

ACTIVE START

Newsletter for Coaches & Recreational Directors

Learning the Terms

The gym is a wonderful environment to help Active Start gymnasts learn about laterality and directionality and in turn increase their special awareness. **Laterality** is internalizing the difference between left and right and the ability to control the two sides of the body together or separately. This is the motor basis for spatial concepts. **Directionality** is the awareness of space outside the body and involves left/right, up/down, in/out and forwards/backwards.

Circle Time Activity

Olympics Opening Ceremonies:

Have the gymnasts make "torches" by wrapping paper towel or toilet paper rolls with aluminum foil and then stuff one end with yellow and orange tissue paper strips.

Get them to wear colours to resemble the Country they are representing. All the athletes can come into the gym carrying their torch and waving to the 'crowd.' Have them circle around the gym and then end at a large round object which will represent the "flame pot" where they will leave their torch with the handles sticking out of the pot. Have the gymnasts hold hands form a circle around the pot singing "Here we Go 'Round the Friendship Flame." After the song, get all the athletes to warm-up together.



Olympic Themed Songs

WISH I COULD BE IN THE OLYMPICS

(Tune: "Oscar Mayer Theme")

Oh, I wish that I could be in the Olympics
I wish that I could jump and have some fun.

For if I could jump in the Olympics,
I'm sure that I'd be number one!

(Can substitute 'jump' for 'swing', or 'throw')

KOOKABURRA

Kookaburra sits in the old gum tree

Watching the Olympics on TV.

Cheer, kookaburra cheer,

Kookaburra cheers on the Canadian team.

HERE WE GO 'ROUND THE FRIENDSHIP FLAME

(Tune: "Here we Go Round the Mulberry Bush")

Here we go 'round the friendship flame,

The friendship flame, the friendship flame.

Here we go 'round the friendship flame,

On our first day of games.

Today, we're going to run some races,

Run some races, run some races.

Today, we're going to run some races.

On our first day of games.



Coaching Tips

To develop awareness of potential risk areas try using these "Danger Zone" activities:

- Give each gymnast a paper plate to use as their steering wheel while they pretend to be cars. Have pieces of felt with various colours cut into circles to indicate street lights (red = stop, green = go, yellow = slow, blue = backwards). Get the gymnasts to move around obstacles on the floor (such as lines, hoops, mats, apparatus, other coaches) by changing the direction and varying the speed of the activity. Include areas that are "danger zones" by marking them with orange tape. Talk about the danger zones.
- Use music such as "Wheels on the Bus", "Danger Zone", "Tijuana Taxi", "Motorcycle Racer", etc. to motivate and control locomotion. Go and stop on musical cues. On stop, point out the danger zones.

Safety First

- Rolls should be introduced going down an incline so that spotting is not necessary. Sometimes props (such as a sponge or small stuffed animal), cue words ("tall as a house, small as a mouse" or "look for a spider in your belly button, roll through the mouse hole") or just a gentle touch will be the reminder needed to tuck the head in on a forward roll. Their head should be tucked in far enough so it does not touch the mat at all. The contact on the mat should be made by the upper area between the shoulder blades.

Olympic BINGO

Provide each gymnast with an Olympic Theme BINGO card (see attachment). Have the gymnasts travel around the 'Olympic venue' and complete all the Olympic events. After they complete each event they will receive a stamp on their BINGO card. Medal ceremonies will take place after all the 'competitors' have completed all the events.

EVENTS INCLUDE:

Gymnastics - Beam (or use a line on floor): "Gather the Medals" - Set gold, silver, bronze medals on the beam (see attachment for sample cut outs). Give them a basket and have them walk across the beam and pick up the medals and put them in their basket. When they get to the end of the beam encourage them to give their coach the basket, then jump off, land and present.

Track & Field - Hurdles: Set-up a length of objects for the athletes to run and leap over. Position the athlete behind the start line and coach can call "on your marks, get set, go!" Use easy objects for them to get over like a rope, pool noodles, or 'french fries' (small rectangular mats). Cheer them on as they cross the finish line!

Soccer: Set-up an obstacle course with pylons, hoops, ropes, cylinders, etc. for the athletes to maneuver their ball through and around to the finish line.

Diving: Have them do a tuck jump from a small height (low beam, box, or bench) and land on their feet. Pretend they splashed into the water! For added effects have them land on a sheet of bubble wrap.

Gymnastics - Ribbons: Give the athletes a ribbon, turn on some music and have them perform a ribbon routine. Encourage them to present when they finish their routine.

Track & Field - Shot Put: Give the athletes a foam ball, have them stand behind a line and throw the ball as far as they can. For a challenge, place targets (hoops, stuffed animals, foam, etc.) for them to throw at.

Basketball: Have the athletes dribble a ball (or if that is too tricky have them walk holding the ball) and score a basket by shooting the ball through a hula hoop.

Track & Field - Relay: Have the athletes do a relay while performing different animal walks.

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Suggested Song Downloads

"It's a Small World"

"The More We Get Together"

Resources: everythingpreschool.com, preschoolexpress.com, flippingedu.com, Kara Thorpe, GF Active Start manual (GCG)

Olympic Theme BINGO





