



Special Olympics
Young Athletes

Session 2

SKILLS FOCUS:

- KICKING
- RUNNING
- BALANCE



Equipment Required:

- An open playing area
- Animal Cubes (Optional)
- Selection of cones
- Spot markers
- Beanbags
- Soft balls for each athlete
- Pop up goals (Optional)
- Obstacle course equipment
- Parachute
- PECS Cards (Optional)

This project is being run by **Special Olympics Ireland** in collaboration with the **School of Health and Human Performance in Dublin City University**.

Each Session is
45 minutes in length.

At the end of the session plan you will be asked to **tick off the activities you managed to complete each week.**



**Special
Olympics**
Ireland



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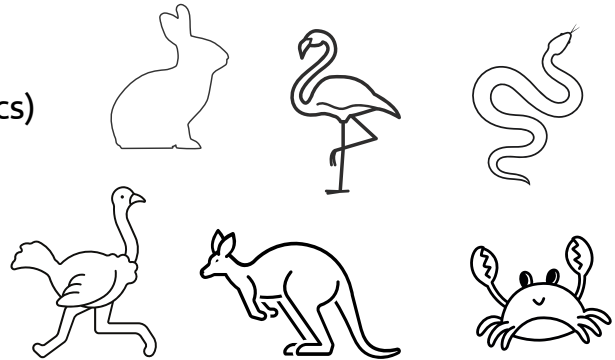
SPÓRT ÉIREANN
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Warm Up - Move like an Animal

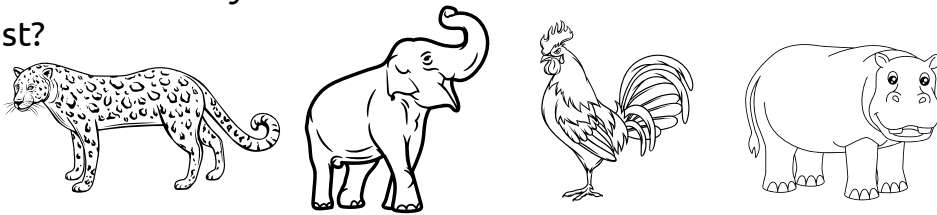
Description of Activity

Invite athletes to move freely around the playing area using the movements of a particular animal suggested by the Coach:

- a bunny (hopping on one leg)
- a flamingo (balance on one leg for 5 secs)
- a snake (slithering)
- an ostrich (running)
- a kangaroo (jumping with two feet)
- a crab (moving side ways).



Now focus on animals running. Select a range of animals such as a cheetah, an elephant, a chicken or a hippo. Ask athletes to show you how that animal would run. Which animal do they think would be the fastest? Which animal would run the slowest?



Skills in Focus

Run
Balance
Hop
Jump

Duration

5 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- Animal Cubes (Optional)
- PECS cards (Optional)

Adaptations

- Bring in more animals that challenge the athletes ability to balance including a Giraffe (walking on tip toes with hands stretched up into the air), a Frog (squatting down in frog position), a Bear (bear crawl, hands and feet) and any other animal you can think of. Ask the athletes to pick their favourite animal.

Observations

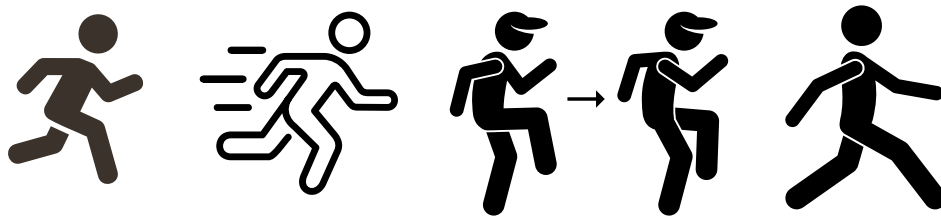
During this activity, look at the athletes movement to see how they are running. Are their arms moving backwards and forwards? Are they landing flat footed or on the ball of their foot?

Coach Says - Running (Recap week 1)

Description of Activity

This activity encourages the exploration of different running techniques through commands. The coach invites athletes to spread out in the open area and complete the tasks individually. Athletes are instructed to watch the coaches movements and listen to the their commands.

- The coach will call 'Coach Says Run...' followed by different commands, the coach will also do the movement as they command.
- The athletes must recreate this movement.
- Commands include - Run while doing heel kicks, high knees, leaning forwards, on your tippy toes, moving your hands from hip to lip, stamping hard into the ground, slowly, quickly, high knees, with long arms, with bouncy strides, with fast arms.



Skills in Focus
Run

Duration

5 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- PECS cards (Optional)

Adaptations

- Depending on athletes ability level, keep the number of commands low to *make the activity easier* or increase the number of demands to *make the activity harder*.
- Ensure to focus on using the below coaching cues.

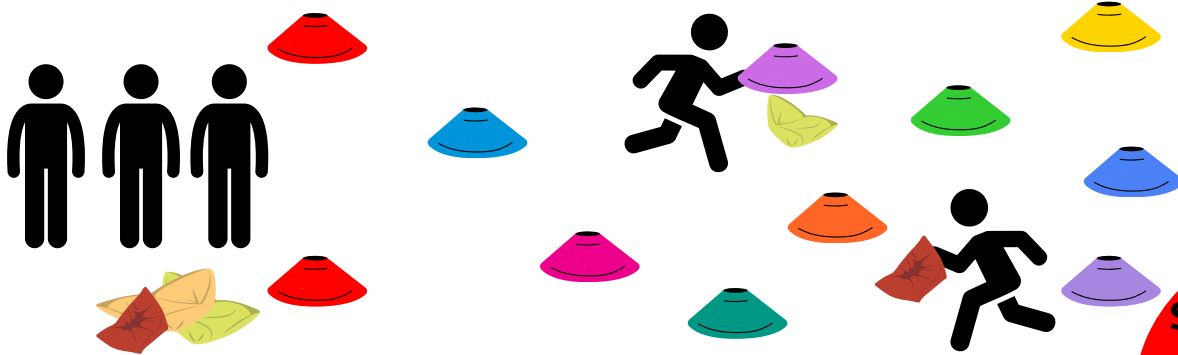
Coaching Cues

- *Run like a ninja, light on your toes* - This will help athletes to land on the ball of their foot instead of being flat footed.
- *Swing your arms back and forth*- This will help athletes to move their arms in opposition to their legs.

Scavenger Hunt - Running, Skipping, Hopping

Description of Activity

Arrange the athletes in groups of 3-4 at one end of a large playing area. Scatter a full set of cones throughout the playing area and randomly hide bean bags under some of the cones. On the coach's signal the first athlete from each group runs into the playing area, looks under one cone, checks for a beanbag and then returns to their group with the beanbag if they were successful. Once tagged the next athlete in line can go in search of a beanbag. An athlete may only check under one cone during their turn. The coach can alternate the skill they ask the athletes to do eg. run out to the cone, hop, skip or two foot jump to the cone.



Skills in Focus

Run
Hop
Skip
Jump

Duration

5 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- Cones
- Bean Bags
- PECS cards

Variations

If an athlete discovers a beanbag under a cone, they must transport it back to their group by balancing it on their head. This creates a more challenging task for the athletes.

Coaching Cues

- *Run like a ninja, light on your toes* - This will help athletes to land on the ball of their foot instead of being flat footed.
- *Swing your arms back and forth*- This will help athletes to move their arms in opposition to their legs.

Try to ... - Kicking

Description of Activity

This activity encourages the exploration of different techniques that introduce the skill of kicking through commands. The coach invites athletes to spread out in the open area with a soft football or other soft ball and complete the tasks individually. Athletes are instructed to watch the coaches demonstration and listen to the their commands.

- The coach will call 'Try to kick the ball... as hard as you can', followed by different commands, the coach will also do the movement as they command.
- The athletes must recreate this movement.
- Commands include - Kick the ball as soft as you can, moving your arms fast, from a standing position with no leg swing, with your arms by your side, by running up to the ball fast and swinging your leg, by running up to the ball and not swinging your leg back. Remember to use the coaching cues below.



Skills in Focus
Kick

Duration

7 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- Soft ball for each athlete
- Pop up goals (Optional)
- PECS cards (Optional)

Variations

- If athletes are performing the movements quite well and demonstrating proficiency in the skill, let the athletes try to score a goal into a pop up net 1-2 times at the end of the activity.

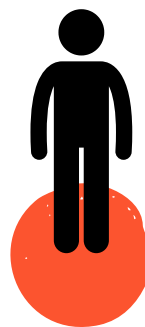
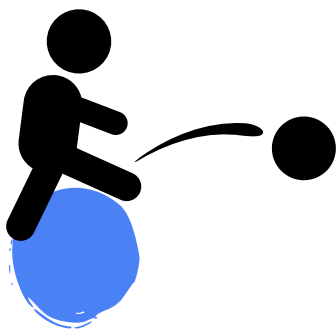
Coaching Cues

- *Big step, big kick* - Gets athletes to focus on taking an elongated stride prior to making contact with the ball and swinging the kicking leg back.
- *Shoe laces to the ball* - Encourages athletes to bring their kicking leg forward fast, making contact with the ball using the shoe laces or instep of the foot.

Partner Practice - Kicking

Description of Activity

Arrange athletes in pairs with one ball per pair. Each athlete stands on a spot marker facing their partner who is also standing on a spot marker a few metres away. Athlete A begins by kicking the ball to their partner, keeping it low along the ground. Coach emphasises using the instep or inside of the preferred foot (not toes). Athlete B bends down and collects the ball with their hands, before placing it back on the ground and returning the kick. Repeat the kicking action between athletes back and forth for 10 minutes. Option to swap partners after a few minutes. Coaches to reinforce the kicking coaching cues below during this activity.



Skills in Focus
Kick

Duration

8 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- Spot markers for each participant
- Football or similar for each pair
- PECS cards (Optional)

Adaptations

- To make this activity easier or harder, move the athletes / pairs closer (easier) or farther away (harder) from each other.
- Ask a parent or volunteer to partner with an athlete for this activity.

Coaching Cues

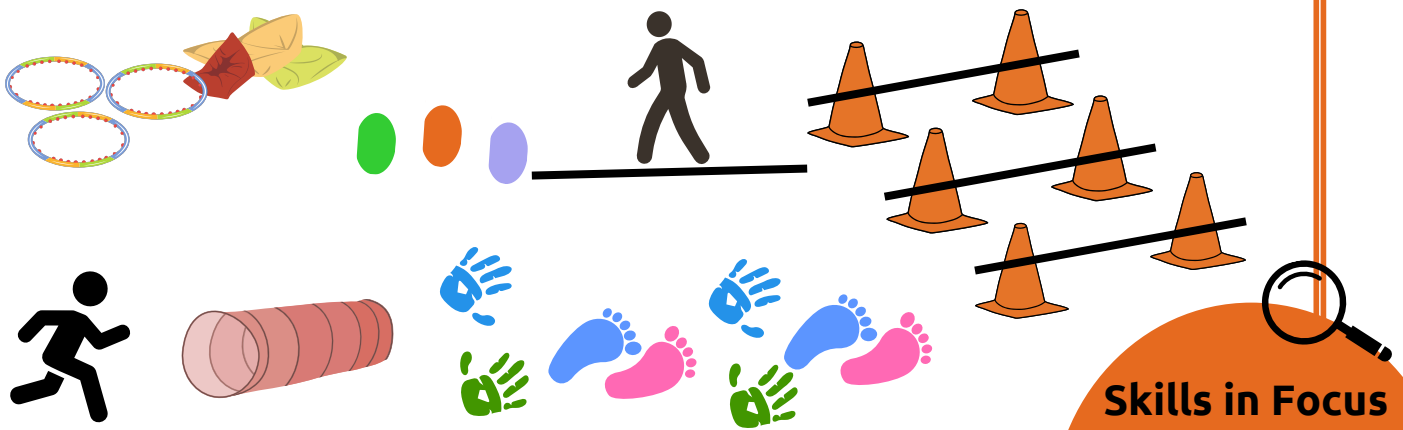
- *Big step, big kick* - Gets athletes to focus on taking an elongated stride prior to making contact with the ball and swinging the kicking leg back.
- *Shoe laces to the ball* - Encourages athletes to bring their kicking leg forward fast, making contact with the ball using the shoe laces or instep of the foot.

Obstacle Course

Description of Activity

Athletes take turns to complete the obstacle course which targets and reinforces a range of different fundamental movement skills.

- Run and then crawl through the tunnel
- Bear crawl, matching hands and feet to plastic hands/feet on ground
- Two foot jump over the hurdles. Keep bar low to encourage athletes to jump
- Walk heel to toe on a line for 6 steps with hands on hips
- Balance on stepping stones
- Throw 3 bean bags into hula hoops at the end



Skills in Focus

Run
Crawl
Jump
Balance
Throw

Duration

10 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- Tunnel
- Hands and Feet
- Hurdles (Cones and poles)
- Balance Beam
- Balance Rocks
- Hula Hoops and Beanbags

Adaptations

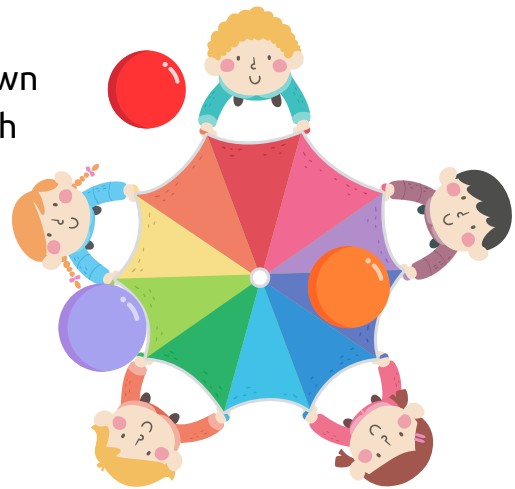
- Use different equipment to make the course easier or more challenging depending on the athletes ability.
- Tell athletes a story as part of the obstacle course, e.g. that they are trekking through the jungle or have landed on another planet that they are exploring.

Cool Down - Parachute Activity

Description of Activity

The coach and volunteers open up the parachute and invite athletes to find a space and hold onto the handle. The coach starts by asking athletes to move the parachute slowly up and down, then really fast up and down. This is repeated a couple of times. Volunteers help throw some soft balls into the middle of the parachute and the athletes move the parachute to make the balls fly into the air.

After a few minutes when all of the balls are thrown from the parachute, all the athletes lie underneath and take deep breaths to relax before the session finishes. Volunteers and parents move the parachute gently up and down.



Duration

5 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- Parachute
- Soft balls
- PECS cards

Variations

- *Merry-Go-Round*: Have athletes turn sideways and hold onto handle with their left hand. Everyone walks in a circle to create a merry-go-round. Get athletes to march, skip or hop in a circle.
- *Mushroom*: Have all athletes hold onto the parachute, raise the handle above their heads and then pull it down quickly so everyone is underneath forming a 'mushroom'. Repeat this a few times.



Session 2

SKILLS FOCUS:

- KICKING
- RUNNING
- BALANCE



Please circle the activities you completed in Session 2:

Warm Up

Running Skill

Running Game

Kicking Skill

Kicking Game

Obstacle Course

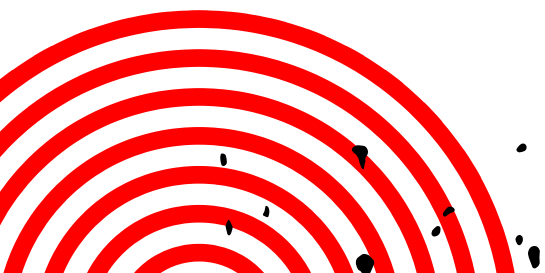
Cool Down

Session Notes

What went well:

What didn't work as well:

Targets for next session:





Special Olympics
Young Athletes

Session 2

VIDEO LINKS



**To view a demonstration of each activity
and game outlined in Session 2,
please click on the relevant link below:**

Move like an Animal Warm Up video

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WjgdJx9ag04JzcgP8KgX5VCVZaE7OZhg/view?usp=sharing>

Coach Says - Running video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1JhrWQ_32esKysUeaH2fcvQ2Kselci692/view?usp=sharing

Scavenger Hunt video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/19hvGOY5F7S-Pbdv9Kz-nQdsrteEmuc0D/view?usp=drive_link

Try to... Kicking video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/15pr80jx0leKo2DmslaLx5Edlgo4fSw4r/view?usp=drive_link

Partner Practice Kicking video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-n6DB-a3zafyrScZv4vMK3uZzAWbsm1z/view?usp=drive_link

Obstacle course video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WLqyLzBvu620928253n8XaEoXSjOvXqa/view?usp=drive_link

