



Special Olympics
Young Athletes

Session 5

SKILLS FOCUS:

- JUMPING
- CATCHING
- BALANCE



Equipment Required:

- An open playing area
- Animal cube (Optional)
- Spot markers
- Softball for each athlete
- Hula hoops / hurdles / line on ground
- 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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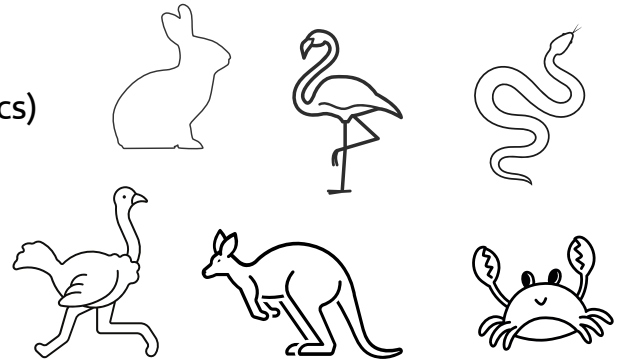
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Warm Up - Move like an Animal

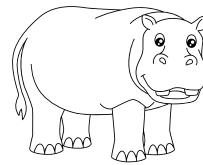
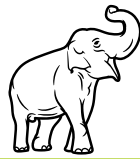
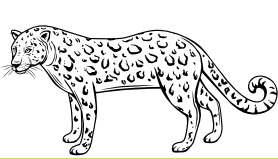
Description of Activity

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).



You can use the Animal cube here for inspiration. 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?

Catch me if you can! - Catching (Recap week 4)

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

5 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 a scarf. The scarves travel more slowly through the air, allowing more time for the athlete to catch it.

Coaching Cues

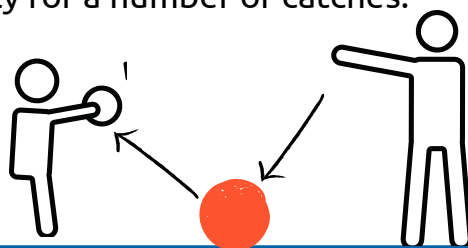
- *Hands ready*- Encourages athlete to have their hands positioned in front of their body with their elbows flexed.
- *Reach for the ball* - Encourages children to extend their arms reaching for the ball as it comes towards them.

Partner Pass - Catching (Recap week 4)

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

5 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.

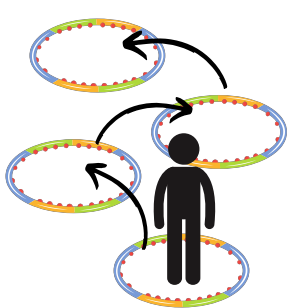
Jumping over objects - Jumping

Description of Activity

This activity encourages the athletes to jump over objects of different shapes, sizes and heights, this encourages the kids to calculate the type of jump necessary to complete the task ahead. Set up different stations with the following tasks:

- Jumping over hurdles or pool noodles
- Jumping over balance rocks
- Jumping over tape or a line on the ground
- Jumping from one Hula Hoop to another

Disperse the athletes between the different stations and swap groups so all athletes have an opportunity to try the different jumping challenges.



Skills in Focus

Jump

Duration

7 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- Hurdles and Cones
- Tape/string / ropes / line on ground
- Hula hoops
- Balance rocks

Adaptations

- If the tasks are becoming easy for the athletes the coach can increase the heights of hurdles and introduce other equipment to make the activity more challenging.

Coaching Cues

- *Bend knees, arms back and jump* - This encourages athletes to bend their knees and bring their arms back prior to take off. Ideally, the arms will swing up over the head and be forced down with the landing. Both feet should land on the ground at the same time.

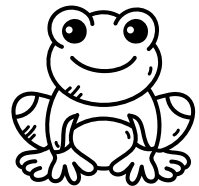
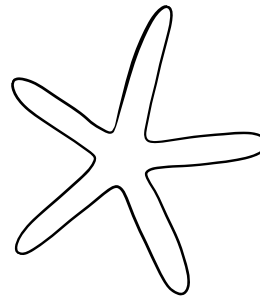
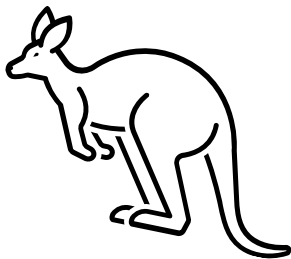
Jump like an Animal - Jumping

Description of Activity

The coach introduces different styles of jumps by referring to animals, call out and demonstrate the animal to the athletes and get them to complete the movement.

- Jump like a frog (deep squat)
- Jump like a kangaroo (Distance Jump)
- Jump like a monkey (exaggerated arms)
- Jump like a flamingo (One leg)
- Star fish jumps (Height Jump)
- Bunny Jumps (Jumps in quick concession)

Each animals' movement pattern is directed at different individual parts of the jumping movement looking to be achieved.



Skills in Focus
Jump

Duration

8 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space

Variations

- If athletes are getting bored after repeating the animals above ask them to come up with new animals that jump and the whole group follows an athletes lead.

Coaching Cues

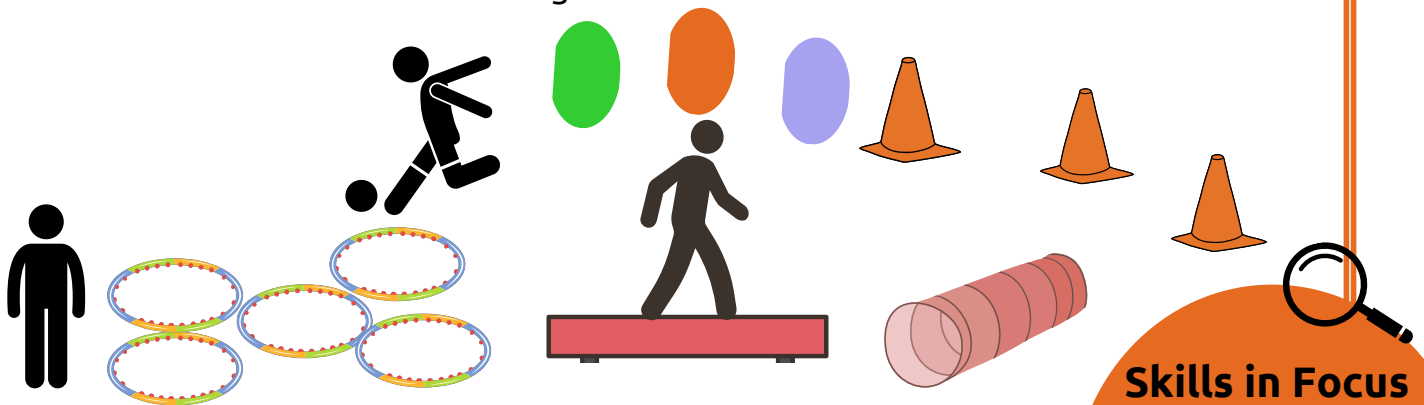
- *Bend knees, arms back and jump* - This encourages athletes to bend their knees and bring their arms back prior to take off. Ideally, the arms will swing up over the head and be forced down with the landing. Both feet should land on the ground at the same time.

Obstacle Course

Description of Activity

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

- Hop scotch jumping into the hula hoops (two feet and one foot alternating)
- Walk across the balance beam, hold a single leg balance at the end of beam
- Crawl through the tunnel
- Run moving in and out between cones
- Balance on stepping stones
- Kick a ball into a net or at a target



Skills in Focus

Hop
Jump
Balance
Run
Kick

Duration

10 minutes

Equipment

- An open playing space
- Hula Hoops
- Balance Beam
- Tunnel
- Cones
- Balance Rocks
- Ball and Target / Net

Adaptations

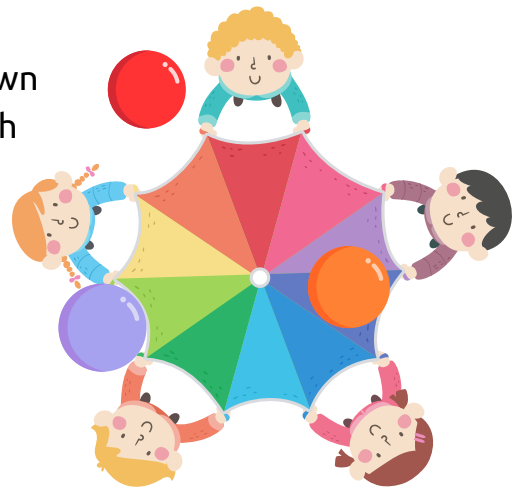
- Use different equipment to make the course easier or more challenging depending on the athletes ability.
- Tell athletes a story as part of the obstacle course, e.g. that they are trekking through the jungle or have landed on another planet that they are exploring.

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 (Optional)

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 5

SKILLS FOCUS:

- JUMPING
- CATCHING
- BALANCE



Please circle the activities you completed in Session 5:

Warm Up

Catching Skill

Catching Game

Jumping Skill

Jumping Game

Obstacle Course

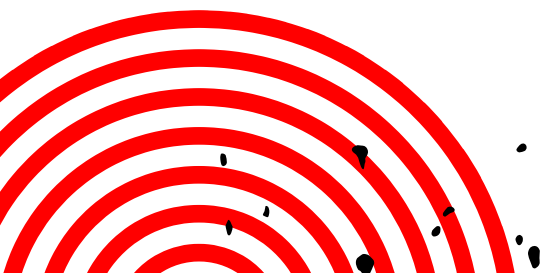
Cool Down

Session Notes

What went well:

What didn't work as well:

Targets for next session:





Special Olympics
Young Athletes

Session 5

VIDEO LINKS



**To view a demonstration of each activity
and game outlined in Session 5,
please click on the relevant link below:**

Move like an Animal Warm Up video

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WjgdJx9ag04JzcqP8KgX5VCVZaE7OZhg/view?usp=sharing>

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

Jumping over objects video

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Bs48zSkpGcBsaOSevWSqntqfIKBXCCFn/view?usp=sharing>

Jump like an Animal video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1adVW-RsAz9qopYxiu6X_U35vZ9tY_Osl/view?usp=drive_link

Obstacle course video

https://drive.google.com/file/d/19p_S6LDZr4Bgs4SzHYy_Ck6m3kpfkt_4/view?usp=sharing

