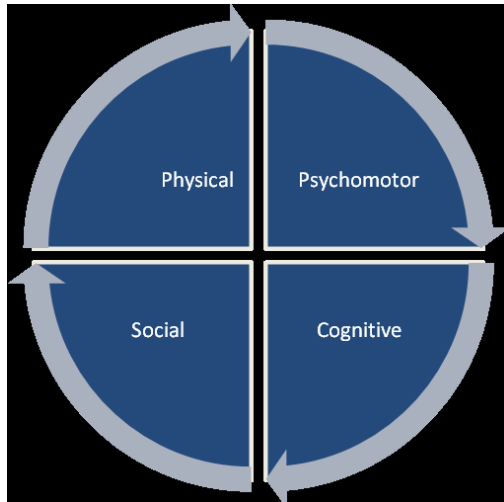


The Importance of Active Start



Each and every year new students enter our gyms and fill up our classes and these children may never have spent time away from their parents or had limited interaction with other children. This can be a very difficult time for instructors so understanding the children's ages and stages of development can truly make your job much easier.

The number one reason that children quit any sport is because they are not having fun! Fun is how most kids evaluate their interest in participation. It's not how many goals they achieve or how many 10.0s they receive on balance beam, it's the pure pleasure of feeling good. When you understand the interest and abilities of children at various ages, you can create stations and appropriate challenges to allow them to be successful and have fun.

From Linda Thorburg & Brent Lutska
Children's Ages and Stages: What Can They Understand? What Can They Do?



Four components of Development

Physical: The growth and development of different body systems that occur as a child develops. Examples of areas of growth and development include height, weight, bone maturation, muscle growth, development of the cardiovascular system (Nichols, 1994).

Motor: The development of motor skills. Motor skills are movements that are purposeful and controlled by the individual. Examples of motor skills include: running, jumping, walking, hopping, etc. (Nichols, 1994).

Social: The development of an individual's social behaviours, interactions with others, feelings and attitudes (Rink, 2006).

Cognitive: Changes and development of intellectual skills such as thinking, memory, and problem solving (Boyd et al, 2009).

From: Gail Wilson & Shannon Painter
Effective Leadership for Developmentally Appropriate, Inclusive & Active Physical Activity

The Basics



Fun

Warm/Fuzzy Relationships

Friends, coaches, parents and volunteers...

Child-directed discovery

Challenges, guided exploration, adaptation, application

Age-appropriate challenges

Successful learning opportunities

Progress, Awards & rewards, "Catch a child doing something good"

Creative/safe Environments

Circuits, dance studio, stations, gym, themes, outdoor climbers, trestle climbers, vault/bars/beam/floor, wedges, rainbows, mountains of mats...

Program Accommodations

Adaptive equipment, special needs, flexible challenges, suitable scheduling, program validation...

Motivating stimuli

Poems, music, beanbags, ribbons, sounds, cotton balls, imagery (spider-in-your-belly-button), rag doll, pizza hands, popcorn, parachute...



Fitness

Cognitive Development

Memory/recall
Concentration
Spatial Awareness
Body awareness
Problem Solving skills
Decision-making
Communication skills
Laterality
Directionality
Patterning

Psycho/Socio Development

Self-esteem
Self-confidence
Stress/coping skills
Self-expression
Cooperation
Group social skills-sharing, turns, team, helping

Motor development (ABCS)

Agility
Balance
Co-ordination
Spatial orientation



Fundamental Movement Patterns

Locomotion Stationary Landing

Running	Knee Scale	SLP's
Galloping	stork stand	motorcycle
Slithering	TA DA!	Timber

Rotation Spring Swing

Log roll	tuck jump	long swig
Crayon roll	kangaroo jump	hiccup swing
"Spider-in-your Bellybutton"	"Rabbit"	Woodpecker

Object Manipulation

Projection Reception Carrying

Throwing	catching	raising
Kicking	gathering	circling
Tossing	grasping	swirling

The goal of all Active Start programs is to provide participants with a multi-movement based program that encourages participation in activities that contribute to improved motor, cognitive, psycho-social and physical development.





Developmental Stages



Children under the age of 6 are not little adults, nor do they have the same abilities, needs and interests as older children. It is inappropriate to simply “water down” recreational programs and to assume that they will be beneficial to Active Start Participants.

2 Year Olds

Can only handle one task at a time

Sometimes not very sociable with other children

Prone to emotional outbursts NO!!!

When catching holds hands out, palms up with thumbs out and trap ball against body

Fearless explorer with boundless energy

Short attention span

May want security blanket with them

Likes routine and repetition

Awkward while running

3 Year Olds

Jumps in place two feet together

Climbs up and down ladders

Learns through exploration and direction

Imitates adult actions

Easily distracted, so busy comparing objects and people

Participates in simple circle time

Kicks ball forward remaining balanced

Jumps off low box with 2 foot landing

Gradually showing preference for one hand over the other

Can balance on one foot

4 Year Olds

Can learn underhand throwing and can “basket catch” different size balls

Can step together sideways

Hops on one foot for a distance

Good at galloping

Walks along a beam alternating feet

Learning to share and take turns

Kicks with greater control

Loves humour

Fiercely independent

5 Year Olds

Understands concept of function, time and relationships

Catches with elbows bent

Nearly doing a mature efficient forward roll

Good body co-ordination

Jumps a distance of 3 feet

Likes and obey rules

Uses dominant side

May insist that things are fair

Starting to skip

Enjoys physically active games

Children learn best when they want to learn!





Tips to Keep in Mind!



- Less talk—More action!
- Choose the right time to talk.
- Use language that is age appropriate.
- Use positive communication.
- Keep it clear and simple.
- Establish verbal and non-verbal signals for control (ie. Stop, start, gather, sit, ready).
- Use visual aids, small apparatus, and props to communicate.
- Incorporate rules and guidelines into activities. Just talking about the rules doesn't work!
- Body language says a lot. Beware of sending conflicting messages.
- Use sounds and verbal cues for movement.
- Use humour but keep it appropriate.
- In Parent & Tot programs we try to communicate tot the child through the parent.
- Teach children to congratulate themselves.
- Develop ways to recognize and reward desired behaviours & learning.

