

ACTIVE START

Newsletter for Coaches & Recreational Directors

Learning the Terms

While all children follow similar patterns in growth and development, the rate of development is highly individual. **Chronological age** refers to the number of years and days elapsed since birth. **Developmental age** refers to the child's stage of physical, cognitive, social & emotional maturity. For children under the age of 6, developmental age may range from plus/minus 4 months of their chronological age. A difference in age of only a few months means that you will have a wide range of physical, social and cognitive abilities in your group. You will need to structure your lessons carefully so that everyone can participate fully, according to their individual stages of development.

Circle Time Activity

Planting Flowers/Trees:

Use some type of boundary markers (like cones, bean bags, etc.) to create the space that is your garden. Ask the children to find a spot in the garden where they can crouch down low and become a small seed. Once all the seeds are planted the coach will go around and water the seeds to make them grow (coach can have an empty watering can or another object to water with). As the seeds grow ask them what type of plant they have grown into (flower, tree, what colour, etc.).



Spring Rhymes

FIVE LITTLE BEES

One little bee blew and flew.
He met a friend, and that made two.
Two little bees, busy as could be--
Along came another and that made three.
Three little bees, wanted one more,
Found one soon and that made four.
Four little bees, going to the hive.
Spied their little brother, and that made five.
Five little bees working every hour--
Buzz away, bees, and find another flower.

FIVE GREEN AND SPECKLED FROGS

(can be done on a beam with a safe landing when they jump in the pool)
Five green and speckled frogs
Sat on a speckled log,
Eating some most delicious bugs.
Yum, Yum!
One jumped into the pool
Where it was nice and cool,
Then there were four green speckled frogs.
Ribbit, ribbit!
(Continue rhyme until all the frogs jump into the pool)



Coaching Tips

- Always position yourself so you can see every child
- Have efficient 'stopping' signals ('look sharp' - arms above head like a pencil, 'freeze', 'hit the deck' - drop to stomachs, 'turtle' - lie on back with knees tucked up, use music to get them to stop)
- When transitioning to a new area have a way to get there (follow in a train but avoid having them hang onto each other in case one falls, animal walks, all hold a space ship (hula hoop), locomotions like marching or kick walks, guide the caterpillar (pool noodle))
- Have a specific place for them to go when they get to the new area (sit on a boat - use a box, in the swimming pool - on a squishy mat, in hoops, on shapes, on big foam squares and call them different things like ketchup, mustard, mud, lava, grass)

Safety First

- When coaches and parents (for parent & tot classes) are assisting gymnasts on beams and other heights (no higher than chest height) they should place their hands on either side of the gymnasts torso
- Since young children are unpredictable, and the size of the bar is often too large for their hands, inverted hangs or swings must be spotted to prevent falling (head or neck injuries)

Draw with Me

Objectives: Improve spatial orientation (particularly within a group), musicality, creativity, locomotions (cardiovascular endurance), stationary positions (strength) and coordination/object manipulation

Materials: 1 Rope/participant, music and stereo

Target age: 3-5 years old

Length: 2-3 min (great for warm-up or cool-down depending on the intensity of the music/movement)

Directions: Participants move themselves and the rope when the music is playing and stop to "create a drawing" when the music is paused. The coach can increase the complexity of the locomotion and/or stationary position in the following ways:

1. Change the intensity of the locomotion from slow to fast (good for warm-up) or fast to slow (good for cool-down) (i.e., walking, skipping, running* and vice versa)
2. Assign a different stationary position with each pause of the music (i.e., 'present on high toes', 'tea-cup', 'stork/passé balance')
3. Assign a different manipulation* of the rope with each play of the music (i.e., wiggle/snake from one end, swing, skip through)
4. Assign a different "drawing"*** with every pause in the music (e.g., circle, smile, heart, flower, snail/snake, etc...)

*ensure gymnasts understand how to run/manipulate the rope safely without touching anyone/anything else

**gymnasts can use the floor as their "canvas" and their rope as the ink for increased imagery and creativity

Tips:

- Teach all the different locomotions and stationary positions you would like to include in this game prior to playing.
- Select appropriate music based on the goal of this game (warm-up would use faster, more up-beat music vs cool-down which would use slower, more relaxing music)
- Try to engage both dominant and non-dominant hands if manipulating with only one hand (i.e., wiggle/snake from one knot); swinging the rope with one knot in each hand is a good way to build shoulder strength and muscular endurance (rope should not touch the ground)
- Assist the gymnasts with their drawings (as needed) to ensure adequate flow from round to round!

Suggested Songs

"5 Little Monkeys Jumping on the Bed"

"The Tigger-cise Song" - Album: Tigger Mania



Resources: NCCP Gymnastics Foundations Active Start manual, Canada Sport for Life website, NCCP Gymnastics Foundations Introduction manual, Julie Levasseur, Kara Thorpe, Jamie Benson