



Special Olympics
Young Athletes

Session 4

SKILLS FOCUS:

- CATCHING
- HOPPING
- BALANCE



Equipment Required:

- An open playing area
- Selection of cones
- Soft balls for each athlete
- Spot markers
- 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**
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Warm Up - Body Parts

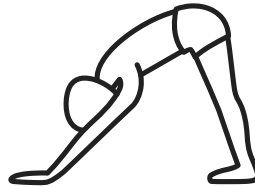
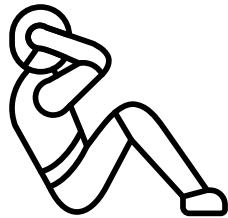
Description of Activity

Invite athletes to move freely around the playing area, the coach calls out different movements e.g. running, side stepping, skipping, hopping, jumping. When the coach calls out a body part (for example knee), the athletes must freeze and balance with that body part touching the floor. The coach demonstrates and participates in this activity to model the balance positions for the athletes.



Knee

Bum



Hands

Elbow



Skills in Focus

Run
Balance
Skip
Jump
Hop

Duration

5 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- PECS cards (Optional)

Variations

Ask the athletes to suggest a body part that must touch the floor to challenge their balance skills.

Observations

During this activity, look at the athletes movements when they are practicing the locomotor skills. What position are their arms in? Are they moving in opposition to each other? Are their knees swinging forward when hopping? Can they skip for four consecutive skips?

Learn to Hop - Hopping (Recap week 3)

Description of Activity

Athletes find a space in the open playing area. Coach demonstrates the skill of hopping on one leg to the athletes and asks them to join in. Coach uses the two coaching cues for the hop below. Athletes get the opportunity to practise hopping in a variety of different ways, using the following prompts:

- Hop on the spot
- Hop forwards
- Hop backwards
- Hop sideways
- Hop as quietly/noisily/quickly/slowly as possible
- Hop as far as you can for distance



Skills in Focus

Hop

Duration

5 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- Spot markers for each participant
- PECS cards (Optional)

Adaptations

- Ask a parent or volunteer to assist athletes with this activity by holding their hand for extra balance and support while hopping.

Coaching Cues

- *Flamingo hop or Stand on one leg and jump* - Encourages athletes to keep the foot of non-hopping leg behind.
- *Count your hops* - Encouraging athletes to try and complete four consecutive hops to reinforce the movement.

Relay Race - Hopping (Recap week 3)

Description of Activity

The focus of this game is reinforce the skill of hopping. Coaches and volunteers group athletes into teams of 3-4 children. Each group has to line up behind a cone. The athletes take it in turns to hop to the opposite cone and back, on the coaches command. Athletes high five their team mate and the next athlete takes a turn. Coaches use the below coaching cues to help improve the athletes hopping technique.



Duration

5 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- Cones or spot markers
- PECS cards (Optional)

Variations

- Coaches can incorporate other locomotor skills including running, skipping and jumping as part of the relay movements.

Coaching Cues

- *Flamingo hop or Stand on one leg and jump* - Encourages athletes to keep the foot of non-hopping leg behind.
- *Count your hops* - Encouraging athletes to try and complete four consecutive hops to reinforce the movement.

Catch me if you can! - Catching

Description of Activity

Each athlete is given a beanbag and asked to spread out in the open playing area so they are not close to anyone else. The coach demonstrates throwing the beanbag up in the air and catching it with two hands. The coach invites the athletes to throw the beanbag up in the air and catch it with two hands while standing still. The athletes practice catching the beanbag in this manner for a couple of minutes while the coach reinforces the coaching cues for catching. Once the athletes are comfortable with the movement, the coach challenges the athletes asking:

- How many catches can you count before the beanbag drops?
- Can you clap before catching the beanbag?
- Can you turn around before catching the beanbag?
- Can you walk around while throwing the beanbag up in the air and catching it?



Skills in Focus
Catch

Duration

7 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- Beanbag for each athlete
- PECS cards (Optional)

Adaptations

- Instead of using beanbags, get the athletes to practice catching using a soft ball or scarf. The scarves travel more slowly through the air, allowing more time for the athlete to catch it.

Coaching Cues

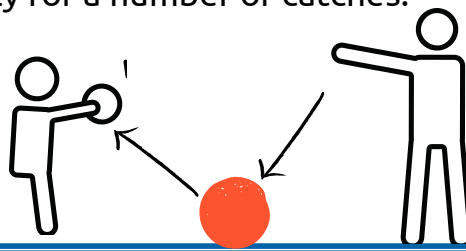
- *Hands ready*- Encourages athlete to have their hands positioned in front of their body with their elbows flexed.
- *Reach for the ball* - Encourages children to extend their arms reaching for the ball as it comes towards them.

Partner Pass - Catching

Description of Activity

Coach arranges athletes in pairs OR partners a parent/volunteer with an athlete and invites them to find a space in the playing area where they are not in contact with others. Pairs face each other, approximately 2-3 metres apart and place a spot marker on the floor in the middle, equidistant from each participant. Athlete A bounces the ball on or near the spot for their partner to catch. Athlete/ Person B then repeats the action.

Coach reinforces the coaching cues focusing on arms reaching for the ball and catching with the hands only. To increase the difficulty move the partners further away from each other, to make the activity easier move the partners closer together. Increase the distance as the activity progresses and once partners can both catch the ball repeatedly for a number of catches.



Skills in Focus
Catch

Duration

8 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- Soft ball for each pair
- PECS cards (Optional)

Variations

- Coaches can begin the activity by getting each athlete to sit on the ground with legs astride and practice bouncing the ball on the ground to head height and catch it again before the ball hits the ground. The coach can then progress the athletes to the partner activity.

Coaching Cues

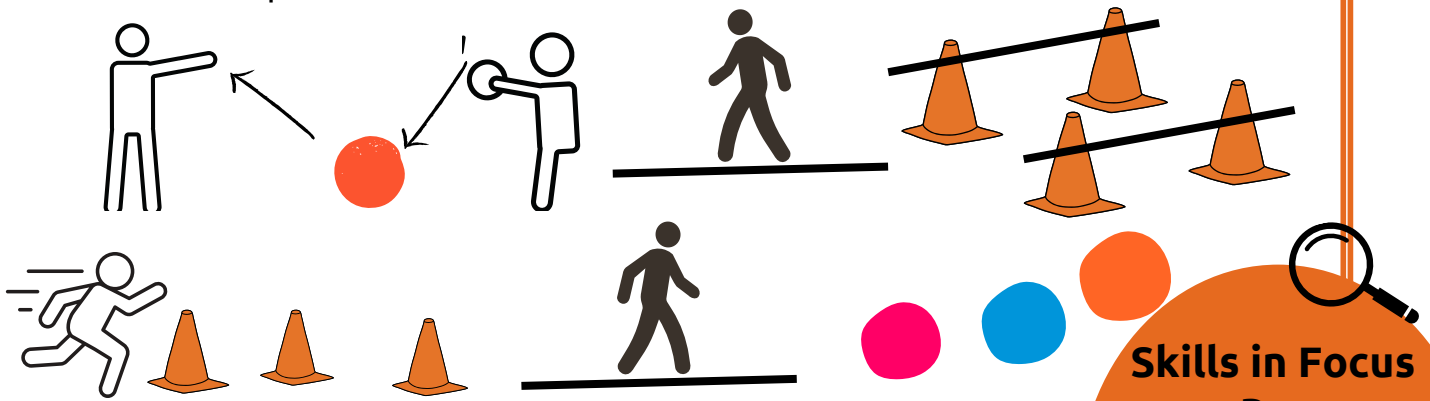
- *Hands ready*- Encourages athlete to have their hands positioned in front of their body with their elbows flexed.
- *Reach for the ball* - Encourages children to extend their arms reaching for the ball as it comes towards them.

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 for 1-2 meters then in and out of the cones
- Walk heel to toe on a line for 6 steps with hands on hips
- Single leg hop across the spot markers
- Crawling under the hurdles
- Walk heel to toe on a line for 6 steps with hands on hips
- Coach / Volunteer bounce passes ball to athlete who must catch the ball and bounce pass it back



Skills in Focus

Run
Balance
Hop
Crawl
Catch

Duration

10 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- Cones
- Line on ground
- Hurdles (Cones and poles)
- Spot Markers
- Soft ball

Adaptations

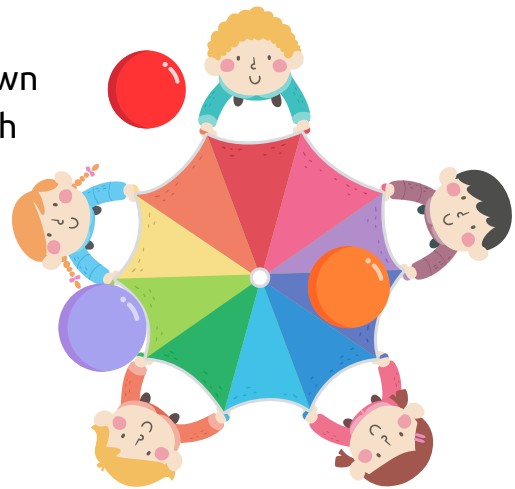
- Use different equipment to make the course easier or more challenging depending on the athletes ability.
- Tell athletes a story as part of the obstacle course, e.g. that they are trekking through the jungle or have landed on another planet that they are exploring.

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 4

SKILLS FOCUS:

- CATCHING
- HOPPING
- BALANCE



Please circle the activities you completed in Session 2:

Warm Up

Hopping Skill

Hopping Game

Catching Skill

Catching Game

Obstacle Course

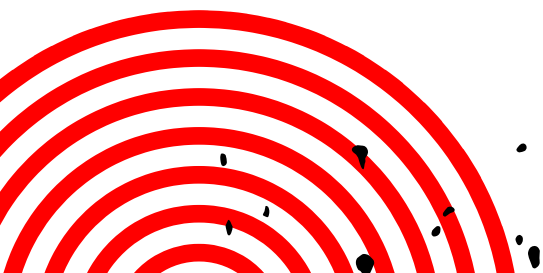
Cool Down

Session Notes

What went well:

What didn't work as well:

Targets for next session:





Special Olympics
Young Athletes

Session 4

VIDEO LINKS



**To view a demonstration of each activity
and game outlined in Session 4,
please click on the relevant link below:**

Body Parts Warm Up video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/12LtzPgvqr9Glo4x3UIUZUKEHq8GuYrsC/view?usp=drive_link

Learn to Hop video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1oB4V1LNot3lvZcJzjBzEOz6aaHCADAI/view?usp=drive_link

Relay Race video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-sGoHohGJDTfxJzPQL4X3gK_b2oJlG_/view?usp=drive_link

Catch me if you can! video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/18pYRJ2EsAQh-dUp8dDfkgpzJeMkQK2ul/view?usp=drive_link

Partner Pass Catching video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KS87xE6FCiBBre8WldFPyxXoR1fJ69RG/view?usp=drive_link

Obstacle course video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ilw8SSzuf1ZYCdWN5rUuAtq210BUPQJJ/view?usp=drive_link

