

Running & Dodging

LEVEL: Active Start 3 - 6 years old

DURATION: 50 - 60 minutes

CATEGORY: Locomotion

EQUIPMENT: Cones, hula hoops, mats, etc. to be used as markers.

Quick Start/Warm-Up 5 minutes

Children run around the activity space. On the signal, they must stop and freeze as quickly as possible. On the next signal, they resume running.

Progression: Introduce a “home base”. On the signal, children must now run to the home base as quickly as they can. Home base can be a circle made of cones, a cluster of hula hoops, a line on the floor, etc. Make sure the home base is wide enough so that all children in the group can run towards and arrive at the base without bumping into each other.

Running 15 minutes

Tell children that there are a few things they can do to help them be better runners. Explain the difference between jogging (medium speed) and running (going as fast as they can). Demonstrate and emphasize that when they are jogging their whole foot should contact the ground, starting with their heel. When jogging turns into faster running, the heel makes little or no contact. The middle of the foot makes first contact with the ground, followed by the front ball of the foot. Also, their arms should be bent approximately 90 degrees at the elbows, and their arms should swing forward and backward by the side of their body, and not across their body.

Activity 1: Jill or Jack Says Jog

Do this activity like “Simon Says”. Depending on the size of your group, make 3 rows of 5-10 children facing the leader who is “Jack” or “Jill”. The aim of this simple activity is to teach the differences between the action of the arms and legs when walking and jogging. “Jack” or “Jill” says walk forwards, or jog forwards, or jog on the spot, and the group moves together. The leader can give directions for the arms and legs together or separately. The leader should teach the different arm swing for walking and jogging (straight and by the side for walking, bent 90 degrees for jogging) and teach the heel strike that goes with each step during walking or jogging. Anybody moving when Jill or Jack doesn't say to move must tip-toe backwards until they are in the back row (walking backwards is another Fundamental Movement Skill). Have fun!

CUES

- Heads Up
- Quick Stops

CORRECTION AND POINTS TO STRESS

Tell children to keep their heads up. This helps balance and prevents collisions with others.

Feet should be apart and they should bend at the knees and hips for better balance when stopping.

CUES

- Arms move up and down
- Heel touches first

CORRECTION AND POINTS TO STRESS

There are several points to watch for in developing running patterns, however it is beyond the scope of a lesson to address all points at this level. Try to observe each child and provide individual feedback based on the cues described in the explanation. Another more obvious point to observe is trunk position- children should be leaning slightly forward from their waist when jogging.

Sprinting

Tell children that they are now going to practice “sprinting”, which is running as fast as they can over a short distance. When they sprint, they might notice that their heel doesn’t touch the ground first anymore. Because they are going so fast, their steps are quicker and lighter and only the balls of their feet touch the ground. Have children identify and touch the balls of their feet. Explain that their knees should also come up higher when they are sprinting and their arms should “pump” more vigorously compared to when they are jogging.

Activity 2: Reaction Sprint

Identify a start line. Get the children to spread out along the line. On the signal, ask them to start jogging away from the start line. On the next signal, they must turn quickly and sprint back to the start.

Dodging

30 minutes

Ask the children if they know what dodging is. Explain that dodging is making a quick change of direction when they are travelling (for example running). Explain that being able to dodge is important in group games so that they don’t collide with others. It’s also important in a lot of sports. Demonstrate and explain that when they dodge, they should look towards the new direction where they are going, lower their body, and push off their outside foot to start moving in the new direction. The change in direction should happen in one step. Have a child run towards you and demonstrate dodging.

Activity 3: Zig-zag Dodge

Establish a start line and then create a line of cones in a zig-zag pattern starting about 5 metres from the start line. Children jog from the start line to first cone, and then they dodge when they get there in the direction of the next cone. They continue dodging at each cone until they reach the end of the line of cones. Set up several zig-zag patterns so that lineups are minimized at each station. Once they have reached the end of the cones, they jog back to their start line and the next child goes.

Activity 4: Partner Lane Tag

Using cones or lines on the floor, establish multiple lanes running the length of the activity space, approximately 4 meters wide. Depending on the number of lanes possible, students work in pairs or in small groups. One child stands in the middle of the lane as “it” while the others line up along one end line. On the signal, one child per lane attempts to run to the other side without being tagged by the person who is “it”. After all of the runners in the line have tried to reach the other side (successfully or not), change the “it” person. The width of the lanes in this activity is key to determining whether it is too easy or too difficult for runners to reach the other side, so modify the lane width if necessary.

CUES

- Balls of feet
- High knees

CORRECTION AND POINTS TO STRESS

It is very difficult for many children to grasp the concept of pacing (i.e. the difference between a jog and a sprint). The session leader may need to emphasize this point repeatedly. Remind the children that they start by only jogging, and they sprint only when they hear the second signal.

CUES

- Get low
- Push off

CORRECTION AND POINTS TO STRESS

If you see that children are taking several small steps to change direction of travel, encourage them to push off and change direction in one step. They need to plant their outside foot near a cone or line, and take the next step in another direction.

If children are crossing their feet when they dodge at the cones, place coloured tape on the ground to show where they need to plant their left and right feet.

CUES

- Dodge to both sides

CORRECTION AND POINTS TO STRESS

The boundaries provided by the lanes will make this a challenge for children and force them to use their dodging skills. Demonstrate how dodging in one direction then dodging to the other direction can fool the “it” person into moving to one side and result in enough space for the runner to get past them.

Activity 5: Sharks and Minnows

This tag game combines the skills of running and dodging. One child starts in the middle of the activity space as the tagger while the rest of the group lines up along an end line. When the tagger calls “Here fishy fishies”, the children attempt to cross to the opposite end line without being touched. If they are touched they become a shark. Emphasize that when children are tagged, they join the shark in the center but can only start tagging other children on the next round.

CUES

- Dodge the shark

CORRECTION AND POINTS TO STRESS

As this is a large group game children may need certain rules repeatedly emphasized. Make sure they understand that they only run when the tagger calls “Here fishy fishies” and that once they’ve crossed to the other side, they must stay there until everyone has crossed, and until they hear the tagger call “Here fishy fishies” again.

Summary 2 minutes

Q. What are the skills we worked on today? When you are dodging, what are some things you can do to dodge really well? What do we need to remember when we are running so that we can be really good runners?

This lesson plan was prepared in collaboration with ACCSports.ca

ADDITIONAL SOURCES: PHE Canada. Fundamental Movement Skills: The building block for the development of physical literacy. Active Start and FUNdamental stages, 2008.

Graham, Holt/Hale & Parker. Children Moving: A Reflective Approach to Teaching Physical Education. 5th Ed. Mayfield Publishing Company, 2001.

Be Fit for Life - Moving Alberta. Move & Play Through Physical Literacy. Card Ring.