanbags, or beach balls with various food, beverages or exercises on them.



There are additional health and fitness activities that can be added to Young Athletes. Three sample lessons are in the Guide. Additional lessons and activities to support healthy habits can be found at [resources.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes](https://resources.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes)

## Children's Songs

Locally popular songs can be modified to talk about health topics in a fun and exciting way. The sample songs below show how songs can be updated to teach children about nutrition, physical activity and general health and well-being.

### 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.

### 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.



Which Food is Healthy?

*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Real or plastic foods, or pictures of food, tape*

*The goal of this activity is to help children learn about different types of food and making good food choices.*

On a wall or table, draw a happy face (smile) and an unhappy face (frown) with tape. Give children different healthy and unhealthy food items. These can be pictures of food, plastic or cloth food, or real food packaging.

Ask children to group the foods into two groups – those that make them healthy and strong (happy face) and those that are unhealthy (unhappy face).

Once children have separated the foods, discuss which foods have been correctly placed on the happy face and which food items were wrongly identified as “healthy”. Using the grid below as a sample, talk to children about why those foods are not healthy. Also, suggest replacing with foods that are healthier choices.

Unhealthy vs Healthy Foods

Unhealthy Food	Healthy Food	Comment to Child
Chips/Crisps	Bananas or Carrots	“Chips don’t make strong muscles and soft skin and good eyes, but bananas and carrots make you healthy!”
Juice	Milk	“Milk has lots of calcium and protein that will help you get taller and have strong bones, muscles and teeth.”
Soda	Water	“When you are thirsty, water is a good choice for your body. Soda has lots of sugar and will make you even thirstier.”

Tame the Tube

*EQUIPMENT NEEDED: Small box, “Screen-Free Activities” Cards*

*The goal of this activity is to show the importance of limiting screen time (like TV, computer, video games, tablets, smart phones) to no more than two hours a day for children and families.*

Copy the list below and cut out each activity. Place individual activities in a small bowl or box. Ask children to pick an activity and then do each activity as a family or with the whole classroom. Ask children to suggest other screen-free activities that they would like to do.

Talk about the importance of limiting screen time throughout the activity.

Screen-Free Activities

Read a book	Sing a Song	Take a Walk
Dance to a Song	Play with Friends	Play a Game
Play Outside	Write a Poem	Cook a Healthy Meal
Draw a Picture	Listen to Music	Play your Favorite Sport

## Additional Resources : Next Steps with Special Olympics

Children will progress at different rates in Young Athletes. Some children will continue to be challenged and others will be ready to move on to more advanced skills. Work with children individually to know the right next step. The next step could be participating in another Young Athletes session, beginning a training program for a sport, or advancing directly to becoming a competitive Special Olympics athlete or unified partner.

Regardless of ability level, Special Olympics provides opportunities for children and adults throughout their lives. Through health promotion, physical activity and sports, Special Olympics has something for everyone.

Through Olympic-style individual and team sports, people with intellectual disabilities over the age of eight can participate in meaningful training and competition opportunities.

### **Become a Unified Teammate**

Special Olympics Unified Sports joins people with and without intellectual disabilities together on the same team. Unified Sports was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding.

**Learn more at [www.specialolympics.org](http://www.specialolympics.org)**





[www.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/YoungAthletes)



# Foundational Skills

## WEEK ONE

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### THIS SET OF LESSONS PROVIDES

games and activities to help children develop fitness, strength, body awareness, spatial concepts, adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements) and visual tracking skills. Children will also become familiar with the Young Athletes equipment and routines.



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## Overview

**Lesson Plans (Day One, Day Two, Day Three)** provide details to help you plan and carry out the Young Athletes program with a group of children between the ages of 2 and 7 years old.

**Adults Needed:** Plan for at least 1 adult for every 4 children. Recruit help from families, volunteers, older students, college students and others in your community to make sure the program runs smoothly and is fun.

**Time:** Young Athletes is implemented with great enthusiasm, high energy and quick pace. Time estimates are provided to guide completion of each lesson in 30 minutes. However, the pace and length of the lesson should be matched to the needs, interests, ages, and skills of the young athletes in your group.

**Sequence:** There are three lessons for each skill area labeled Day One, Day Two and Day Three. Lessons within the skill area are designed to be offered in sequence to help children become acquainted with the activities and build skills through repetition.

**Resources:** The Lesson Plan Summary Cards include an outline of the activities, list of equipment needed, and page numbers to find the activity descriptions. The cards, Young Athletes Activity Guide, Suggestions from Teachers, and training videos are included in the online Toolkit (see website below).

**Playing at home:** Give families the Lesson Plan Summary Cards and encourage them to sing the songs and play one or two games with their child at home before the next session. Help them learn about the activities by including them in your group sessions and/or providing a family training session. Be sure they have access to the Activity Guide and Videos for more information.

**>> See the Young Athletes Toolkit online at:**  
[www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

## Opening Sports Song (5 min.)

**PURPOSE** Start each Young Athletes class with a gathering/warm-up song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with. This will help them warm-up, serve as a gathering activity, create body awareness and support adaptive skills (following directions, singing along, imitating motor movements).

**EXPLAIN** "Today is our first day of Young Athletes! An athlete is someone who plays sports and exercises the muscles in their body. We are all going to be Young Athletes while we play new games and exercise the muscles in our bodies. Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

**SING** **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

- The athletes in our class touch their toes (bend and stretch), touch their toes, touch their toes. The athletes in our class touch their toes, - all through the day.
- The runner on the team goes run run run, run run run run, run run. The runner on the team goes run run run - all through the town.
- The swimmer in the water goes swim swim swim, swim swim swim, swim swim swim. The swimmer in the water goes swim swim swim - all through the pool.



**I Spy** (5 min.)**EQUIPMENT** Floor markers, bean bags, cones, hoops, balls**PURPOSE** Identify and locate sports equipment using a variety of motor movements, strength, and general fitness.**DEMONSTRATE** "Great warm-up! Now let's play I Spy with all of our new sports equipment! I spy with my little eye a blue ball! Where is the blue ball?" Look around, find the ball.**LEAD** "Hurry, let's walk to the balls! Where is the blue ball? (balls, cones, floor markers, scarves, etc.) Great! OK, listen carefully! I spy with my little eye an orange cone! Where is the orange cone? Look around 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.
- The I Spy game progresses as teacher (or athlete) calls out the name of a piece of equipment and all athletes find that object.
- The teacher can lead by also calling out a color and all athletes find equipment of a particular color.

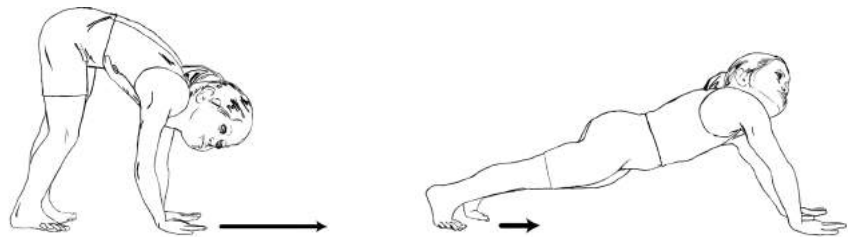
**Scarf Game** (5 min.)**EQUIPMENT** Scarf for each child**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, visual tracking, identification of body parts**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Now let's play the Scarf Game! Watch the scarf! Look where the scarf is going! Catch the scarf with your (hands, head, elbow, foot)! You/I caught a (blue, red, yellow) scarf with my/your (hand, head, elbow, foot)!"

## Inchworm Wiggle (5 min.)

**PURPOSE** Strength, general fitness, motor skills

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Bend over and put your hands on the ground. “Let’s play the Inchworm Wiggle!” “Great, watch me move like an inch worm. (Model while talking.) Walk with your hands then, walk with your feet. Awesome!”

- Let’s do it again! Let’s do the Inchworm Wiggle.
- Walk with your hands; then walk with your feet.
- Great! Inch worm to the (name a piece of equipment: bean bags, balance beam, etc.)



## Bridges and Tunnels (5 min.)

**PURPOSE** Strength, general fitness

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** “OK, now we are going to play Bridges and Tunnels! First let’s make our tunnel!” If physically able, have one athlete bend forward so that hands and feet are on the ground to form a bridge and tunnels. Encourage other athletes to form a bridge or tunnel.





## Bridges and Tunnels *(continued)*

### Tunnels

"Who can bend like this to make a tunnel? (Hands and feet on ground, bottom up making tunnel) Awesome, he/she made a tunnel. Now, who can go under his/her tunnel? Great! After you go under the tunnel you make a tunnel right next to him/her! Great, now our tunnel is even bigger!"

- One athlete forms a tunnel by touching the ground with his/her feet and hands or by getting down onto hands and knees.
- The other athletes crawl, scoot, under the tunnel.
- Once they go under the tunnel, have each athlete extend the tunnel (by forming a tunnel next to the person who started the activity).

**Tips:** Make note of approximately how many times the child can perform the activity or how long the child hold up the bridge or tunnel. Encourage more repetitions or more time over several weeks to develop muscular strength and endurance. Encourage bridges and tunnels to be rigid and strong while people and objects pass under and through.



### Bridges

"OK! Now we are going to play bridges. Who can bend like this to make a bridge? (Sit on ground. Place hands/feet flat on ground. Push bottom off ground.) Great! Now let's make a bridge and go under the bridge!"

- One athlete forms a bridge by sitting with his/her hands and feet flat on the ground and pushing his/her bottom off the ground.
- The other athletes crawl, scoot, under the bridge.
- To make it easier have athletes place their feet or hands on the wall or an object and other athletes go under.



## Closing Sports Song (5 min.)

**PURPOSE** End each Young Athletes class with a closing/cool-down song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with. This builds body awareness and adaptive skills (following directions, singing along, imitation of motor movements) and helps with transitions.

**EXPLAIN** "Let's end Young Athletes with a song, If You're Happy and You Know It. Sing along with me and do what I do."

- SING**
- If you're happy and you know it, clap and stomp (wiggle your body; fly like a bird: walk around with arms outstretched).
  - If you're happy and you know it then your face will really show it if you're happy and you know it clap and stomp.



## Opening Sports Song (5 min.) with Scarf

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

**SING** **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

- The athletes in our class touch their toes (bend and stretch); touch their toes; touch their toes. The athletes in our class touch their toes, - all through the day.
- The player on the court jumps up and down, up and down, up and down. The player on the court jumps up and down - all during the game.
- The athlete on the team throws the scarf, throws the scarf, throws the scarf. The athlete on the team throws the scarf - all through the town.

**Tip:** Have athletes suggest additional motions and lead.

## I Spy: Bunny Hop (5 min)

Adapt the Game from Day 1 by asking athletes to hop, then crawl to the sports equipment you name.

## Inchworm Wiggle (4 min)

Repeat the Activity from Day 1

## Bridges and Tunnels (5 min)

Repeat the Activity from Day 1



## Obstacle Course *(5 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Set up a 5 station course with floor markers (dots for jumping on), bean bags with hoop (throwing bean bag through hoop), a series of hurdles (cones with dowel/stick), balance beam, area to run to finish (through a ribbon).

**EXPLAIN** Now we get to run the obstacle course! Watch and follow me!

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Show the athletes how to go through the obstacle course. Then assist athletes in moving through course.



### Station 1: Jump on Dots

- Arrange 10 dots in zigzag pattern, close to one another.
- Athlete will bunny hop on two feet from dot to dot.
- Athlete will jump to the right, then jump to the left, zigzagging down length of dots.

### Station 2: Throw Bean Bag Through Target (basket, hoop)

- Use floor marker to show where athlete stands.
- Athlete will throw bean bag or small ball to a hoop held parallel to the floor or to a bucket.
- Progress to throwing through target (hoop on cone or block) from distance of 3 feet.
- Throw underhanded and if child is able proceed to throwing overhand.
- Move distance closer or further away, depending on skill of athlete.





**Tip:** Encourage color recognition, object recognition, verbal and counting development by calling out colors, names, and numbers of objects used in each activity. Ask children to repeat the objects you reference, including their name, color and numbers. Make note of the concepts the child has mastered and those that are still developing (e.g., knows on/off; identified red, not blue). Incorporate concepts during play such as giving directions to move around stationary objects like a couch or crawl under a table to retrieve a toy.

### Station 3: Step/Jump Over Hurdles

- Make hurdle using two cones and one dowel or stick. Place dowel through holes in cone.
- Adjust height as needed for athletes and always start the bar at the lowest height.
- Always start the bar at the lowest height. If he/she is unable to jump, they can step over hurdle.

### Station 4: Walk on Balance Beam

- Athletes will independently walk the length of the beam, alternating steps.
- Add various ways to move down the beam for advanced athletes (walk backwards, side-steps, change directions – forward to backwards).
- Add length to the beam by using multiple beams.

### Station 5: Run to Finish Line (through ribbon)

- When athlete steps off beam, he/she should run to the finish line.
- Teach athletes to run through the line. Introduce this skill several times as some may stop, not wanting to hit or touch the finish line.
- The finish line is a long ribbon. To set the finish line, attach the ribbon to one side of the area while holding the other end of the ribbon in your hand (or have another person hold the other end). As the athlete touches the ribbon, let it go.

## Closing Sports Song (5 min.)

Repeat the song you used in Day 1 to end the Lesson.



## Opening Sports Song with Bunny Hop (3 min.)

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

**SING** **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

- The athletes in our class can bend and stretch, bend and stretch, bend and stretch. The athletes in our class can bend and stretch, all through the town.
- The athletes in our class can hop like a bunny, hop like a bunny, hop like a bunny. The athletes in our class can hop like a bunny - all through the day.
- The athletes in our class can go up and down (on your toes), up and down, up and down. The athletes in our class can go up and down - all through the town.

**Tip:** Have athletes suggest additional motions and lead.

## I Spy: Stomp/Tip Toes (3 min.)

Adapt the Game from Day 1 by instructing athletes to move in different ways to the equipment (e.g. tiptoe, stomp slowly, stomp fast, walk backwards)

## Bridges and Tunnels (4 min.)

Repeat the Activity from Day 1



## Follow the Leader (4 min.) with Side Steps, Follow a Path

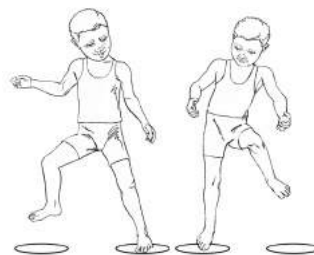
**PURPOSE** Introduction to Walking and Running skills. Motor Skills (walking, running, side steps, grasp, release), adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**EQUIPMENT** Set up space with 3 floor markers placed about two feet apart in a line.

Place bean bags or small ball on the 2nd floor marker so athletes can side step from first marker to second marker, pick up bean bag/ball, side step to last marker, place ball on last marker. Adapt by adding more markers and/or increasing distance between markers.

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Encourage athletes to sidestep right and left onto a variety of floor markers (plastic disks, hoops). "Ok! Now let's play follow the leader!"

- March around the room, swing your arms!
- March around the room, hands on head! Side step to the right.
- Great! Side step again. Side step one more time! Now side step to the left. One big side step and again, and again!
- Now this time, side step to the marker, pick up the bean bag, side step to the next marker, drop the bean bag on the marker!



## Running Styles *(introduction to week 2)*

**PURPOSE** Body awareness, general fitness, motor skills (walk, run, balance), adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Using a clap or whistle, signal change in running style, while providing verbal command for each running/walking style:

- Stomp slow/fast
- Run slow/fast
- Run backwards
- High knees run (raise knees high when running)
- Tiptoe walking

**Obstacle Course** *(7 min.)*  
Repeat the Activity from Day 2.

**Closing Sports Song** *(3 min.)*  
Repeat the song you used in Day 1 and 2 to end the Lesson.



**You have finished Week One: Foundational Skills Lessons.  
You can now begin Week Two: Walking and Running.**





# Walking & Running

## WEEK TWO

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**THIS SET OF LESSONS PROVIDES**  
games and activities to help  
children develop walking and running  
skills, fitness, strength, body awareness,  
spatial concepts, and adaptive skills  
(following directions, imitating  
motor movements).



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## Overview

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**Time:** Young Athletes is implemented with great enthusiasm, high energy and quick pace. Time estimates are provided to guide completion of each lesson in 30 minutes. However, the pace and length of the lesson should be matched to the needs, interests, ages, and skills of the young athletes in your group.

**Sequence:** There are three lessons for each skill area labeled Day One, Day Two and Day Three. Lessons within the skill area are designed to be offered in sequence to help children become acquainted with the activities and build skills through repetition.

**Resources:** The Lesson Plan Summary Cards include an outline of the activities, list of equipment needed, and page numbers to find the activity descriptions. The cards, Young Athletes Activity Guide, Suggestions from Teachers, and training videos are included in the online Toolkit (see website below).

**Playing at home:** Give families the Lesson Plan Summary Cards and encourage them to sing the songs and play one or two games with their child at home before the next session. Help them learn about the activities by including them in your group sessions and/or providing a family training session. Be sure they have access to the Activity Guide and Videos for more information.

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## Opening Sports Song (5 min.)

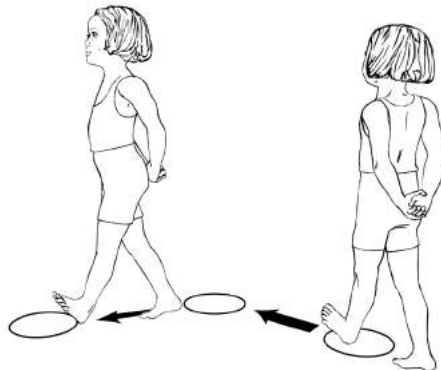
**EQUIPMENT** Whistle, floor markers (distributed around room to create a path), tambourine or drum.

**PURPOSE** Start each Young Athletes class with a gathering/warm-up song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with. This will help them warm-up, serve as a gathering activity, create body awareness and support adaptive skills (following directions, singing along, imitating motor movements).

**EXPLAIN** "It is time for Young Athletes! Let's start with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

**SING** **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

- The athletes in our class swing their arms, swing their arms, swing their arms. The athletes in our class swing their arms, - all through the day.
- The runner on the team runs real fast, runs real fast, runs real fast. The runner on the team runs real fast - all through the town.
- The runner on the team runs real slow, runs real slow, runs real slow. The runner on the team runs real slow - all through the game.



## Follow the Leader (5 min.) and Follow a Path

**EQUIPMENT** Tambourine or drum, floor markers

**PURPOSE** Strength, general fitness, motor skills

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Great warm-up! Now let's play Follow the Leader! March around the room; swing your arms!"

- Use a tambourine or drum or overhead clapping to lead athletes around room, marching.
- Encourage athletes to swing arms and lift knees high.
- March around room, following a path (floor markers).
- Repeat with Follow the Leader: running; walking backwards.

## Side Stepping (4 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Floor markers, short balance beam, long balance beam

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Let's do some Side Stepping!"

**Tips:** Encourage child not to crouch or make extra movements when walking or sidestepping and to keep his/her hips and feet facing forward. Try placing a beanbag on the child's head to encourage good posture and balance.

- Encourage athletes to sidestep right and left onto floor markers.
- Side step to the right, across path.
- Side step to left across the path.
- Use the same side step to move across short balance beam and longer balance beam.



# Walking & Running

WEEK DAY

two

1

2

3

## Running Styles *(5 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Whistle

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Choose a variety of running/walking styles to teach children. Then explain at the sound of the whistle (or other command signal like hand clapping) you will tell them to switch their running/walking styles.

- Stomp slow/fast
- Run slow/fast
- Run backwards
- High knees run (Raise knees high when running)
- Tiptoe walk

Or, create a foot race (competition) using different running styles

## Bridges and Tunnels *(5 min.)*

**PURPOSE** Strength, general fitness

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "OK, now we are going to play Bridges and Tunnels! First let's make our tunnel!" If physically able, have one athlete bend forward so that hands and feet are on the ground to form a bridge and tunnels. Encourage other athletes to crawl (inchworm, walk) under tunnel or bridge.





## Bridges and Tunnels *(continued)*

### Tunnels

"Who can bend like this to make a tunnel? (Hands and feet on ground, bottom up making tunnel) Awesome, he/she made a tunnel. Now, who can go under his/her tunnel? Great! After you go under the tunnel you make a tunnel right next to him/her! Great, now our tunnel is even bigger!"

- One athlete forms a tunnel by touching the ground with his/her feet and hands or by getting down onto hands and knees.
- The other athletes crawl, scoot, under the tunnel.
- Once they go under the tunnel, have each athlete extend the tunnel (by forming a tunnel next to the person who started the activity).



**Tips:** Make note of approximately how many times the child can perform the activity or how long the child hold up the bridge or tunnel. Encourage more repetitions or more time over several weeks to develop muscular strength and endurance. Encourage bridges and tunnels to be rigid and strong while people and objects pass under and through.

### Bridges

"OK! Now we are going to play bridges. Who can bend like this to make a bridge? (Sit on ground. Place hands/feet flat on ground. Push bottom off ground.) Great! Now let's make a bridge and go under the bridge!"

- One athlete forms a bridge by sitting with his/her hands and feet flat on the ground and pushing his/her bottom off the ground.
- The other athletes crawl, scoot, under the bridge.
- To make it easier have athletes place their feet or hands on the wall or an object and other athletes go under.



# Walking & Running

WEEK DAY

two

1

2

3

## Closing Sports Song (5 min.)

**PURPOSE** End each Young Athletes class with a closing/cool-down song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with.

**EXPLAIN** "It is time to end Young Athletes. Let's sing If You're Happy and You Know It. Sing along with me and do what I do."

- SING**
- If you're happy and you know it, clap and stomp (wiggle your body; fly like a bird: walk around with arms outstretched)
  - If you're happy and you know it then your face will really show it if you're happy and you know it clap and stomp, (wiggle your body; fly like a bird: walk around with arms outstretched).



## Opening Sports Song (5 min.) with Scarf

**EQUIPMENT** Scarf for each athlete.

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

**SING AND DEMONSTRATE** **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

*"The athletes in our class bend and stretch, bend and stretch, bend and stretch. The athletes in our class bend and stretch - all through the day."*

- Grab opposite corners of scarf, place hands on hips. Start with feet apart, directly below hips. Slowly bend down with scarf in two hands towards your toes, when you sing bend. Come back up, hands on hips when you sing stretch. When you sing all through the day, twirl whole body or scarf around over head.

*"The athletes in our class bend and stretch, bend and stretch, bend and stretch. The athletes in our class bend and stretch - all through the town."*

- Grab two (or opposite) corners of scarf, place hands on hips. As you sing, move the scarf with body. Start with feet apart, directly below hips. Slowly bend right and back to center, bend left and back to center when singing the words bend and stretch. When you sing all through the town, twirl whole body or scarf around over head.

*"The athletes on the team catch a scarf, catch a scarf, catch a scarf. The athletes on the team catch a scarf - all through the game."*

- Have athletes suggest additional motions and lead.



# Walking & Running

## WEEK DAY

### two 1 2 3

## Follow the Leader (5 min.)

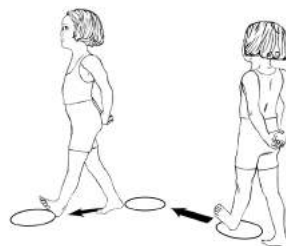
*With Side Steps, Follow the Path, Bunny Hop, Inch Worm*

**EQUIPMENT** Floor markers, bean bags or small ball

**WARM UP** Set up space with 3 floor markers placed about two feet apart in a line. Place bean bags or small ball on the 2nd floor marker so athletes can side step from first marker to second marker, pick up bean bag/ball, side step to last marker, and place ball on last marker. Adapt by adding more markers and/or increasing distance between markers.

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Great warm-up! Now let's play Follow the Leader!"

- March around the room, swing your arms!
- March around the room, hands on head! Side step to the right.
- Great! Side step again. Side step one more time! Now side step to the left. One big side step and again, and again!
- Now this time, side step to marker, pick up bean bag, side step to next marker, drop the bean bag on marker!
- Encourage athletes to side step right and left onto a variety of floor markers (plastic disks, hoops).



**Run and Carry** (6 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Floor markers, hoop on floor with balls or bean bags in it, hoop on block for target Make a path with 10 floor markers that leads to target (hoop on block), placing markers about one foot apart. Place balls/bean bags in a small hoop on the ground, next to the 5th floor marker) so athletes can pick up bean bag/ball, walk/run/side step to last marker and throw ball/bag through hoop (target). Adapt by adding more markers and/or increasing distance between markers.

**PURPOSE** Strength, general fitness, motor skills (walk, side-step, throw to target, run)

- WARM-UP**
- Have athletes run a short distance, pick up the ball or bean bag and return it back to you.
  - Repeat this a couple of times for each child.
  - Then line up athletes at the first floor marker (the marker furthest away from target).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Great! Now you're ready to learn a Run and Carry Routine. Watch me do the routine! Now you do it. When I say GO! You do it!"

- walk/run/side step along the path
- stop to pick up ball/bag
- keep going on path to target
- stop on last marker and throw ball/bean bag into target
- follow path back (walking/running/side stepping)
- touch the next person's hand and say "GO!"

**Tip:** Repeat Run and Carry routine using walk, run, side-step, walk backwards, etc.





# Walking & Running

WEEK DAY

two

1

2

3

**Running Styles** (6 min.)  
Repeat the Activity from Day 1.

**Obstacle Course** (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Set up a 5 station course with floor markers (dots for jumping on), bean bags with hoop (throwing bean bag through hoop), a series of hurdles (cones with dowel/stick), balance beam, area to run to finish (through a ribbon).

**EXPLAIN** Now we get to run the obstacle course! Watch and follow me!

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Show the athletes how to go through the obstacle course. Then assist athletes in moving through course.

## Station 1: Jump on Dots

- Arrange 10 dots in zigzag pattern, close to one another.
- Athlete will bunny hop on two feet from dot to dot.
- Athlete will jump to the right, then jump to the left, zigzagging down length of dots.

## Station 2: Throw Bean Bag Through Target (basket, hoop)

- Use floor marker to show where athlete stands.
- Athlete will throw bean bag or small ball to a hoop held parallel to the floor or to a bucket.
- Progress to throwing through target (hoop on cone or block) from distance of 3 feet.
- Throw underhanded and if child is able proceed to throwing overhand.
- Move distance closer or further away, depending on skill of athlete.



**Obstacle Course** *(continued)***Station 3: Step/Jump Over Hurdles**

- Make hurdle using two cones and one dowel or stick. Place dowel through holes in cone.
- Adjust height as needed for athletes and always start the bar at the lowest height.
- Always start the bar at the lowest height. If he/she is unable to jump, they can step over hurdle.

**Station 4: Walk on Balance Beam**

- Athletes will independently walk the length of the beam, alternating steps.
- Add various ways to move down the beam for advanced athletes (walk backwards, side-steps, change directions – forward to backwards).
- Add length to the beam by using multiple beams.

**Station 5: Run to Finish Line (through ribbon)**

- When athlete steps off beam, he/she should run to the finish line.
- Teach athletes to run through the line.
- Introduce this skill several times as some may stop, not wanting to hit or touch the finish line.
- The finish line is a long ribbon. To set the finish line, attach the ribbon to one side of the area while holding the other end of the ribbon in your hand (or have another person hold the other end).
- As the athlete touches the ribbon, let it go.

**Closing Sports Song** *(3 min.)*

Repeat song used in Day 1 to end the lesson.



## Opening Sports Song (3 min.) with Bunny Hop

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

**SING** **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

- The athletes in our class can bend and stretch, bend and stretch, bend and stretch. The athletes in our class can bend and stretch - all through the day.
- The athletes in our class can hop like a bunny, hop like a bunny, hop like a bunny. The athletes in our class can hop like a bunny - all through the town.
- The athletes in our class can go up and down (on your toes) up and down. The athletes in our class can go up and down - all through the game.

## Step and Jump (6 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Balance beams, ropes, floor markers. Use the balance beam/rope and floor markers to set goals for athletes to jump to.

**PURPOSE** Introduction to Balance and Jumping skills. Motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills (balance and direction), body awareness.

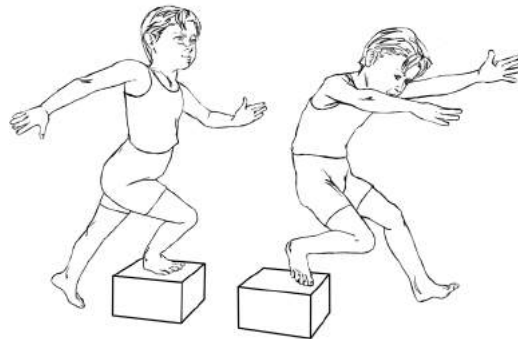
**EXPLAIN** "OK athletes, now we are going to jump off of our balance beams/ropes and try to land on the floor markers."



## Step and Jump *(continued)*

### DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD

- Step onto the balance beam/rope, then bend your knees, and jump to the floor markers.
- If athletes are physically able, allow them to jump onto the balance beam/rope as well.
- As athletes master jumping to a floor marker, move the markers further away, raise the level of the jump, and alter the floor marker position to allow for twisted jumps.
- For example, an athlete could face forward but jump to a marker to their side. Assure that balance skills have been acquired first.



## Run and Carry *(6 min.)*

Repeat Activity from Day 2.



# Walking & Running

## WEEK DAY

### two 1 2 3

### Coach Says (5 min.)

**PURPOSE** Introduction to Balance and Jumping skills. Identification of body parts, general fitness, balance, motor coordination, body awareness. Shifting of body weight to engage balance muscles is an important functional and sports related skill.

### DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD

**Tips:** Encourage the child to mimic your movements; try placing a bean bag on the child's head to encourage good posture and balance; encourage landing with two feet at the same time.

"Now let's play Coach Says using our bodies. I want you to look at what I do with MY body and try to do it with your own. I want you to COPY what I do. Look at me, see how I am..."

- Standing on one foot, standing with one foot in front of the other, standing on tip toes, standing on my heels...You try!
- Now try it with your arms out/in/up/down, or eyes closed/open.
- Encourage athletes to try these new balancing techniques while manipulating their bodies so that their muscles will need to counteract shifts in weight.

### Obstacle Course (7 min.)

Repeat Activity from Day 2.

### Closing Sports Song (3 min.)

Repeat the song used in Day 1 and Day 2 to end the lesson.





# Jumping & Balancing

## WEEK THREE

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**THIS SET OF LESSONS PROVIDES**  
games and activities to help  
children develop fitness, strength,  
body awareness, spatial concepts,  
balance, jumping, and hand eye  
coordination, and adaptive skills  
(following directions, imitating  
motor movements).



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# Jumping & Balancing

WEEK DAY

three

1

2

3

## Opening Sports Song (5 min.)

**PURPOSE** Start each Young Athletes class with a gathering/warm-up song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with. This will help them warm-up, serve as a gathering activity, create body awareness and support adaptive skills (follow directions, sing along, imitation of motor movements).

**EXPLAIN** "We're going to start a NEW week of Young Athletes! Remember, an athlete is someone who plays sports and exercises the muscles in their body. We are all going to be Young Athletes while we play new games and exercise the muscles in our body. Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

### SING AND DEMONSTRATE **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

- The runner on the team goes run run run, run run run, run, run, run. The runner on the team goes run run run - all through the day.
- The athletes in our class walk real slow, walk real slow, walk real slow. The athletes in our class walk real slow - all through the town.
- The player on the court goes jump jump jump, jump jump jump, jump jump jump. The player on the court goes jump jump jump - all through the game.



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**Coach Says** (5 min.)

**PURPOSE** Shifting of body weight to engage balance muscles is an important functional and sports related skill. Other skills to be developed include identifying body parts, general fitness, motor skills (balance), motor coordination, body awareness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Encourage athletes to try these new balancing techniques while manipulating their bodies so that their muscles will need to counteract shifts in weight. "Great warm-up! Now let's play "Coach Says" using our bodies. I want you to look at what I do with MY body and try to do it with your own. I want you to COPY what I do. Look at me, see how I am:

- Standing on one foot, standing with one foot in front of the other, standing on tip toes, standing on my heels...You try!
- Now try it with your arms out/in/up/down, or eyes closed/open.

**Balance Beam/Ropes** (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Balance beams/ropes

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills, body awareness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Let's play with our balance beams/ropes!" Walk along the balance beam/ropes nice and straight.

- Now try walking with one foot on each side of the balance beam/ropes like I am (straddling rope).
- Great! Now let's walk on TOP of the balance beam/ropes with one foot in front of the other. Go very slowly to keep your balance.



# Jumping & Balancing

WEEK DAY

three

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## Foot Trap (4 min.)

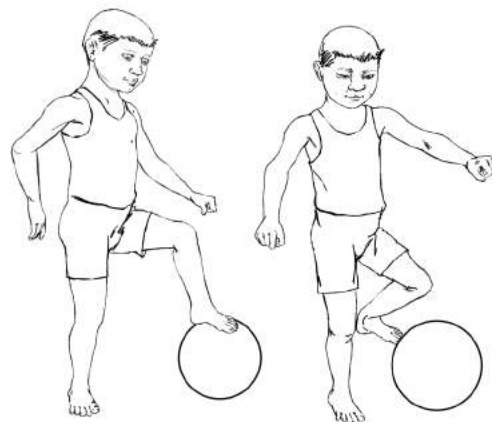
**EQUIPMENT** Slow motion ball; Use various sized balls for athletes to experience various amounts of challenge to their balance (smaller ball = smaller challenge).

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills (kicking & trapping), body awareness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Now we are going to use our feet to trap a ball. Take your foot like I am, and place your foot on top of the ball. Stand like this and balance. Then, take your foot off and kick the ball to another athlete/coach."

**Tips:** Encourage athletes trying this skill with smaller balls if larger ones are too difficult.

- Give children opportunities to practice kicking the ball from a stand still trap. If athletes master this begin having them trap a rolling ball.
- Now, when another athlete kicks the ball to you, try to stop the ball while it's moving by putting your foot on top of it the same way.
- Once it stops, get your balance, and then kick the ball back.
- Great job passing the ball back and forth using foot traps!



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**Step and Jump** (6 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Balance beams/ropes, floor markers. Use the balance beam/rope and floor markers to set goals for athletes to jump to.

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills (balance and direction), body awareness, adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "OK athletes, now we are going to jump off of our balance beams/ropes and try to land on the floor markers.

- Step onto the balance beam/rope, then bend your knees, and jump to the floor markers.
- As athletes master jumping to a floor marker, move the markers further away, raise the level of the jump, and alter the floor marker position to allow for twisted jumps if athletes have balance skills.

**Closing Sports Song** (5 min.)

**PURPOSE** End each Young Athletes class with a closing/cool-down song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with.

**EXPLAIN** "It is time to end Young Athletes. Let's sing If You're Happy and You Know It. Sing along with me and do what I do."

- SING**
- If you're happy and you know it, clap and stomp (wiggle your body; fly like a bird: walk around with arms outstretched)
  - If you're happy and you know it then your face will really show it if you're happy and you know it clap and stomp, (wiggle your body; fly like a bird: walk around with arms outstretched).





# Jumping & Balancing

WEEK DAY

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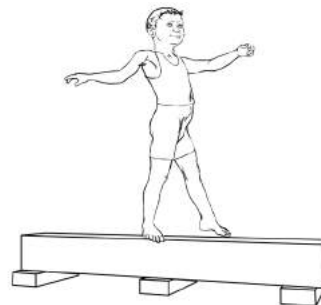
## Opening Sports Song (4 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Balance beam/rope

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song (Wheels on the Bus melody). Sing along with me and do what I do."

**SING AND DEMONSTRATE** **Wheels on the Bus Melody**

- (On balance beam/rope) The player on the court goes jump jump jump, jump jump jump, jump jump jump. The player on the court goes jump jump jump - all through the day.
- (On balance beam/rope) The athletes in our class jump on and off, on and off, on and off. The athletes in our class jump on and off - all through the town.
- The athletes in our class jump forward and back, forward and back, forward and back. The athletes in our class jump forward and back - all through the game.



## Coach Says (4 min.)

Adapt the Activity from Day 1, having athletes stand on a balance beam or rope as they stand on one foot, tip toe, heels, etc.



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## Rolling and Trapping *(5 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Ball

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, identification of body parts (toes touching), strength, general fitness/flexibility, motor skills (rolling, trapping), body awareness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Arrange athletes in pairs facing one another on the ground with their legs outstretched in a straddle position so that their legs are touching in the shape of diamond.

- Give them a slow motion ball/ball to roll back and forth between them.
- Now we're going to practice rolling these balls to our partners like we started last week.
- Face sitting your partner with your legs out and spread like this (demonstrate).
- Make sure your toes are touching your partner's toes.
- Next, one of you rolls the ball to the other on the ground like this (demonstrate). Stop the ball with your hands, and roll it back.
- If athletes are physically able to, encourage them to advance to a kneeling or standing position.
- Try passing the ball to your partners on your knees like this (demonstrate).
- Try passing the ball to your partners standing up and rolling it to them like this (demonstrate crouching position).
- Great job!!



# Jumping & Balancing

WEEK DAY

three

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2

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## Foot Trap (4 min.)

Repeat Activity from Day 1.

## Jumping High (5 min.)

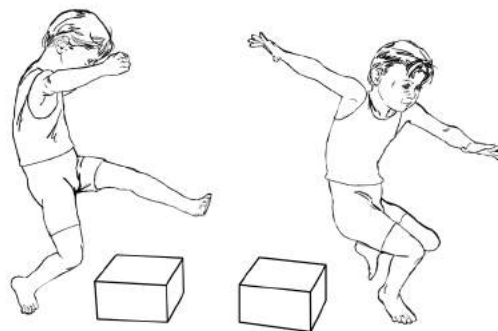
**EQUIPMENT** Floor markers, dowel, bean bags, cones, hoops, balls, balance beam/rope, and blocks. Equipment should be already placed around room. Spread the equipment around the room so that athletes can have a chance to jump over the various pieces.

**PURPOSE** Identify and locate sports equipment, motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills (jumping, balance, grasp), body awareness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Introduce the skill of jumping over equipment to the athletes.

**Tips:** Children can jump onto or off of equipment if their feet cannot clear the floor (for instance they can jump over the bean bag, or on top of it); If they are jumping off of the equipment as opposed to over it, challenge them to reach for an object (ex: scarf) while doing so.

- Yesterday we jumped on and off of our balance beams onto our floor markers.
- Today, we're going to try to jump OVER our equipment.
- Jump onto the equipment first— THEN see if you can jump OVER it!



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## Frog Hoppin'/ Leapin' Lizards

(5 min.)

### EQUIPMENT

Floor markers placed around the room

### PURPOSE

Identify and locate sports equipment (floor markers), motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills (hopping & running), body awareness and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

### DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD

"OK athletes, now we're going to play Leapin' Lizards! Everyone is going to LEAP/HOP from one floor marker to another just like a leapin' lizard!"

**Tips:** If the child takes off or lands flat-footed, encourage leaning forward and bending the knees; If leaping is difficult for the child, run along the child's side, holding his/her hand and practice leaping onto a marker over an object.

- You can jump from one to the next (demonstrate) or over them (demonstrate).
- If athletes master jumping from one to the next, and/or over the markers, encourage them to run and land either onto or over the marker:
- Now that you can hop onto the marker, and over the marker, try running first and then landing on the marker.

## Closing Sports Song

(5 min.)

Repeat the song used in Day 1 to end the Lesson.



# Jumping & Balancing

WEEK DAY

three

1

2

3

## Opening Sports Song with Leapin' Lizard (2 min.)

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song (Wheels on the Bus melody). Sing along with me and do what I do."

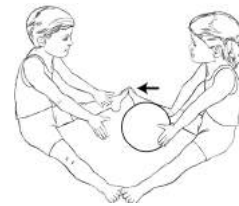
### SING AND DEMONSTRATE Wheels on the Bus Melody

- The athletes on the team leap over the mark, over the mark, over the mark. The athletes on the team leap over the mark - all through the day.
- The player on the court runs forward and back, forward and back, forward and back. The player on the court runs forward and back - all through the town.
- The athletes in our class leap on the mark, on the mark, on the mark. The athletes in our class leap on the mark - all through the game.

**Coach Says:** (3 min.)  
**with a bean bag** Adapt the Activity from Day 1 by having them first jump on, then over a bean bag, then play catch with it.

**Jumping High** (4 min.)  
Repeat Activity from Day 2.

**Rolling & Trapping** (5 min.)  
Repeat Activity from Day 2.



**Foot Trap** (4 min.)

Repeat Activity from Day 2.

## Jumping &amp; Balancing

Frog Hoppin'/  
Leapin' Lizards

(5 min.)

Repeat Activity from Day 2.

## Goalie Drill

(5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Two cones to form each goal and slow motion ball placed around room.**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, (shift weight to react to ball movements), strength, general fitness, motor skills (grasping, running), body awareness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movement).**EXPLAIN** Arrange athletes so that they are standing in-between two cones forming a goal. "OK Leapin' Lizards, let's practice being goalies! Stand in-between the two cones. The space in-between the cones is called a GOAL."**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD**

- When the coach or your partner rolls or kicks the ball into the goal, use your hands to stop the ball like this.
- The goalie's job is to stop the ball before it goes in-between the cones, the goal. Let's practice being goalies!

## Closing Sports Song

(2 min.)

Repeat the song used in Day 1 and 2 to end the Lesson.



**You have finished Week Three: Jumping & Balancing Lessons. You can now begin Week Four: Trapping & Catching.**





# Trapping & Catching

## WEEK FOUR

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**THIS SET OF LESSONS PROVIDES**  
games and activities to help children  
develop trapping and catching (fitness,  
strength, body awareness, spatial  
concepts, balance, hand eye  
coordination, motor control,  
proprioception).



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## Overview

**Lesson Plans (Day One, Day Two, Day Three)** provide details to help you plan and carry out the Young Athletes program with a group of children between the ages of 2 and 7 years old.

**Adults Needed:** Plan for at least 1 adult for every 4 children. Recruit help from families, volunteers, older students, college students and others in your community to make sure the program runs smoothly and is fun.

**Time:** Young Athletes is implemented with great enthusiasm, high energy and quick pace. Time estimates are provided to guide completion of each lesson in 30 minutes. However, the pace and length of the lesson should be matched to the needs, interests, ages, and skills of the young athletes in your group.

**Sequence:** There are three lessons for each skill area labeled Day One, Day Two and Day Three. Lessons within the skill area are designed to be offered in sequence to help children become acquainted with the activities and build skills through repetition.

**Resources:** The Lesson Plan Summary Cards include an outline of the activities, list of equipment needed, and page numbers to find the activity descriptions. The cards, Young Athletes Activity Guide, Suggestions from Teachers, and training videos are included in the online Toolkit (see website below).

**Playing at home:** Give families the Lesson Plan Summary Cards and encourage them to sing the songs and play one or two games with their child at home before the next session. Help them learn about the activities by including them in your group sessions and/or providing a family training session. Be sure they have access to the Activity Guide and Videos for more information.

**>> See the Young Athletes Toolkit online at:**  
[www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

## Opening Sports Song (5 min.)

**PURPOSE** Start each Young Athletes class with a gathering/warm-up song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with. This will help them warm-up, serve as a gathering activity, create body awareness and support adaptive skills (following directions, singing along, imitating motor movements).

**EXPLAIN** "We're going to start a NEW week of Young Athletes! Remember, an athlete is someone who plays sports and exercises the muscles in their body. We are all going to be Athletes while we play new games and exercise the muscles in our bodies. Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

### **SING AND DEMONSTRATE** Wheels on the Bus melody:

- The goalie on the team goes stop that ball (jump in front of ball), stop that ball, stop that ball. The goalie on the team goes stop that ball - all through the day,
- The player on the court goes jump jump jump, jump jump jump, jump jump jump. The player on the court goes jump jump jump - all through the town.
- The athletes in our class roll the ball, roll the ball, roll the ball.
- The athletes in our class roll the ball— all through the game.



## Rolling & Trapping *(5 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Ball

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, identification of body parts (toes touching), strength, general fitness/flexibility, motor skills (rolling, trapping), body awareness, adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Arrange athletes in pairs facing one another on the ground with their legs outstretched in a straddle position so that their legs are touching in the shape of diamond. Give them a slow motion ball/ball to roll back and forth between them. "Great job with our song! Now we're going to practice rolling these balls to our partners like we started last week."

- Face sitting your partner; with your legs out and spread. Make sure your toes are touching your partner's toes.
- Next, one of you rolls the ball to the other on the ground. Stop the ball with your hands, and roll it back.
- If athletes are physically able to, encourage them to advance to a kneeling or standing position.
- Great job!



# Trapping & Catching

WEEK DAY

four

1

2

3

## Goalie Drill (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Two cones to form each goal and slow motion ball should be already placed around room.

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination (shift weight to react to ball movements), strength, general fitness, motor skills (grasping, running), body awareness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Arrange athletes so that they are standing in-between two cones forming a goal. "OK Athletes, let's practice being goalies!"

- Stand in-between the two cones. Remember, the space in-between the cones is called a GOAL.
- When the coach or your partner rolls or kicks the ball into the goal, use your hands to stop the ball.
- The goalie's job is to stop the ball before it goes in-between the cones, the goal. Let's practice being goalies!

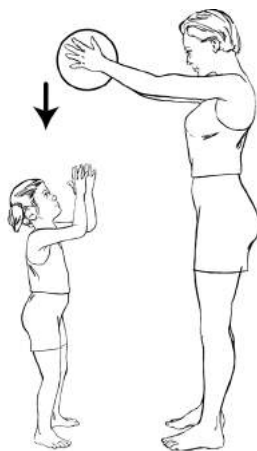


**Big Ball** (5 min.)**EQUIPMENT** Big ball

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills (balance), body awareness, proprioception, hand eye coordination, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Now, let's play catch with our big ball (or slow motion ball) Watch me first, then everyone will get a chance to play with an adult."

- Stand facing the athlete and slowly bring the ball toward them. "See the ball coming towards you! Keep your eye on the ball!" Repeat several times. Moving more quickly each time. "It's moving faster now!"
- Next, have the athlete grab the ball from your hands. "OK, now when I get close, TAKE the ball from my hands."
- Then, explain, "I'm going to let go of the ball so you can catch it now! Just use your hands to catch it!" Practice this several times before actually tossing the ball.
- Give each athlete as much practice as possible catching the ball while being sure to incorporate all children. Waiting children can cheer, toss an imaginary ball, or toss another ball to themselves.





## Bean Bag Catch (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Bean bag

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Adapt the Big Ball Activity using a bean bag instead of ball to practice catching skills.

## Closing Sports Song (5 min.)

**PURPOSE** End each Young Athletes class with a closing/cool-down song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with.

**EXPLAIN** "It is time to end Young Athletes. Let's sing If You're Happy and You Know It. Sing along with me and do what I do."

- SING**
- If you're happy and you know it, clap and stomp (wiggle your body; fly like a bird: walk around with arms outstretched)
  - If you're happy and you know it then your face will really show it if you're happy and you know it clap and stomp, (wiggle your body; fly like a bird: walk around with arms outstretched).



## Opening Sports Song (4 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Balance beam/rope

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song (Wheels on the Bus melody). Sing along with me and do what I do."

**SING AND DEMONSTRATE** **Wheels on the Bus Melody**

- The athletes in our class catch the bean bag, catch the bean bag, catch the bean bag. The athletes in our class catch the bean bag - all through the day.
- The player on the team catches the ball, catches the ball, catches the ball. The player on the team catches the ball - all through the town.
- The athletes on the team jump up and down, up and down, up and down. The athletes on the team jump up and down - all through the game.

## Goalie Drill (5 min.)

Repeat the Activity from Day 1.

## Big Ball or Bean Bag Catch (5 min.)

Repeat the Big Ball or Bean Bag Catch Activity from Day 1.



# Trapping & Catching

WEEK DAY

four

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2

3

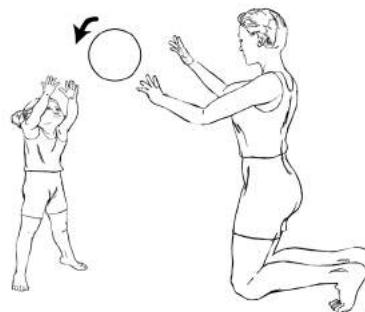
## High Ball Catch (6 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Large beach ball, slow motion balls

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills (grasping, catching, & holding), body awareness, proprioception, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements). Use a large beach ball or slow motion balls to introduce catching from a short distance.

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Kneel facing the child who is about 3 feet away. "OK athletes, we're going to practice catching this BIG ball!"

- Gently toss a beach ball or fairly large ball to the child and encourage catching the ball with fingers pointing up (because it's from above the waist). Be sure the toss is done from the chest level and with the fingers pointing up. "See how I am tossing the ball to (athlete) with my fingers pointing UP? Catch the ball with your fingers pointing UP!"
- Vary distances and heights depending on child's physical abilities. Progress by moving further away and mixing up high and low tosses. "Great job!! Now I'm going to back up a little bit and see if we can do this!"
- Give the athletes as much practice as possible while being sure to incorporate all children. Waiting children can be cheering, or tossing an imaginary ball, or tossing it to themselves if there are enough.



## Trapping &amp; Catching

**Bounce Catch** (6 min.)**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills (grasping, catching, & holding), body awareness, proprioception, and adaptive skills (follow directions, imitating motor movements). Use a large beach ball to introduce catching from a floor bounce.**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Face the child and bounce a beach ball or fairly large ball so the child can catch the ball without moving. "Now that we practiced catching the ball from up here (motion to chest area), NOW we're going to catch it from down here (motion to lower half of body)."

**Tip:** Eyes should be focused on the target. Fingers should be pointing down when catching a ball that approaches below the waist and pointing up when the ball approaches above the waist.

- See if I bounce the ball to (athlete), he can point his fingers DOWN because it's coming from DOWN here (motion to lower half of body)."
- Point your fingers down to catch the bounce pass. Now try with your partners!
- Vary distances and use smaller balls depending on child's physical abilities.
- Give the athletes as much practice as possible while being sure to incorporate all children. Waiting children can be cheering, or tossing an imaginary ball, or tossing it to themselves if there are enough.

**Closing Sports Song** (3 min.)

Repeat the song you used in Day 1 to end the Lesson.



# Trapping & Catching

WEEK DAY

four

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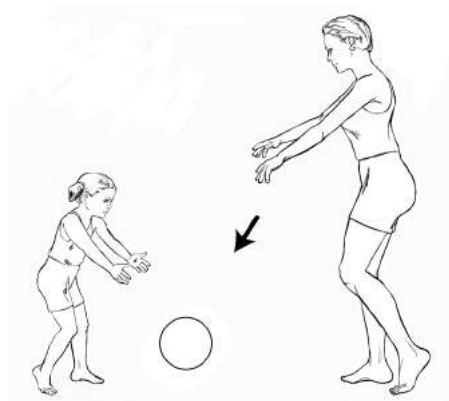
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## Opening Sports Song with Leapin' Lizard (5 min.)

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song (Wheels on the Bus melody). Sing along with me and do what I do."

### SING AND DEMONSTRATE Wheels on the Bus Melody

- The athletes on the team leap over the mark, over the mark, over the mark. The athletes on the team leap over the mark - all through the day.
- The player on the court jumps up and down, up and down, up and down. The player on the court jumps up and down - all through the town.
- The athletes in our class catch the ball, catch the ball, catch the ball. The athletes in our class catch the ball - all through the game.



## Bean Bag (5 min.) Catch/Throw

**EQUIPMENT** You will need a bean bag for each child so that they can toss the bean bag with adults, and by themselves when waiting.

**PURPOSE** Identification of body parts, general fitness, motor skills (catching, throwing), motor coordination, body awareness, Adaptive skills (Following directions, imitating motor movements). Introducing Week 5 skills.

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Great job with that, Athletes!! Now we're going to try the catching AND throwing our bean bags! Watch me first then everyone will get a chance to play with an adult."

- Stand facing the athlete and slowly bring the bean bag toward them. "See the bean bag coming towards you! Keep your eye on the ball!" Repeat several times. Moving more quickly each time. "It's moving faster now!"
- Next, have the athlete grab the bean bag from your hands. "OK, now when I get close, TAKE the ball from my hands."
- Then, explain, "I'm going to let go of the bean bag so you can catch it now! Just use your hands to catch it!" Practice this several times.
- Then begin tossing the bean bag. "I'm throwing the bean bag, and you're catching it!"
- Now introduce throwing the bean bag. "Take the bean bag and put it in your hands. Look at my hands and toss the bean bag to me, just like I did to you!" This is an UNDERHAND throw.
- We can throw the bean bag back and forth. Give the athletes as much practice as possible while being sure to incorporate all children. Waiting children can be cheering, tossing an imaginary bean bag, or tossing the bean bag to themselves, getting used to how the manipulate the bean bags.

**Tip:** Note that students should be pointing their fingers down when taking and throwing objects passed below their waists.





# Trapping & Catching

WEEK DAY

four

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2

3

**High Ball Catch** (5 min.)  
Repeat Activity from Day 2.

**Rolling** (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Two cones to form each goal and slow motion ball should be already placed around room.

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, strength, general fitness/flexibility, motor skills (rolling, trapping), hand and eye coordination (aiming at goal), body awareness, and adaptive skills (follow directions, imitating motor movements). Introduce Week 5 skills.

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Demonstrate and Lead: Arrange athletes so that they are standing one bodies length away from two cones forming a goal. Place a floor marker where you want them to sit/kneel/stand. "OK Athletes, let's practice making goals!"

**Tip:** Remind athletes to keep their eyes on the ball and to use the floor markers as an indicator of where to sit, kneel or stand.

- Sit on the ground and roll the ball THROUGH the cones to make a GOAL!! This can be done against a wall alone, or with a partner athlete on the other side of the cones, mirroring one another, with the same task to make a goal
- Now kneel on your knees and try rolling the ball THROUGH the cones to make a GOAL kneeling!
- Now stand on your feet and try rolling the ball THROUGH the cones to make a goal standing!

**Bounce Catch** (4 min.)  
Repeat Activity from Day 2.



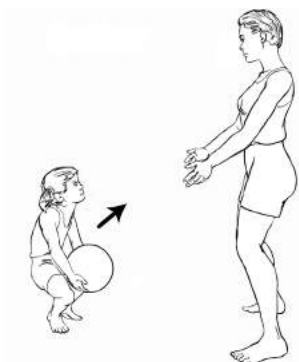
**Two-Hand Underhand** (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Inflatable balls or slow motion balls for each athlete or each pair of athletes.

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination (shift weight to react to ball movements), strength, general fitness, motor skills (grasping, throwing, catching), identification of body parts (fingers), body awareness and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements). Introduce Week 5 skills.

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD**

Arrange athletes so that they are standing face to face with another athlete and use floor markers to give athletes a reference point of where to stand, if needed. Arrange the athletes about 3 feet, or one athlete's body length apart.



- OK athletes, just like we threw our bean bags, we're going to practice throwing these balls to our partners.
- Take the ball and put it in your hands. Look at my/your partner's hands and throw the ball into my/their hands. Be sure to point your fingers down!
- This is an UNDERHAND throw. We can throw the ball back and forth to our partners!

**Closing Sports Song** (3 min.)

Repeat the song you used in Day 1 and 2 to end the Lesson.



**You have finished Week Four: Trapping & Catching Lessons. You can now begin Week Five: Throwing.**



# Throwing WEEK FIVE

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## THIS SET OF LESSONS PROVIDES

games and activities  
to help children develop  
throwing skills, fitness,  
strength, body awareness,  
and spatial concepts.



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**Time:** Young Athletes is implemented with great enthusiasm, high energy and quick pace. Time estimates are provided to guide completion of each lesson in 30 minutes. However, the pace and length of the lesson should be matched to the needs, interests, ages, and skills of the young athletes in your group.

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## Opening Sports Song (4 min.)

**PURPOSE** Start each Young Athletes class with a gathering/warm-up song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with. This will help them warm-up, serve as a gathering activity, create body awareness and support adaptive skills (follow directions, sing along, imitation of motor movements).

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

**SING** **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

- The athletes in our class touch their toes (bend and stretch), touch their toes, touch their toes. The athletes in our class touch their toes - all through the day.
- The runner on the team goes run run, run, run run, run, run run run. The runner on the team goes run run run - all through the town.
- The player on the court jumps up and down, up and down, up and down. The player on the court jumps up and down - all through the game.



**Rolling** (5 min.)

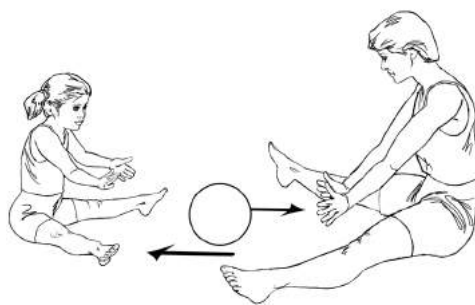
**EQUIPMENT** Slow motion ball, cones, floor markers placed next to cones

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Sit with legs extended out to the side facing the child. "Let's sit down like we did last week –with our legs out. Now let's roll the ball." Roll the ball back and forth.

**Tip:** Remind athletes to keep their eyes on the ball and to use the floor markers as an indicator of where to sit, kneel or stand.

- Great – now legs try rolling the ball while we kneel. Roll the ball from half-kneeling position.
- Okay. Now let's stand up and roll the ball between the cones to make a goal.
- Encourage the child to roll the ball from a standing position so it passes between two cones. This can be done against a wall alone, or with a partner athlete on the other side of the cones, mirroring one another, with the same task to make a goal.





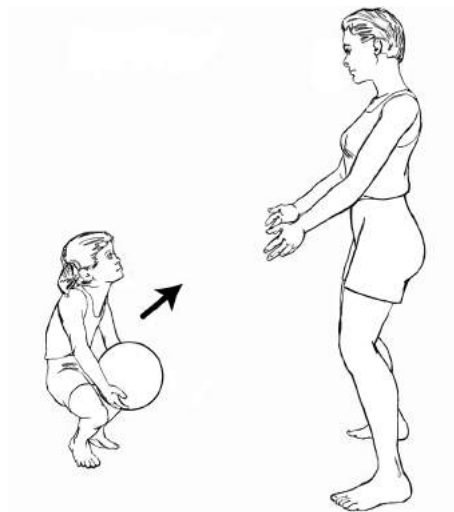
## Two-Hand Underhand (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Slow motion ball for each pair of athletes, floor markers

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Arrange athletes so that they are standing face to face with another athlete and use floor markers to give athletes a reference point of where to stand, if needed. Arrange the athletes about 3 feet, or one athlete's body length apart.

- OK athletes, just like we're going to practice throwing these balls to our partners.
- Take the ball and put it in your hands. Look at my/your partner's hands and throw the ball into my/their hands. Be sure to point your fingers down!
- This is an UNDERHAND throw. We can throw the ball back and forth to our partners!
- Progress to having athletes stand further away.



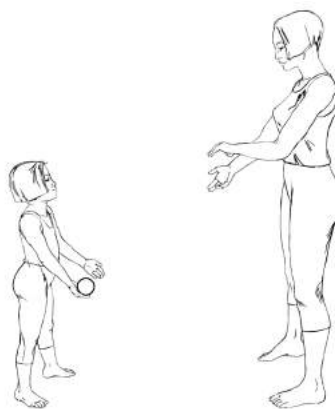
## Underhand Toss (6 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Small foam ball, bean bag

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, motor skills

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** “Athletes—let’s make a circle and we can toss the ball/beanbag to each other. Hold the ball/beanbag like this”. Fingers should be facing down when tossing a ball underhand. Foot opposite the hand tossing the ball should always be forward in an open stance.

- Throw the ball or beanbag to the athlete standing next to you. Encourage the child to stand with bent knees holding the small ball or beanbag in his/her hand.
- Ask the child to toss the ball or the beanbag to the child standing next to him/her and have the ball/beanbag go around the circle.
- Keep going—everyone gets a turn throwing the ball/beanbag. Remember to keep your fingers down when tossing underhand.



## Two Hand Throwing (overhead) *(6 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Slow motion ball

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, motor skills

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Now we are going to throw the ball. Watch how I do it."

"Stand sideways with one foot a little bit in front of the other one. This is called a sideways stance. Raise your hands over your head. Bend your arms. Now throw the ball."

- Encourage the child to stand in a sideways stance and to rock back and forth. As the child rocks to the back foot ask them to raise their hands over their head.
- When rocking forward encourage the child to bring their arms forward as well as overhead to throw the ball towards you. Practice throwing several times.
- That was great! Good job.

## Closing Sports Song *(5 min.)*

**PURPOSE** End each Young Athletes class with a closing/cool-down song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with.

**EXPLAIN** "It is time to end Young Athletes. Let's sing If You're Happy and You Know It. Sing along with me and do what I do."

- SING**
- If you're happy and you know it, clap and stomp (wiggle your body; fly like a bird: walk around with arms outstretched)
  - If you're happy and you know it then your face will really show it if you're happy and you know it clap and stomp, (wiggle your body; fly like a bird: walk around with arms outstretched).



## Opening Sports Song (3 min.)

**EXPLAIN** “Let’s start Young Athletes with our Sports Song (Wheels on the Bus melody). Sing along with me and do what I do.”

### SING AND DEMONSTRATE Wheels on the Bus Melody

- The athletes in our class hop up and down, up and down, up and down. The athletes in our class hop up and down - all through the day.
- The swimmer in the pool goes splash splash splash, (splash motion with hands), splash splash splash, splash splash splash – all through the pool.
- The swimmer in the pool goes splash splash splash - all through the pool.

## Underhand Toss (6 min.)

Repeat the Activity from Day 1.

## Two Hand Throwing (5 min.)

Repeat the Activity from Day 1.



## Overhand Throwing (6 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Small foam ball

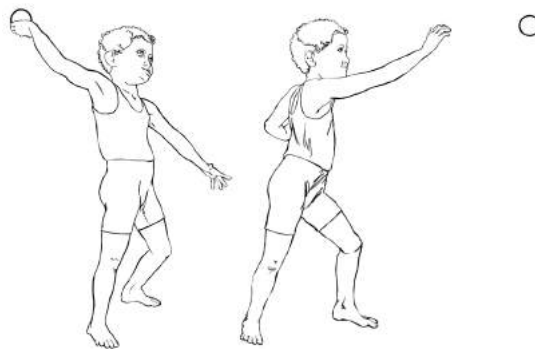
**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, motor skills

### DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD

**Tips:** The hips and shoulders should rotate forward; The arm should bend at the elbow and then straighten at the release of the ball; Wrist should snap downward when the ball is released.

This uses the same techniques as two hand throwing but encourage the child to use one hand, bringing his/her arm back and forward the throw the small ball towards you. "Now let's throw this smaller ball like I am doing with just one hand."

- Stand in your sideways stance.
- Bring the hand holding the ball up over your head.
- Bend your arm at the elbow.
- Now throw the ball.
- That was great! Good job. Let's do it again.



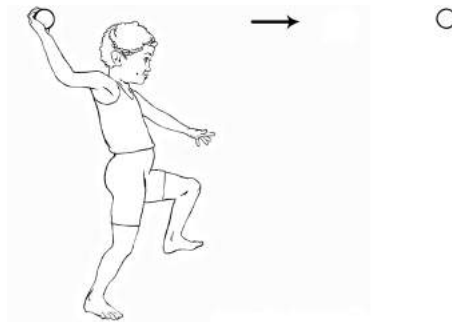
## Throwing for Distance *(6 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Small foam ball or bean bag, floor markers, hoops set up on cones. Set up markers about 3 feet apart.

**PURPOSE** Strength, general fitness, motor skills

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Encourage athletes to throw the ball at the markers, then through the hoops.

- Now we are going to throw the ball at the first star/floor marker. Great—now go and get it and throw to the second star/floor marker. Wow—can you throw it to the third star/floor marker?
- Move over to the hoop. One athlete stands on a marker to throw the ball and the other athlete stands by the hoop to retrieve it. Now let's throw the ball or beanbag through the hoop. Look you made a basket!
- Have another athlete pick up the ball and take their turn throwing it. Vary distances according to ability.



## Closing Sports Song *(4 min.)*

Repeat the song you used in Day 1 to end the Lesson.





## Opening Sports Song (3 min.)

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song (Wheels on the Bus melody). Sing along with me and do what I do."

### SING AND DEMONSTRATE **Wheels on the Bus Melody**

- The athletes in our class touch their toes (bend and stretch), touch their toes, touch their toes. The athletes in our class touch their toes - all through the day.
- The pitcher on the team throws the ball, throws the ball, throws the ball. The pitcher on the team throws the ball - all through the game.

## Review of Underhand Toss (4 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Small foam ball, bean bag, hoop (NOTE: Hoop can either be held by an adult or set up on the top of the cone).

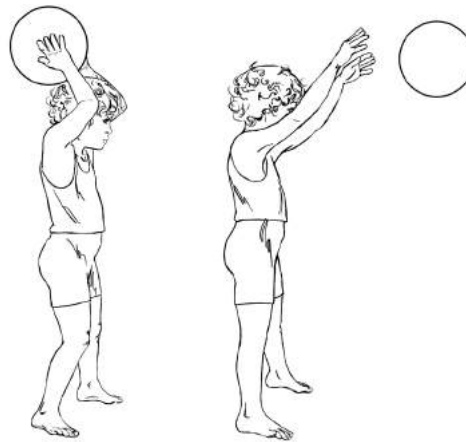
**SING AND DEMONSTRATE** "Today we are going to make baskets with the ball/beanbag in front of the hoop."

- Hold the ball/beanbag like this (show fingers facing down). Stand like we did before, sideways with one foot in front of the other.
- Now throw the beanbag/ball through the hoop. Great—you made a basket.
- Have another athlete at the hoop pick up the ball and take their turn throwing it. Vary distances according to ability.



**Two Hand Throwing** (4 min.)

Repeat the Activity from Day 1 and 2.

**Overhand Throwing** (4 min.)

Adapt the Activity from Day 2, by encouraging athletes to use one hand, bringing his/her arm back and forward to throw a small ball towards you.

**Throwing for** (4 min.)**Distance and  
Accuracy**

Repeat the Activity from Day 2.



## Ball Tapping *(4 min.)*

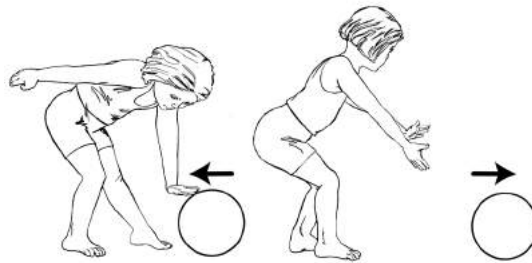
**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball or slow motion ball, floor markers

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Tap a beach ball toward the child. "Tap the ball across the floor back to me— keep your hand open."

**Tips:** Eyes should be focused on the ball; Encourage the child to follow through by twisting his or her belly forward and clapping the hands out in front.

- Progress to having the child stand sideways with 1 foot on each of two markers (front/back).
- Toss a beach ball to the child and have him/her hit the ball with an open hand.
- Great job!



**Handball** (4 min.)**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, cone**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements. Introducing Week 6 skills).**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** “Now we are going to see if we can hit this ball off the cone. Watch – keep your hand open and hit it like this.”

- Place the ball on the cone and hit it with an open hand or fist.
- Line athletes up opposite the cone to take turns hitting the ball and bringing it back.
- OK, now you do it. Good job!

**Closing Sports Song** (3 min.)

Repeat the song you used in Day 1 and 2 to end the Lesson.



**You have finished Week Five: Throwing Lessons.**  
**You can now begin Week Six: Striking.**



# Striking WEEK SIX

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**THIS SET OF LESSONS PROVIDES**  
games and activities to help children  
develop kicking skills, fitness, strength,  
body awareness, eye hand coordination,  
and adaptive skills (following direc-  
tions, imitating motor movements).



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## Overview

**Lesson Plans (Day One, Day Two, Day Three)** provide details to help you plan and carry out the Young Athletes program with a group of children between the ages of 2 and 7 years old.

**Adults Needed:** Plan for at least 1 adult for every 4 children. Recruit help from families, volunteers, older students, college students and others in your community to make sure the program runs smoothly and is fun.

**Time:** Young Athletes is implemented with great enthusiasm, high energy and quick pace. Time estimates are provided to guide completion of each lesson in 30 minutes. However, the pace and length of the lesson should be matched to the needs, interests, ages, and skills of the young athletes in your group.

**Sequence:** There are three lessons for each skill area labeled Day One, Day Two and Day Three. Lessons within the skill area are designed to be offered in sequence to help children become acquainted with the activities and build skills through repetition.

**Resources:** The Lesson Plan Summary Cards include an outline of the activities, list of equipment needed, and page numbers to find the activity descriptions. The cards, Young Athletes Activity Guide, Suggestions from Teachers, and training videos are included in the online Toolkit (see website below).

**Playing at home:** Give families the Lesson Plan Summary Cards and encourage them to sing the songs and play one or two games with their child at home before the next session. Help them learn about the activities by including them in your group sessions and/or providing a family training session. Be sure they have access to the Activity Guide and Videos for more information.

**>> See the Young Athletes Toolkit online at:**  
[www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)



## Opening Sports Song (4 min.)

**PURPOSE** Start each Young Athletes class with a gathering/warm-up song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with. This will help them warm-up, serve as a gathering activity, create body awareness and support adaptive skills (follow directions, sing along, imitation of motor movements).

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

**SING** **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

- The athletes in our class can jump, jump, jump, jump, jump, jump, jump. The athletes in our class jump, jump, jump - all through the day.
- The basketball player on the team can make a basket (arms up and forward throw as if making a basket as in overhand toss) make a basket, make a basket. The basketball player on the team can make a basket – all through the game.



**Ball Tapping** (5 min.)**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball or slow motion ball, floor markers**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Tap a beach ball toward the child. "Tap the ball across the floor back to me – keep your hand open."

**Tips:** Eyes should be focused on the ball; encourage the child to follow through by twisting his or her belly forward and clapping the hands out in front.

- Progress to having the child stand sideways with 1 foot on each of two markers (front/back).
- Toss a beach ball to the child and have him/her hit the ball with an open hand.
- Great job!

**Handball** (4 min.)**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, cone**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Now we are going to see if we can hit this ball off the cone. Watch – keep your hand open and hit it like this."

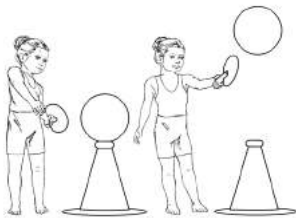
- Place the ball on the cone and hit it with an open hand or fist.
- Line athletes up opposite the cone to take turns hitting the ball and bringing it back.
- OK, now you do it. Good job!



## Side Striking *(6 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, cones; paddle, junior size racket or plastic bat

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Athletes, now we are going to use a racket to hit the ball". Using a side-ways stance, encourage the child to strike a tossed ball with a junior size racket or bat.



- Look at the ball. See it coming to you.
- Now swing the racket. Great, you got a hit!
- Keep practicing being sure all children get several turns.

## Obstacle Course *(6 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Set up a 5 station course with floor markers (dots for jumping on), bean bags with hoop (throwing bean bag through hoop), a series of hurdles (cones with dowel/stick), balance beam, area to run to finish (through a ribbon).

**PURPOSE** Body awareness, general fitness, motor skills (run, jump, throw, balance), and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Now we get to run the obstacle course! Watch and follow me!" Show the athletes how to go through the obstacle course. Then assist athletes in moving through course.



## Obstacle Course *(continued)*

### Station 1: Jump on Dots

- Arrange 10 dots in zigzag pattern, close to one another.
- Athlete will bunny hop on two feet from dot to dot.
- Athlete will jump to the right, then jump to the left, zigzagging down length of dots.

### Station 2: Throw Bean Bag Through Target (basket, hoop)

Athlete will throw bean bag or small ball to a hoop held parallel to the floor or to a bucket.

- Progress to throwing a bean bag or small ball through target (hoop on cone or block) from distance of 3 feet.
- Use floor marker to show where athlete stands.
- Move distance closer or further away, depending on skill of athlete.

### Station 3: Jump Over Hurdles

- Make hurdle using two cones and one dowel or stick. Place dowel through holes in cone.
- Adjust height as needed for athletes. Always start the bar at the lowest height.
- Encourage athlete to jump using two feet, over the bar, landing on two feet.



#### Station 4: Walk on Balance Beam

- Athletes will independently walk the length of the beam, alternating steps.
- Add various ways to move down the beam for advance athletes (backwards, sideways, change directions – forward to backwards).
- Add length to the beam by using multiple beams.

#### Station 5: Run to Finish Line (through ribbon)

- When athlete steps off beam, he/she should run to the finish line. Teach athletes to run through the line.
- Introduce this skill several times as some may stop, not wanting to hit or touch the finish line.
- The finish line is a long ribbon. To set the finish line, attach the ribbon to one side of the area while holding the other end of the ribbon in your hand (or have another person hold the other end).
- As the athlete touches the ribbon, let it go.

## Closing Sports Song (5 min.)

**PURPOSE** End each Young Athletes class with a closing/cool-down song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with.

**EXPLAIN** “It is time to end Young Athletes. Let’s sing If You’re Happy and You Know It. Sing along with me and do what I do.”

- SING**
- If you’re happy and you know it, wiggle your arms (flap like a bird’s wings, walk around with arms outstretched)
  - If you’re happy and you know it then your face will really show it if you’re happy and you know it wiggle your arms.



## Opening Sports Song (4 min.)

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

### SING AND DEMONSTRATE **Wheels on the Bus Melody**

- The athletes in our class roll the ball, roll the ball, roll the ball. The athletes in our class roll the ball - all through the day.
- The athletes in our class jump up and down, up and down, up and down. The athletes in our class jump up and down - all through the town.

## Side Striking (6 min.)

Repeat the Activity from Day 1.

## Beginning Hockey (6 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, small foam ball, dowel, junior sized hockey stick or junior size plastic golf club

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills, and eye hand coordination

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Today we are going to learn to play some sports. First we are going to play hockey." Place a large ball on the ground.

- Stand in your sideways stance.
- Hold the stick (hockey stick, golf club) with both hands.
- Now hit the ball
- Great!





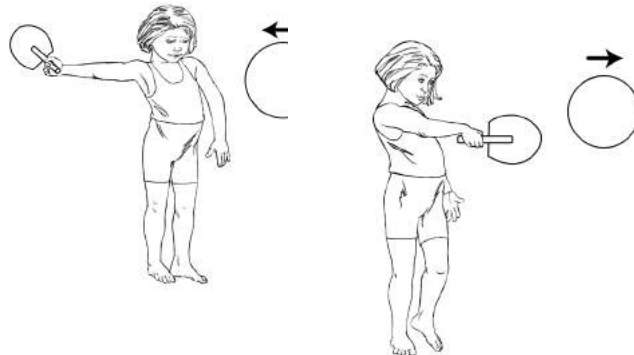
## Beginning *(6 min.)* Tennis/Softball

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, cones; paddle, junior size racket or plastic bat

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills and eye hand coordination

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Now we are going to play tennis/softball." Place a large ball on a cone and use floor markers to help athletes learn how to stand sideways.

- Now stand sideways and hold the paddle/racket with one hand.
- Hit the ball with your paddle/racket.



## Bridges/Tunnels *(4 min.)*

**PURPOSE** Strength, general fitness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "OK, Now we are going to play tunnels and bridges. First let's make our tunnel!" If physically able, have one athlete bend forward so that hands and feet are on the ground to form bridges and tunnels. Encourage other athletes to crawl (inchworm, walk) under tunnel or bridge.



## Bridges/Tunnels *(continued)*

### Tunnels

"Who can bend like this to make a tunnel? (Hands and feet on ground, bottom up making tunnel). Awesome, he/she made a tunnel. Now, who can go under his/her tunnel? Great! After you go under the tunnel, you make a tunnel right next to him/her! Great, now our tunnel is even bigger!"

- One athlete forms a tunnel by touching the ground with his/her feet and hands or by getting down onto hands and knees.
- The other athletes crawl, scoot, under the tunnel.
- Once they go under the tunnel, have each athlete extend the tunnel (by forming a tunnel next to the person who has already made a tunnel).

### Bridges

"Ok! Now we are going to play bridges. Who can bend like this to make a tunnel? (Sit on ground. Place hands/feet flat on ground.) Push bottom off ground. Great! Now let's make a bridge and go under the bridge!"

- One athlete forms a bridge by sitting with his/her hands and feet flat on the ground and pushing his/her bottom off the ground.
- The other athletes crawl, scoot, under the bridge.
- To make it easier have athletes place their feet or hands on wall or an object and other athletes go under.

## Closing Sports Song *(4 min.)*

Repeat the song you used in Day 1 to end the Lesson.



## Opening Sports Song (2 min.)

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song (Wheels on the Bus melody). Sing along with me and do what I do."

### SING AND DEMONSTRATE Wheels on the Bus Melody

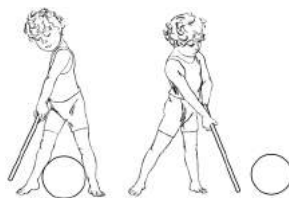
- The athletes in our class touch their toes (bend and stretch), touch their toes, touch their toes. The athletes in our class touch their toes - all through the day.
- The pitcher on the team throws the ball, throws the ball, throws the ball. The pitcher on the team throws the ball - all through the game.

## Side Striking (5 min.)

Repeat Activity from Day 1 and 2.

## Beginning Hockey (5 min.)

Repeat Activity from Day 2.



## Beginning Tennis/Softball (5 min.)

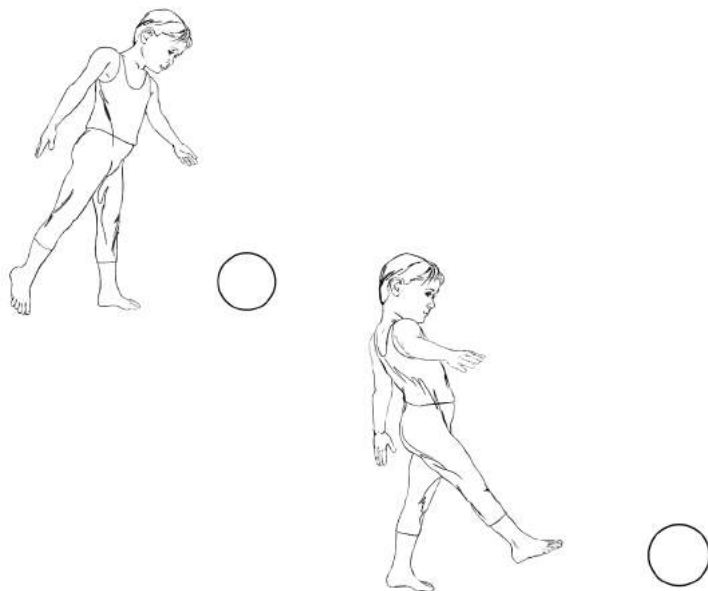
Repeat Activity from Day 2.



**Kicking** (4 min.)**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball or playground ball**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills. Introduction of Week 7 skills.**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Athletes, now we are going to kick the ball. Watch me!"

**Tips:** The child's eyes should be focused on the ball; Non-kicking foot should be positioned just behind and to the side of the ball; The kicking leg should bend at the knee for a back swing and should follow through; The opposite arm swings forward as the ball is kicked.

- Stand behind the ball. Now kick it.
- Have the child kick the ball towards you with his/her preferred foot.
- Wonderful. Now get the ball and give it to (child) to kick.



## Obstacle Course (7 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Set up a 5 station course with floor markers (dots for jumping on), bean bags with hoop (throwing bean bag through hoop), a series of hurdles (cones with dowel/stick), balance beam, area to run to finish (through a ribbon).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Now we get to run the obstacle course and practice some things we have learned! Watch and follow me!" Show the athletes how to go through the course. Then assist athletes in moving through course.

### Station 1: Throwing for distance and accuracy

- Set up markers about 3 feet apart.
- Have the child throw the ball at the marker.
- Encourage the child to throw the ball at the markers.

### Station 2: Frog Hoppin'

- Place round floor markers so that they are a distance that the athlete can jump.
- Have athletes hop from one marker to the next.

### Station 3: Walk on Balance Beam

- Athletes will independently walk the length of the beam, alternating steps.
- Add various ways to move down the beam for advance athletes (backwards, sideways, change directions – forward to backwards).
- Add length to the beam by using multiple beams.



**Station 4: Jump Over Hurdles**

- Make hurdle using two cones and one dowel or stick. Place dowel through holes in cone.
- Adjust height as needed for athletes. Always start the bar at the lowest height.
- Encourage athlete to jump using two feet, over the bar, landing on two feet.

**Station 5: Run to Finish Line (through ribbon)**

- When athlete steps off beam, he/she should run to the finish line. Teach athletes to run through the line.
- Introduce this skill several times as some may stop, not wanting to hit or touch the finish line.
- The finish line is a long ribbon. To set the finish line, attach the ribbon to one side of the area while holding the other end of the ribbon in your hand (or have another person hold the other end).

**Closing Sports Song** (2 min.)

Repeat the song used in Day 1 and 2 to end the Lesson.



**You have finished Week Six: Striking Lessons.  
You can now begin Week Seven: Kicking.**



# Kicking WEEK SEVEN

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**THIS SET OF LESSONS PROVIDES**  
games and activities to help children  
develop kicking skills, flexibility, general  
fitness, strength, body awareness,  
coordination, spatial concepts,  
and adaptive skills (following  
directions, imitating  
motor movements).



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## Opening Sports Song *(4 min.)*

**PURPOSE** Start each Young Athletes class with a gathering/warm-up song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with. This will help them warm-up, serve as a gathering activity, create body awareness and support adaptive skills (follow directions, sing along, imitation of motor movements).

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

**SING** **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

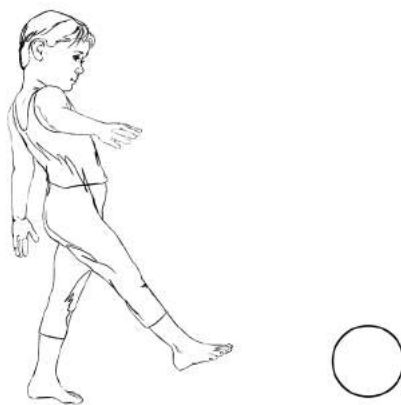
- The athletes in our class can jump, jump, jump, jump, jump, jump, jump. The athletes in our class jump, jump, jump - all through the day.
- The tennis player on the team can swing their racket, swing their racket, swing their racket. The tennis player on the team can swing their racket - all through the game.



**Kicking** (5 min.)**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball or playground ball**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills. Introduction of Week 7 skills.**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Athletes, now we are going to kick the ball. Watch me!"

**Tips:** The child's eyes should be focused on the ball; Non-kicking foot should be positioned just behind and to the side of the ball; The kicking leg should bend at the knee for a back swing and should follow through; The opposite arm swings forward as the ball is kicked.

- Stand behind the ball. Now kick it.
- Have the child kick the ball towards you with his/her preferred foot.
- Wonderful. Now get the ball and give it to (child) to kick.



## Penalty Kick Prep *(6 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball or playground ball

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating, motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** “Now let’s get ready to play soccer! We are going to run and then kick the ball. Watch!” Place a ball on the ground.

- Walk to the ball and kick it.
- Have children repeat activity, progressing to running and kicking.
- Great! Let’s do it again.

## Kicking for Distance *(5 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball, playground ball, cones, floor markers

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** “Let’s see how far we can kick the ball. Which marker can you kick the ball past? ”

- Encourage athletes to walk or run up to the ball and kick it for distance by having them kick a ball past various markers.
- Great job! Can you kick the ball past the cone (blue maker, etc.)



## Kicking for Accuracy *(6 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball or playground ball; cones, floor markers

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements, counting)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "In soccer you score goals by kicking the ball through the cones. Now let's try to make a goal in a soccer game." Place a ball on the ground.

- Encourage child to walk or run up to the ball to kick to toward a goal or between 2 cones.
- Great – let's see how many goals the team has scored (count as each child scores a goal).

## Closing Sports Song *(4 min.)*

**PURPOSE** End each Young Athletes class with a closing/cool-down song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with.

**EXPLAIN** "It is time to end Young Athletes. Let's sing If You're Happy and You Know It. Sing along with me and do what I do."

- SING**
- If you're happy and you know it, wiggle your arms ( flap like a bird's wings, walk around with arms outstretched)
  - If you're happy and you know it then your face will really show it if you're happy and you know it wiggle your arms.



## Opening Sports Song *(4 min.)*

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

### **SING AND DEMONSTRATE** **Wheels on the Bus Melody**

- The runners in our class run, run run (run in place). The runners in our class run, run, run - all through the day.
- The hockey players in our class strike the puck, strike the puck, strike the puck (make hockey motion from week 6). The hockey players in our class strike the puck - all through the game.

## Penalty Kick Prep *(4 min.)*

Repeat Activity from Day 1.

## Kicking for Distance *(5 min.)*

Repeat Activity from Day 1.

## Kicking for Accuracy *(5 min.)*

Repeat Activity from Day 1.



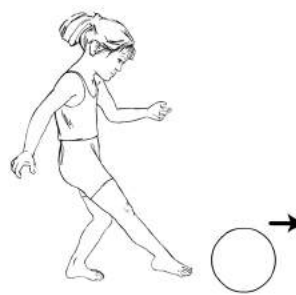
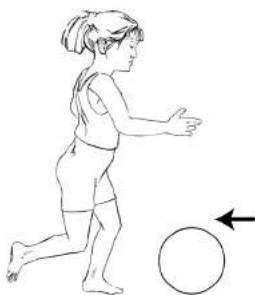
**Kickball** (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball or playground ball

**PURPOSE** Body Awareness, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills (run, jump, throw, balance) and adaptive skills (following directions, imitation of motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** “Now let’s kick the ball as I roll it to you. Remember to keep your eyes on the ball!”

- Roll or kick a ball toward an athlete and encourage him/her to kick the moving ball toward you or a moving target.
- Have the athlete bring the ball back to you.
- That was a great job. Now let’s do it again with (child).
- Give athletes more opportunity to practice by assigning adults to small groups.





## Give and Go (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball, playground ball; cones

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills, eye hand coordination, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements, counting)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Let's play soccer. I am going to kick the ball to you and you kick it between the cones."

- Kick a ball toward the athlete and encourage him/her to kick the moving ball toward a goal or between 2 cones.
- You scored a goal! Let's keep count and see how many goals our team can score.
- an object and other athletes go under.



## Closing Sports Song (3 min.)

Repeat the song you used in Day 1 to end the Lesson.



## Opening Sports Song (4 min.)

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song (Wheels on the Bus melody). Sing along with me and do what I do."

### **SING AND DEMONSTRATE** **Wheels on the Bus Melody**

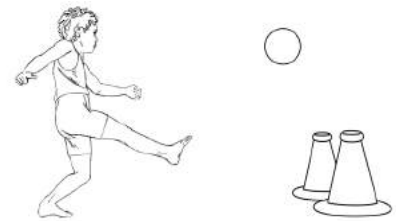
- The soccer player in our class kick the ball, kick the ball, kick the ball.  
The soccer players in our class kick the ball - all through the day.
- The pitcher on the team throws the ball, throws the ball, throws the ball.  
The pitcher on the team throws the ball - all through the game.

## Kicking for Distance (5 min.)

Repeat the Activity from Day 1 and 2.

## Kicking for Accuracy (5 min.)

Repeat the Activity from Day 2.



## Kickball (5 min.)

Repeat the Activity from Day 2.

## Give and Go (4 min.)

Repeat the Activity from Day 2.



## Bridges and Tunnels (4 min.)

**PURPOSE** Strength, general fitness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "OK, Now we are going to play tunnels and bridges. First let's make our tunnel!" If physically able, have one athlete bend forward so that hands and feet are on the ground to form bridges and tunnels. Encourage other athletes to crawl (inchworm, walk) under tunnel or bridge.

### Tunnels

"Who can bend like this to make a tunnel? (Hands and feet on ground, bottom up making tunnel). Awesome, he/she made a tunnel. Now, who can go under his/her tunnel? Great! After you go under the tunnel, you make a tunnel right next to him/her! Great, now our tunnel is even bigger!"

- One athlete forms a tunnel by touching the ground with his/her feet and hands or by getting down onto hands and knees.
- The other athletes crawl, scoot, under the tunnel.
- Once they go under the tunnel, have each athlete extend the tunnel (by forming a tunnel next to the person who has already made a tunnel).

### Bridges

"Ok! Now we are going to play bridges. Who can bend like this to make a tunnel? (Sit on ground. Place hands/feet flat on ground.) Push bottom off ground. Great! Now let's make a bridge and go under the bridge!"

- One athlete forms a bridge by sitting with his/her hands and feet flat on the ground and pushing his/her bottom off the ground.
- The other athletes crawl, scoot, under the bridge.
- To make it easier have athletes place their feet or hands on wall or an object and other athletes go under.



## Closing Sports Song *(2 min.)*

Repeat the song you used in Day 1 and 2 to end the Lesson.



**You have finished Week Seven: Kicking Lessons.  
You can now begin Week Eight: Review of Skills as Sports.**



# Review of Skills as Sports WEEK EIGHT

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## THIS SET OF LESSONS PROVIDES

athletes the chance to apply  
the skills developed over the  
course of the Young Athletes™  
program to sports games.



***Special Olympics***  
**young athletes™**

[www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

## Overview

**Lesson Plans (Day One, Day Two, Day Three)** provide details to help you plan and carry out the Young Athletes program with a group of children between the ages of 2 and 7 years old.

**Adults Needed:** Plan for at least 1 adult for every 4 children. Recruit help from families, volunteers, older students, college students and others in your community to make sure the program runs smoothly and is fun.

**Time:** Young Athletes is implemented with great enthusiasm, high energy and quick pace. Time estimates are provided to guide completion of each lesson in 30 minutes. However, the pace and length of the lesson should be matched to the needs, interests, ages, and skills of the young athletes in your group.

**Sequence:** There are three lessons for each skill area labeled Day One, Day Two and Day Three. Lessons within the skill area are designed to be offered in sequence to help children become acquainted with the activities and build skills through repetition.

**Resources:** The Lesson Plan Summary Cards include an outline of the activities, list of equipment needed, and page numbers to find the activity descriptions. The cards, Young Athletes Activity Guide, Suggestions from Teachers, and training videos are included in the online Toolkit (see website below).

**Playing at home:** Give families the Lesson Plan Summary Cards and encourage them to sing the songs and play one or two games with their child at home before the next session. Help them learn about the activities by including them in your group sessions and/or providing a family training session. Be sure they have access to the Activity Guide and Videos for more information.

**>> See the Young Athletes Toolkit online at:**  
[www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

# Review of Skills as Sports

WEEK DAY

eight

1

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## Opening Sports Song (4 min.)

**PURPOSE** Start each Young Athletes class with a gathering/warm-up song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with. This will help them warm-up, serve as a gathering activity, create body awareness and support adaptive skills (follow directions, sing along, imitation of motor movements).

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

**SING** **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

- The athletes in our class can run run, run, run, run, run. The athletes in our class run run run - all through the day.
- The swimmer on the team can swim, swim, swim, swim, swim, swim. The swimmer on the team can swim, swim, swim - all through the pool





## Running Styles *(4 min.)*

**PURPOSE** Strength, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movement)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "This week we are going to practice different sports. Today we are going to do sports that you would see in track and field. First let's try running different ways."

Use a whistle to signal when athletes should listen to you and change their running style.

- Stomp slow/fast
- Run slow/fast
- Run backwards
- High knees runs (raise knees high when running)
- Tiptoe walking

Or, create a foot race (competition) using different running styles movements)



# Review of Skills as Sports

WEEK DAY

eight

1

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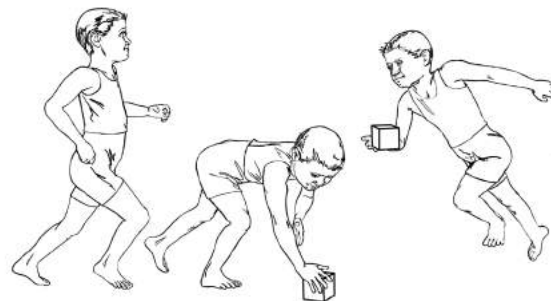
## Run and Carry Relay (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Bean bag, floor markers placed at equal intervals around the floor.

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Set up floor markers around the room, then show each child a marker to stand on. Give a bean bag to the child at the first marker. "Now let's play a running game."

- (Child at first marker/home base) is going to run from home to the second marker.
- He/she is then going to hand the bean bag to (child at second marker) and he/she will run to the next marker and give the bean bag to (child at third marker.).
- We will keep going around the room until (child on last marker) gets the beanbag and runs "home" to me.
- Ready, set, go.



## Jumping High (5 min.)

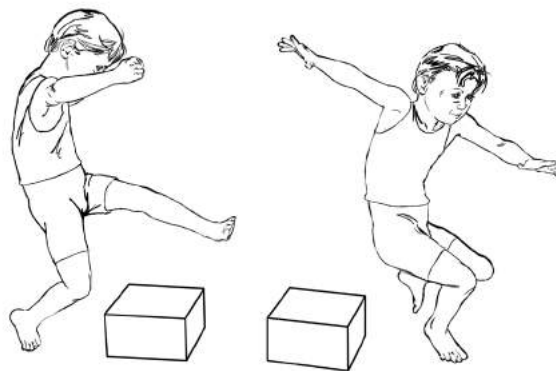
**EQUIPMENT** Floor markers, dowel, bean bags, cones, hoops, balls, balance beam/rope, and Blocks should be spread around the room. so that athletes can have a chance to jump over the various pieces.

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Now we are going to do the high jump. We're going to try to jump OVER our equipment."

**Tips:** Children can jump onto or off of equipment if their feet cannot clear the floor; If they are jumping off of the equipment as opposed to over it, challenge them to reach for an object (ex: scarf) while doing so.

- Jump onto the equipment first– THEN see if you can jump OVER it!
- Now move to the next piece of equipment and try it again.



# Review of Skills as Sports

WEEK DAY

eight

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## Hurdles (5 min.)

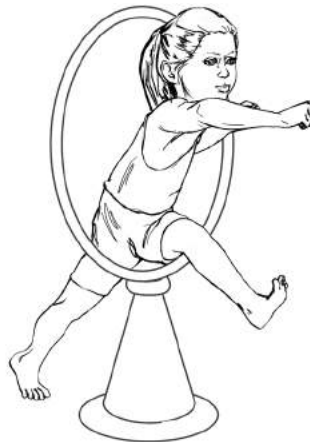
**EQUIPMENT** One dowel with two cones or blocks (for hurdle). Make hurdle using two cones and one dowel or stick. Place dowel through holes in cone.

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, adaptive skills (following directions, imitating of motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Set up several hurdles for athletes. Always start the bar at the lowest height. Adjust height as needed for athletes. "Now we are going to jump over hurdles."

- Encourage athlete to jump using two feet, over the bar, landing on two feet.
- After everyone has jumped over the lowest height, raise the dowel. Repeat.

For more of a challenge (optional) set up 2 hurdles several feet apart. "Now that everyone had jumped over the stick, let's see if you can jump over 2 in a row like this. Jump over first one, walk to the next one and then jump over that one."



## Throwing for Distance and Accuracy *(5 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Small foam ball, floor markers

**PURPOSE** Body Awareness, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills (run, jump, throw, balance) and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Set up markers (e.g. stars) about 3 feet apart. Have the child throw the ball at the marker. Encourage the child to throw the ball at the markers.

- Now we are going to throw the ball at the first star/marker.
- Great – now go and get to and throw to the second star/marker.
- Wow – can you throw it to the third star/marker?

## Closing Sports Song *(4 min.)*

**PURPOSE** End each Young Athletes class with a closing/cool-down song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with. This builds body awareness and adaptive skills (following directions, singing along, imitation of motor movements) and helps transition to the next activity.

**EXPLAIN** “Let’s end Young Athletes with a song, If You are Happy and You Know It. Sing along with me and do what I do.”

**SING AND DEMONSTRATE**

- If you’re happy and you know it, wiggle your arms (flap like a bird’s wings, walk around with arms outstretched)
- If you’re happy and you know it then your face will really show it if you’re happy and you know it wiggle your arms.



# Review of Skills as Sports

WEEK DAY

eight

1

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## Opening Sports Song (3 min.)

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

### SING AND DEMONSTRATE Wheels on the Bus Melody

- The athletes in our class roll the ball, roll the ball, roll the ball. The athletes in our class roll the ball - all through the day.
- The athletes in our class jump up and down, up and down, up and down. The athletes in our class jump up and down - all through the game.

## Balance Beam (4 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Balance beam/rope.

**PURPOSE** Body Awareness, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills (run, jump, throw, balance) and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Athletes – today we are going to play more sports games. First we are going to do the balance beam – this is part of gymnastics. OK athletes, I want you to look at what I do with MY body and try to do it with your own. I want you to COPY what I do. Look at me, see how I am:"

- Standing on one foot on the balance beam/rope, standing with one foot in front of the other on the balance beam/rope, standing on tip toes on the balance beam/rope, and standing on my heels on the balance beam/rope...You try!
- Now try it with your arms out/in/up/down, or eyes closed/open.
- Encourage athletes to try these new balancing techniques while manipulating their bodies so that their muscles will need to counteract shifts in weight. Shifting of body weight to engage balance muscles is an important functional and sports related skill.



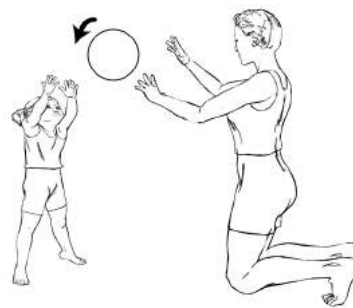
## High Ball Catch (4 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Large beach ball, slow motion balls

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills (grasping, catching, & holding), body awareness, proprioception, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements). Use a large beach ball or slow motion balls to introduce catching from a short distance.

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Kneel facing the child who is about 3 feet away. "OK athletes, we're going to practice catching this BIG ball!"

- Gently toss a beach ball or fairly large ball to the child and encourage catching the ball with fingers pointing up (because it's from above the waist). Be sure the toss is done from the chest level and with the fingers pointing up. "See how I am tossing the ball to (athlete) with my fingers pointing UP? Catch the ball with your fingers pointing UP!"
- Vary distances and heights depending on child's physical abilities. Progress by moving further away and mixing up high and low tosses. "Great job!! Now I'm going to back up a little bit and see if we can do this!"
- Give the athletes as much practice as possible while being sure to incorporate all children. Waiting children can be cheering, or tossing an imaginary ball, or tossing it to themselves if there are enough.





# Review of Skills as Sports

WEEK DAY

eight

1

2

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## Overhand Throwing (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Small foam ball

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, motor skills

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** This uses the same techniques as two hand throwing but encourage the child to use one hand, bringing his/her arm back and forward the throw the small ball towards you. "Now let's throw this smaller ball like I am doing with just one hand."

- Stand in your sideways stance.
- Bring the hand holding the ball up over your head.
- Bend your arm at the elbow.
- Now throw the ball.
- That was great! Good job. Let's do it again.

## Handball (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, cone

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Now we are going to see if we can hit this ball off the cone. Watch – keep your hand open and hit it like this."

- Place the ball on the cone and hit it with an open hand or fist.
- Line athletes up opposite the cone to take turns hitting the ball and bringing it back.
- OK, now you do it. Good job!



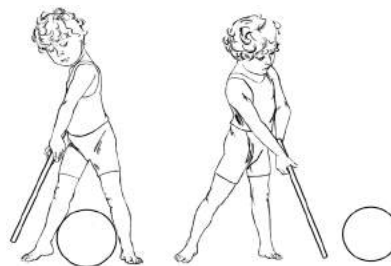
## Beginning Hockey (6 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, small foam ball, dowel, junior sized hockey stick or junior size plastic golf club

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills, and eye hand coordination

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Today we are going to learn to play some sports. First we are going to play hockey." Place a large ball on the ground.

- Stand in your sideways stance.
- Hold the stick (hockey stick, golf club) with both hands.
- Now hit the ball
- Great!



## Closing Sports Song (3 min.)

Repeat the song used in Day 1 to end the Lesson.

# Review of Skills as Sports

WEEK DAY

eight

1

2

3

## Opening Sports Song (4 min.)

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song (Wheels on the Bus melody). Sing along with me and do what I do."

### SING AND DEMONSTRATE Wheels on the Bus Melody

- The athletes in our class touch their toes (bend and stretch); touch their toes; touch their toes. The athletes in our class touch their toes, - all through the day.
- The pitcher on the team throws the ball, throws the ball, throws the ball. The pitcher on the team throws the ball - all through the town.

## Beginning Tennis/Softball (6 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, cones; paddle, junior size racket or plastic bat

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills and eye hand coordination

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Now we are going to play tennis/softball." Place a large ball on a cone and use floor markers to help athletes learn how to stand sideways.

- Now stand sideways and hold the paddle/racket with one hand.
- Hit the ball with your paddle/racket.



## Review of Skills as Sports

**Kickball** (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball or playground ball

**PURPOSE** Body Awareness, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills (run, jump, throw, balance) and adaptive skills (following directions, imitation of motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** “Now we are going to practice our soccer skills! First we are going to kick the ball.”

- Roll or kick a ball toward an athlete and encourage him/her to kick the moving ball toward you or a moving target.
- Have the athlete bring the ball back to you.
- That was a great job. Now let’s do it again with (child).
- Give athletes more opportunity to practice by assigning adults to small groups.

**Penalty Kick Prep** (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball or playground ball

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating, motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** “Now we are going to practice our penalty kick! We are going to run and then kick the ball. Watch!” Place a ball on the ground.

- Walk to the ball and kick it.
- Have children repeat activity, progressing to running and kicking.
- Great! Let’s do it again.



# Review of Skills as Sports

WEEK DAY

eight

1

2

3

## Give and Go (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball, playground ball; cones

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills, eye hand coordination, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements, counting)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Let's play soccer. I am going to kick the ball to you and you kick it between the cones."

- Kick a ball toward the athlete and encourage him/her to kick the moving ball toward a goal or between 2 cones.
- You scored a goal! Let's keep count and see how many goals our team can score.

## Closing Sports Song (4 min.)

Repeat the song used in Day 1 and Day 2 to end the Lesson.



### CONGRATULATIONS!

You have finished Week Eight: Review of Skills as Sports and the Young Athletes program. Plan for a culminating event with your local Special Olympics Program. You can repeat or adapt the Lessons to help children practice their skills and gain more confidence, too. See the online toolkit for Suggestions from Teachers and other resources at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)



# CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

Young Athletes™ is an innovative sports play program for children aged 2-7 years old. The program includes active games, songs and other play activities that help children develop skills. The key skill areas are: foundational skills; walking and running; balance and jumping; trapping and catching; throwing; striking; and kicking.

**Lesson Plans:** Detailed Lesson Plans give adult leaders an 8 week structure for introducing the activities and helping children practice skills while having fun. The Lessons should be led with great enthusiasm, high energy and quick pace. Recommended times for each activity allow leaders to complete the Lesson Plans in 30 minutes. However, we encourage you to adjust the pace and length of time to meet the needs, interests, ages, and skills of your group.

**Sequence:** For each week there are 3 days of Lesson Plans for a total of 24 days. Lessons are designed to be offered in sequence to help children become acquainted with the activities and build skills through repetition.

**Summary Cards:** Lesson Summary Cards are provided as prompts for teachers and coaches to use while teaching. They also serve as a resource for families to learn about their child's experience in the program. The Summary Cards also reference the online videos and the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide, an illustrated and simple guide for both leaders and families to use.

**Adults Needed:** Plan for at least 1 adult for every 4 children. Recruit help from families, volunteers, older students, college students and others in your community to make sure the program runs smoothly and is fun.

**Playing at home:** Give families the Lesson Plan Summary Cards and encourage them to sing the songs and/or play some of the games with their child at home each week. Help them learn about the activities by including them in your group sessions and/or providing family demonstration sessions, as well as referring them to the Activity Guide and online videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes).

Favazza, P.C., Zeisel, S., Parker, R., & Leboeuf, L. (2011).  
Young Athletes Curriculum. Special Olympics International, Washington, DC.

## WEEK DAY

one

1

## Foundational Skills Lesson Summary Card

**Equipment:** Scarves (enough for each child to have one); floor markers, balls, bean bags, cones, hoops (distributed around room). All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

### 5 min. Opening Sports Song

Wheels on the Bus melody

*The athletes in our class touch their toes...*

*The runner on the team goes run run run...*

*The swimmer in the water goes swim swim swim...*

### 5 min. I Spy

**Equipment:** floor markers, bean bags, cones, hoops, balls

### 5 min. Scarf Game

**Equipment:** Scarf for each child

### 5 min. Inchworm Wiggle

### 5 min. Bridges and Tunnels

### 5 min. Closing Sports Song

If You're Happy and You Know It

*If you're happy and you know it, clap and stomp*

*(wiggle your body; fly like a bird: arms outstretched)*

*If you're happy and you know it then your face will really show*

*it if you're happy and you know it clap and stomp,*

*(wiggle your body; fly like a bird: arms outstretched).*

**Tip:** Use a variety of body movements.

>> See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Foundational Skills, pages 2-5) and other resources at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****one****2****Foundational Skills Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Bean bags and/or balls near target (hoop on cone), one dowel with two cones or blocks (for hurdle), scarves, balance beam, ribbon, floor markers. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

**5 min. Opening Sports Song with Scarf**

Wheels on the Bus melody

*The athletes in our class touch their toes...*

*The player on the court jumps up and down...*

*The athlete on the team throws the scarf...*

**5 min. I Spy: Bunny Hop**

**Equipment:** floor markers, bean bags, cones, hoops, balls, balance beam, blocks

**4 min. Inchworm Wiggle****6 min. Bridges and Tunnels****7 min. Obstacle Course**

Set up a 5 station course with floor markers (dots for jumping on), bean bags with hoop (throwing bean bag through hoop), a series of hurdles (cones with dowel/stick), balance beam, area to run to finish (through a ribbon).

**3 min. Closing Sports Song**

If You're Happy and You Know It

>> See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Foundational Skills, pages 2-5) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****one****3****Foundational Skills Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Whistle, bean bags and/or balls near target (hoop on cone), one dowel with two cones or blocks (for hurdle), scarves, balance beam, ribbon, floor markers. Equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

**5 min. Opening Sports Song with Bunny Hop**

Wheels on the Bus melody

*The athletes in our class touch their toes...*

*The player on the court jumps up and down...*

*The athlete on the team throws the scarf...*

**3 min. I Spy: Stomp/Tiptoes**

**Equipment:** floor markers, bean bags, cones, hoops, balls, balance beam, blocks.

**4 min. Bridges and Tunnels****5 min. Follow the Leader: Side Steps, Follow a Path****5 min. Running Styles**

Introduction to Week 2

**7 min. Obstacle Course**

Set up a 5 station course with floor markers (dots for jumping on), bean bags with hoop (throwing bean bag through hoop), a series of hurdles (cones with dowel/stick), balance beam, area to run to finish (through a ribbon).

**3 min. Closing Sports Song**

If You're Happy and You Know It

>> See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Foundational Skills, pages 2-5; Walking and Running, pages 6-8) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)



**WEEK DAY****two****1****Walking and Running Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Whistle, floor markers (distributed around room to create a path), tambourine or drum. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

**5 min. Opening Sports Song**

Wheels on the Bus melody

*The athletes in our class swing their arms...*

*The runner on the team runs real fast...*

*The runner on the team runs real slow...*

**5 min. Follow the Leader and Follow a Path**

**Equipment:** tambourine or drum, floor markers

**4 min. Side Stepping****5 min. Running Styles**

- Stomp slow/fast
- Run slow/fast
- Run backwards
- High knees run (raise knees high when running)
- Tiptoe walk

**6 min. Bridges and Tunnels****5 min. Closing Sports Song**

If You're Happy and You Know It

>> See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Walking and Running, pages 6-8) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****two****2****Walking and Running Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Whistle, bean bags and/or balls near target (hoop on cone), balance beam, one dowel with two cones or blocks (for hurdle), scarves, ribbon, floor markers. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

**5 min. Opening Sports Song with Scarf**

Wheels on the Bus melody

**5 min. Follow the Leader**

With Side Steps, Follow the Path, Bunny Hop, Inch Worm

**6 min. Run and Carry**

**Equipment:** Floor markers, hoop on floor with balls or bean bags in it, hoop on block for target

**4 min. Running Styles****7 min. Obstacle Course**

Set Set up a 5 station course with floor markers (dots for jumping on), bean bags with hoop (throwing bean bag through hoop), a series of hurdles (cones with dowel/stick), balance beam, area to run to finish (through a ribbon).

- Jump on Dots
- Throw Bean Bag Through Target (hoop)
- Step/Jump Over Hurdles
- Walk on Balance Beam.
- Run to Finish Line (Through Ribbon)

**3 min. Closing Sports Song**

If You're Happy and You Know It

>> See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Walking and Running, pages 6-8) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****two****3****Walking and Running Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Whistle, bean bags and/or balls near target (hoop on cone), balance beam, one dowel with two cones or blocks (for hurdle), scarves, ribbon, floor markers. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

**3 min. Opening Sports Song with Bunny Hop**  
Wheels on the Bus melody

**6 min. Step and Jump (Introduction to Week 3)**  
**Equipment:** balance beams, ropes, floor markers

**6 min. Run and Carry**

**5 min. "Coach Says"**  
Introduction to Week 3

**7 min. Obstacle Course**  
Set Set up a 5 station course with floor markers (dots for jumping on), bean bags with hoop (throwing bean bag through hoop), a series of hurdles (cones with dowel/stick), balance beam, area to run to finish (through a ribbon).

- Jump on Dots
- Throw Bean Bag Through Target (hoop)
- Step/Jump Over Hurdles
- Walk on Balance Beam.
- Run to Finish Line (Through Ribbon)

**3 min. Closing Sports Song**  
If You're Happy and You Know It

**>>** See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Walking and Running, pages 6-8; Balance and Jumping, pages 9-11) and videos at:  
[www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****three****1****Balance and Jumping Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Floor Markers (distributed around room); slow motion balls/balls, balance beams/ropes. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

**5 min. Opening Sports Song**  
Wheels on the Bus melody  
*The runner on the team goes run run, run...*  
*The athletes in our class walk real slow...*  
*The player on the court goes jump jump jump...*

**5 min. "Coach Says"**

**4 min. Balance Beam/Ropes**

**5 min. Foot Trap**  
**Equipment:** slow motion ball

**6 min. Step and Jump**

**5 min. Closing Sports Song**  
If You're Happy and You Know It

**>>** See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Balance and Jumping, pages 9-11) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****three****2****Balance and Jumping Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Floor markers (distributed around room), dowel, bean bags, cones, hoops, slow motion balls/balls, balance beams/rope. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

4 min. **Opening Sports Song**  
Wheels on the Bus melody

4 min. **“Coach Says” (with a Balance Beam/Rope)**

5 min. **Rolling & Trapping**

4 min. **Foot Trap**  
**Tip:** Use smaller balls if larger ones are too difficult.

5 min. **Jumping High**  
**Tip:** Children can jump onto or off of equipment if their feet cannot clear the floor. For instance they can jump over the bean bag, or on top of it.

5 min. **Frog Hoppin’/Leapin’ Lizards**

3 min. **Closing Sports Song**  
If You’re Happy and You Know It

>> See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Balance and Jumping, pages 9-11) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****three****3****Balance and Jumping Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Floor markers, dowel, bean bags, cones, hoops, slow motion balls/balls, balance beam/rope, blocks, scarves. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

2 min. **Opening Sports Song with Leapin’ Lizards**  
Wheels on the Bus melody  
*The athletes on the team leap over the mark...*  
*The player on the court runs forward and back...*  
*The athletes in our class leap on the mark...*

3 min. **“Coach Says” (with a Bean Bag)**  
Introduction to Week 4

4 min. **Jumping High**

5 min. **Rolling & Trapping**  
Introduction to Week 4

4 min. **Foot Trap**

5 min. **Frog Hoppin’/Leapin’ Lizards**

5 min. **Goalie Drill**  
**Equipment:** two cones to form each goal and slow motion ball

2 min. **Closing Sports Song**  
If You’re Happy and You Know It

>> See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Balance and Jumping, pages 9-11; Trapping and Catching, pages 12-15) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****four****1****Trapping and Catching Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Slow Motion balls/balls, pairs of cones to form goals (space between cones is goal), bean bags (one per child/pair). All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

5 min. **Opening Sports Song**  
Wheels on the Bus melody

5 min. **Rolling & Trapping**

5 min. **Goalie Drill**

5 min. **Big Ball**

5 min. **Bean Bag Catch**

5 min. **Closing Sports Song**  
If You're Happy and You Know It

>> See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Trapping and Catching, pages 12-15) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****four****2****Trapping and Catching Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Bean bags (one per child/pair if possible), pairs of cones to form goals, beach ball, slow motion balls. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

5 min. **Opening Sports Song with Leapin' Lizards**  
Wheels on the Bus melody

5 min. **Goalie Drill**

5 min. **Big Ball/Bean Bag Catch**  
(choose one)

6 min. **High Ball Catch**

6 min. **Bounce Catch**  
**Equipment:** large beach ball

3 min. **Closing Sports Song**  
If You're Happy and You Know It

>> See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Trapping and Catching, pages 12-15) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****four****3****Trapping and Catching Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Floor markers (distributed around room), Bean Bags (one for each child/pair), pairs of cones to form goals (the space in-between is the goal), slow motion balls/balls or beach balls (one for each child/pair). Equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

**3 min. Opening Sports Song with Leapin' Lizards**

Wheels on the Bus melody

*The athletes on the team leap over the mark...*

*The player on the court runs forward and back...*

*The athletes in our class leap on the mark...*

**5 min. Bean Bag Catch/Throw**

Introducing Week 5 concept

**5 min. High Ball Catch**

**Equipment:** beach ball, slow motion balls

**5 min. Rolling**

Introducing Week 5 concept

**4 min. Bounce Catch****5 min. Two-Hand Underhand**

Introducing Week 5 concept

**3 min. Closing Sports Song**

If You're Happy and You Know It

**>>** See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Trapping and Catching, pages 12-15; Throwing pages 16-19; Advanced Skills, pages 28-31) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****five****1****Throwing Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Balls – Slow motion ball and small foam ball, beanbag, floor markers, cones. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

**4 min. Opening Sports Song**

Wheels on the Bus melody

**5 min. Rolling**

**Equipment:** Slow motion ball, cones, floor markers next to cones

**5 min. Two-Hand Underhand****6 min. Underhand Toss (1 hand)**

**Equipment:** Small foam ball, beanbag

**6 min. Two-Hand Throwing (overhead)**

**Equipment:** slow motion ball

**4 min. Closing Sports Song**

If You're Happy and You Know It

**>>** See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Throwing pages, 16-19) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****five****2****Throwing Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Balls – Slow motion ball and small foam ball, beanbag, floor markers, cones. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

**3 min. Opening Sports Song**  
Wheels on the Bus melody

**6 min. Underhand Toss**  
**Equipment:** Small foam ball, beanbag

**5 min. Two-Hand Throwing (overhead)**  
**Equipment:** Slow motion ball

**6 min. Overhand Throwing**

**6 min. Throwing for Distance**

**4 min. Closing Sports Song**  
If You're Happy and You Know It

**>>** See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Throwing, pages 16-19) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****five****3****Throwing Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Balls – beach ball, small foam ball, and slow motion ball; bean bag, hoop, floor markers, cone. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

**3 min. Opening Sports Song**  
Wheels on the Bus melody

**4 min. Review of Underhand Toss**  
**Equipment:** Small foam ball, beanbag, hoop (NOTE: Hoop can either be held by an adult or set up on the top of the cone).

**4 min. Two-Hand Throwing**

**4 min. Overhand Throwing**

**4 min. Throwing for Distance and Accuracy**  
**Equipment:** slow motion ball

**4 min. Ball tapping**  
**Equipment:** Beach ball or slow motion ball, mallets

**4 min. Handball**  
Introducing Week 6

**3 min. Closing Sports Song**  
If You're Happy and You Know It

**>>** See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Throwing pages, 16-19; Striking, pages 20-23) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****six****1****Striking Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Balls – Slow motion ball and small foam ball, floor markers (distributed around room to create a path); bean bags, hoops, cones, balance beams (one long, one short); paddle, junior size racket or plastic bat. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

**4 min. Opening Sports Song**  
Wheels on the Bus melody

**5 min. Ball Tapping**

**5 min. Handball**

**6 min. Side Striking**

**6 min. Obstacle Course**

Set Set up a 5 station course with floor markers (dots for jumping on), bean bags with hoop (throwing bean bag through hoop), a series of hurdles (cones with dowel/stick), balance beam, area to run to finish (through a ribbon).

- Jump on Dots
- Throw Bean Bag Through Target (hoop)
- Step/Jump Over Hurdles
- Walk on Balance Beam.
- Run to Finish Line (Through Ribbon)

**4 min. Closing Sports Song**  
If You're Happy and You Know It

**>>** See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Striking, pages 20-23) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****six****2****Striking Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Balls – beach ball, small foam ball and slow motion ball; paddle, junior size racket or plastic bat; cones; dowel, junior sized hockey stick or junior size plastic golf club. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

**4 min. Opening Sports Song**  
Wheels on the Bus melody

**6 min. Side Striking**

**6 min. Beginning Hockey**

**6 min. Beginning Tennis/Softball**

**4 min. Bridges/Tunnels**

**4 min. Closing Sports Song**  
If You're Happy and You Know It

**>>** See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Striking, pages 20-23; Foundation Skills, pages 2-5) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)



**WEEK DAY****six****3****Striking Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Beach ball, small foam ball, slow motion ball and junior size soccer ball; paddle, cones; dowel, junior sized hockey stick or plastic golf club; floor markers, hoop set-up on cone, balance beam. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

**2 min. Opening Sports Song w/ Leapin' Lizards**

Wheels on the Bus melody

*The athletes on the team leap over the mark...*

*The player on the court runs forward and back...*

**5 min. Side Striking****5 min. Beginning Hockey****5 min. Beginning Tennis/Softball****4 min. Kicking**

Introduction to Week 7

**7 min. Obstacle Course**

Set up a 5 station course with floor markers , bean bags with hoop, hurdles (cones with dowel/stick), balance beam, finish line.

- Throwing for distance and accuracy
- Frog Hoppin'
- Walk on Balance Beam
- Jump Over Hurdles
- Run to Finish Line (Through Ribbon)

**2 min. Closing Sports Song**

If You're Happy and You Know It

>> See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Striking, pages 20-23) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****seven****1****Kicking Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Balls - beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball or playground ball; floor markers, cones. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

**4 min. Opening Sports Song**

Wheels on the Bus melody

**5 min. Kicking****6 min. Penalty Kick Prep****5 min. Kicking for Distance****6 min. Kicking for Accuracy****4 min. Closing Sports Song**

If You're Happy and You Know It

>> See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Kicking, pages 24-27) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)



**WEEK DAY****seven****2****Kicking Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Balls - beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball or play-ground ball; floor markers, cones. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

*3 min.* **Opening Sports Song w/ Leapin' Lizards**  
Wheels on the Bus melody

*4 min.* **Penalty Kick Prep**

*5 min.* **Kicking for Distance**

*5 min.* **Kicking for Accuracy**

*5 min.* **Kickball**

*5 min.* **Give and Go**

*3 min.* **Closing Sports Song**  
If You're Happy and You Know It

**>>** See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Kicking, pages 24-27) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****seven****3****Kicking Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Balls - beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball or play-ground ball; floor markers, cones. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

*4 min.* **Opening Sports Song**  
Wheels on the Bus melody

*5 min.* **Kicking for Distance**

*5 min.* **Kicking for Accuracy**

*5 min.* **Kickball**

*4 min.* **Give and Go**

*4 min.* **Bridges/Tunnels**

*3 min.* **Closing Sports Song**  
If You're Happy and You Know It

**>>** See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide (Kicking, pages 24-27; Foundation Skills, pages 2-5) and videos at: [www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****eight****1****Review of Skills as Sports Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Balls – Slow motion ball and small foam ball; floor markers, cones, dowel, bean bags, hoops, balance beam/rope, and blocks. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

*3 min.* **Opening Sports Song w/ Leapin' Lizards**  
Wheels on the Bus melody

*4 min.* **Running Styles**

*5 min.* **Run and Carry Relay**  
Adapted from Week 2

*5 min.* **Jumping High**

*5 min.* **Hurdles**

*5 min.* **Throwing for Distance and Accuracy**  
From Week 5

*3 min.* **Closing Sports Song**  
If You're Happy and You Know It

>> See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide and videos at:  
[www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****eight****2****Review of Skills as Sports Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Balls – beach ball and small foam ball; cones, balance beam/rope; dowel, junior sized hockey stick, junior size plastic golf club. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

*3 min.* **Opening Sports Song**  
Wheels on the Bus melody

*4 min.* **Balance Beam**  
From Week 3

*4 min.* **High Ball Catch**  
From Week 4

*5 min.* **Overhand Throwing**  
From Week 5

*5 min.* **Handball**  
From Week 6

*6 min.* **Beginning Hockey**  
From Week 6

*3 min.* **Closing Sports Song**  
If You're Happy and You Know It

>> See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide and videos at:  
[www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

**WEEK DAY****eight****3****Review of Skills as Sports Lesson  
Summary Card**

**Equipment:** Balls - beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball, playground ball; cone, floor markers; paddle or junior size racket. All equipment should be set up prior to running Young Athletes™.

*4 min.* **Opening Sports Song**  
Wheels on the Bus melody

*6 min.* **Beginning Tennis/Softball**  
From Week 6

*5 min.* **Kickball**  
From Week 7

*5 min.* **Penalty Kick Prep**  
From Week 7

*6 min.* **Give and Go**

*4 min.* **Closing Sports Song**  
If You're Happy and You Know It

**>>** See the Young Athletes™ Activity Guide and videos at:  
[www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)