

Physical Literacy at Summer Camp

1-week unit for ages 5 - 8 years

Are you looking to add some physical activity to your summer camp? This collection of physical literacy session plans has been developed for summer camp leaders who are running 4-week programs. It can also be easily adapted for 2- and 3-week camps.

Each of these sessions takes about 30 minutes to complete with a group of children. At the end of each session, kids will have enjoyed a series of fun activities while developing their physical literacy.

What is physical literacy?

Physical literacy is when kids have developed the skills and confidence to participate in many different physical activities and sports. Fundamental movement skills such as throwing, catching, running and jumping are the beginning of physical literacy.

Physical literacy is important because it gives kids the confidence to stay active for life. It's not about being a "superstar athlete"—everyone can learn fundamental movement skills, and everyone can become physically literate!

How to use these session plans

1. Decide what time of day that you will run your physical literacy sessions.
2. Review each session plan in advance to ensure that you have the needed equipment.
3. Establish a session routine for the kids (e.g. coming together and listening to your instructions at the start of each session).
4. Make sure that your campers understand your expectations for each session (e.g. stop and start on your signal, put away equipment, etc.).

Tips for running a fun session

1. Manage each session so that all of the kids feel included. For example, avoid setups where highly skilled kids dominate.
2. If necessary, select partners and teams to make sure that all of the partners or teams are balanced for ability.
3. Maximize every child's participation by minimizing line-ups and avoiding games with large circles. Whenever possible, stick to small group activities or fun competitions that use small teams of 2-4 kids each.

Enjoy your camp! For more session plans and information on physical literacy, visit:

ActiveForLife.com

Session 1: Balance

5 - 8 year olds

EQUIPMENT: Beanbags or soft foam balls, music source, large pictures of different balance poses. If you don't have beanbags, you can use rolled-up socks or small stuffed animals!

Introduction (1 - 2 minutes)

Today, we are going to work on balance.

Why is it important to have good balance?

Warm-up: One-foot hot potato tag (5 minutes)

- Leader chooses 2 children to be "it".
- Children who are "it" each have a beanbag or foam ball and must tag the other children by touching them with the beanbag or ball.
- All children must move around activity space by hopping on one foot.
- When a child is tagged, they are given the beanbag or foam ball, and they are now "it".
- Leader uses cones to mark off one corner of the activity space as a "safe zone".
- Children can go to the safe zone for a 10-second rest, then join the game again.
- Leader should specify how many children can be in the safe zone at once (e.g. *Only 4 people are allowed in the safe zone at one time.*)

Demonstration: Static balance (3 - 5 minutes)

- Leader demonstrates the following static balances (hold balance for 3-5 seconds):
 - » *Stork stand: balance on one foot, place other foot against support leg at or above knee, stretch arms out.*
 - » *Downward facing dog: palms and feet flat on floor, stomach facing floor, push bum up to form a bridge, arms and legs are straight, head hanging down between arms.*
 - » *Upward facing dog: lie face down, hands beside shoulders, palms on floor, press up with arms, lift head and torso as high as possible, elbows close to body, hips on floor.*
 - » *Dolphin pose: same as downward dog, but balance on elbows instead of hands.*
 - » *Airplane pose: stand with arms out to sides at shoulder height, lean forward, front leg bent, back leg straight with toes touching the ground.*

Practice: Static balance (5 minutes)

- Leader creates 6 balance stations by placing pictures of different balances around the activity space.
- One of the 6 stations is simply a sheet with "your own balance" printed on it.

- Leader divides children into 6 groups.
- Each group starts at one station and practices that balance.
- Rotate to next station every 30-60 seconds.
- Leader should encourage children to hold each balance for 5-10 seconds.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Praise children for their efforts.
- Encourage children to invent their own balance.
- Encourage children to hold each balance as long as possible.

CUES

- *Head up*
- *Eyes looking forward*
- *Hold pose 5-10 seconds*
- *Body still and tight*

Game: Balance ball pass (10 minutes)

- Leader divides children into groups of 4 or 5.
- Groups spread out around activity space and each group makes a circle.
- Each group has a soft ball.
- Leader calls out a balance and starts the music.
- *When the music plays, hold the balance that I call out, and try to pass the ball around the circle.*
- *Count how many times you can pass the ball without anyone dropping it or losing their balance.*
- Repeat this activity by calling out different balances each time.
- Circles can be made smaller or larger to increase or decrease the difficulty.

Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Call the children into a circle and review what they learned.

What did you do to hold your balance longer?

Session 2: Running

5 - 8 year olds

EQUIPMENT: None

Introduction (1 - 2 minutes)

Today we will learn how to be better, faster runners.

What are some sports or games where you run a lot?

Warm-up: British bulldog (8 - 10 minutes)

- Two children act as bulldogs and stand in the centre of the activity space.
- The rest of the children line up across one baseline of the activity space.
- When the bulldogs yell “British bulldogs”, the other children try to run from the baseline to the other side of the activity space without being tagged by a bulldog.
- Any child who is tagged becomes an extra bulldog in the centre.
- Repeat until there are only two children remaining who are not bulldogs.
- These two remaining children become the bulldogs for the next round.

Demonstration: Basic running (2 minutes)

- Tell children that there are things they can do to be better runners.
- Show the difference between jogging (medium speed) and sprinting (running fast).
- Explain that jogging is good for going longer distances and sprinting is good for short distances.
- Arms should be bent at the elbows and do not cross the centre of the body.
- When jogging, arms “pump” gently forward and backward.
- When sprinting, arms pump more vigorously.
- When sprinting, knees come up higher and hands pump from “hip to lip”.

Practice: Running on the spot (5 minutes)

- Ask the children to run on the spot with you for 20-30 seconds at a time.
- Ask them to slow down or speed up their arms and legs together.
- Keep the head still, not loose and “flopping” from side to side.
- From time to time, ask the children to stop and balance on one foot as they run slowly on the spot.
- If they stand on the right foot, the right hand should point forward and vice versa.
- Repeat a few times so children can grasp the concept of moving the opposite arms and legs.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- There are many elements that make up mature running.
- You won't have time to address all of them in one basic session.
- Simply watch each child and give feedback based on the practice instructions.

CUES

- *Keep head still.*
- *Arms "pump" gently when jogging.*
- *Arms "pump" vigorously when sprinting.*
- *Arms and legs move opposite.*

Game: Fire safety tag (8 - 10 minutes)

- In a large group of children, identify 2-3 children as "fires".
- Identify one more child to be the "firefighter".
- The fires try to tag the other children as they run.
- When a child is tagged by a fire, the child must stop, drop, roll, and then crawl.
- If the firefighter tags the crawling child, the child is free to get up and run again.

CUES

- *Look up*
- *Swing your arms*

Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Call the children into a circle and review what they learned.

What special movements do we need to remember to be good runners?

Session 3: Underhand Throwing

5 - 8 year olds

EQUIPMENT: Beanbags, buckets or boxes for golf holes, small cones or coloured rags for golf tees. If you don't have beanbags, you can use rolled-up socks or small stuffed animals!

Introduction (1 - 2 minutes)

Can you name any games where you throw a ball or other object underhand? (e.g. softball, bocce)

Warm-up: Hot dog tag (5 - 6 minutes)

- Choose 3-5 children to be taggers, depending on numbers.
- Suggestion: Ask children with a certain color shirt to be taggers, then switch colours for next round.
- Children who are tagged become “hot dogs” by lying down with arms at their sides.
- Tagged children can be free again if two other children make a “bun” by lying down on either side of them.
- All three children can then get up and continue playing.
- Make sure children exercise caution and look where they are running at all times.

Demonstration: Underhand throw (1 - 2 minutes)

- Leader demonstrates an underhand throw to a target using a beanbag.
- *Look at your target.*
- *Step forward with the foot opposite to your throwing arm.*
- *Swing your throwing arm and follow through as you release your beanbag.*
- *After you release your beanbag, your hand should be pointing at your target.*

Practice: Throw to target (5 minutes)

- Leader organizes children into groups of 2 or 3.
- Groups spread out along one end of activity space so that all children are throwing in the same direction.
- Every child has a beanbag.
- Leader sets up a few cones in front of every group.
- Children take turns underhand throwing to cones to see who can throw closest to target.
- Leader gives the command to collect beanbags once all children have had a chance to throw.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Begin by placing cones fairly close to children.
- Allow children to throw this short distance for a few turns.
- Increase the difficulty by increasing the distance.

CUES

- *Face target*
- *Step with opposite foot*
- *Swing throwing arm*
- *Follow through*

Game: Bucket toss golf (10 - 15 minutes)

- Leader sets up several “golf holes” by placing buckets or small boxes around the activity space.
- Leader places a marker on the ground to mark “golf tees” where children throw for each hole.
- Leader organizes groups into pairs.
- Each child in pair has a different colour beanbag.
- Each pair of “golfers” starts at a different golf hole.
- Children take turns throwing their beanbag at the golf hole from the tee.
- Children must continue to throw from the tee until they get their beanbag in the hole.
- Children count the number of attempts they make from the tee as “strokes” until they land in the hole, or until the leader says to move to the next hole.
- Leader tells children to move to the next hole every 1-2 minutes.
- Game is over when each pair has had a turn at each hole.
- Partner with the fewest strokes wins.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- During setup, vary the distances for different holes.
- If time allows, play a second round where the children throw with their non-dominant hand.

CUES

- *Face target*
- *Step with opposite foot*
- *Swing throwing arm*
- *Follow through*

Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Call the children into a circle and review what they learned.

What are two things you need to remember when throwing at a target?

Session 4: Galloping

5 - 8 year olds

EQUIPMENT: Hula hoops, cones, skipping ropes. If you don't have hula hoops, you can use beach towels!

Introduction (1 - 2 minutes)

Can you think of any sports or games where you might need to gallop?

Warm-up: Balance tag (5 - 7 minutes)

- Leader places hula hoops around activity space (one per child).
- *When the music starts, jog around the activity space without touching the hula hoops.*
- *When the music stops, hop into a hula hoop and balance the way I tell you to.*
- Suggested balances:
 - » *Balance on your left foot.*
 - » *Balance on your right foot.*
 - » *Stork stand balance.*
 - » *Make a bridge (belly facing up) and balance.*
 - » *Make a bridge (belly facing down) and balance.*
 - » *Reach as high up as you can and balance on your tippy toes.*
- Leader gives children an opportunity to invent their own balances.

Demonstration: Gallop (3 - 5 minutes)

- Leader asks children to sit in a semi-circle.
- *Today we are going to learn how to gallop, just like a horse!*
- Leader demonstrates how to gallop:
 - » *In galloping, you step forward with one foot that is always your "lead" foot.*
 - » *The toes of your back foot chase the heel of your lead foot, almost like skipping.*
 - » *Both feet leave the ground, and you land on your back foot, followed by your lead foot.*
 - » *When galloping, point both feet forward.*
 - » *Arms swing forward at the same time the back foot moves forward.*
 - » *Head up and look forward.*

Practice: Gallop (5 minutes)

- Children spread on along one side of the activity space.
- Leader asks children to gallop in a line to the opposite side of the activity space.
- Leader gallops alongside any children who have difficulty (model the movement).
- Leader encourages children to swing their arms in rhythm with their lower body.
- With a partner, children spread out around activity space and practice the “step-toe-to-heel” pattern.
- Leader can invite children to gallop and work together to make shapes as they gallop (circle, figure eight, triangle, following a line on the floor etc.).
- Leader should encourage children to try galloping with opposite foot leading.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Many children learn this skill quickly, so it is a good time to reinforce good listening and cooperation while helping those who have difficulty.
- Encourage children to gallop with either foot leading.

CUES

- *Step-toes-to-heel*
- *Swing arms in rhythm with lower body*
- *Head up*
- *Toes pointed forward*

Game: Galloping horses relay race (10 minutes)

- Leader divides children into 4 or 5 groups with even numbers of children.
- Leader designates a start line at one end of activity space.
- For each group, leader places a cone at the other end of the activity space to mark their turn-around point.
- Groups line up behind the start line.
- Each group has one skipping rope as the “reins” to lead the horse.
- The first person in line is the horse, and they place the reins around their waist.
- The second person in line holds the reins as if they are guiding the horse.
- In pairs (horse and guide), children gallop around the turn around point and back to the start.
- When they reach the start line, they pass the reins to the next pair in their group.
- The first group to have every pair complete the course wins.

Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Call the children into a circle and review what they learned.

Why is it important to swing your arms when you are galloping?

Session 5: Kicking

5 - 8 year olds

EQUIPMENT: Small soccer balls (size 4 if possible). If you don't have soccer balls, try volleyballs or playground bouncy balls with low inflation for less bounce.

Introduction (1 - 2 minutes)

What are some sports that require you to kick a ball?

Warm-up: Target practice 1 (5 minutes)

- Set up 5-8 shooting targets around the activity space. For example:
 - » two cones to make a goal.
 - » a hula hoop taped against a wall.
 - » two chairs with a rope stretched between their tops.
 - » Be wary of windows or other breakables!
- Each child has a soccer ball.
- Children dribble with their feet slowly around the activity space.
- When they near a target, they shoot by kicking their ball.
- Provide children with some spatial awareness/safety cues. For example, kickers should make sure no one is in the path of their shot.

Demonstration: Kicking a ball (2 - 3 minutes)

- Demonstrate: To kick a soccer ball well (power and accuracy) kicker needs to start with body behind the ball.
- *Step forward with non-kicking foot and plant it 10-15 cm beside the ball.*
- *Swing kicking leg towards the ball, toe pointed down, and make contact with laces (i.e. instep), not the toe.*
- *Follow through with kicking leg so that it swings across the front of the body.*
- *Power comes by making good contact with middle of the ball and keeping balance on your non-kicking leg.*
- *Raise your arms slightly like "airplane wings" for balance.*

Practice: Kicking to a partner (5 minutes)

- Partners kick one ball back and forth from opposite sides of the activity area.
- Make sure all pairs are kicking in the same direction across the area.
- Leader circulates and provides feedback.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Good kicking requires many elements of technique.
- At this level, simply ensure that children plant their non-kicking foot next to the ball and contact the ball with their laces (instep).

CUES

- *Step forward*
- *Plant your foot*
- *Use your laces*
- *Follow through*
- *Airplane wings up*

Activity: Target practice 2 (5 minutes)

- Repeat the “target practice” warm-up activity.

Game: Numbers game soccer (10 minutes)

- Leader uses cones to outline a large rectangular activity space.
- Leader divides children into 2 teams and numbers the children 1,2,3,4, 5, etc.
- Teams spread out along three sides of the activity space. (No team is along the side where the soccer net is).
- A soccer net is set up at one end of the activity space.
- The soccer net can be marked with cones or beanbags.
- Leader stands near the net with a few balls.
- Leader shouts a number out and throws a ball into the middle of the playing area.
- Players with that number compete for the ball and try to dribble and shoot the ball into the net.
- Play stops after a shot is taken, or after the ball travels out of bounds.
- Children then return to their spot and another number is called out.
- Leader starts by calling one number at a time, and then progresses to calling 2 or 3 numbers to compete for the ball.
- Leader can also throw 2 or 3 balls into the playing area.

Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Call the children into a circle and review what they learned.

Why is it important to swing your arms when you are galloping?