

Walking & Running

WEEK TWO

THIS SET OF LESSONS PROVIDES
games and activities to help
children develop walking and running
skills, fitness, strength, body awareness,
spatial concepts, and adaptive skills
(following directions, imitating
motor movements).



Special Olympics
youngathletes™

www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes

Overview

Lesson Plans (Day One, Day Two, Day Three) provide details to help you plan and carry out the Young Athletes program with a group of children between the ages of 2 and 7 years old.

Adults Needed: Plan for at least 1 adult for every 4 children. Recruit help from families, volunteers, older students, college students and others in your community to make sure the program runs smoothly and is fun.

Time: Young Athletes is implemented with great enthusiasm, high energy and quick pace. Time estimates are provided to guide completion of each lesson in 30 minutes. However, the pace and length of the lesson should be matched to the needs, interests, ages, and skills of the young athletes in your group.

Sequence: There are three lessons for each skill area labeled Day One, Day Two and Day Three. Lessons within the skill area are designed to be offered in sequence to help children become acquainted with the activities and build skills through repetition.

Resources: The Lesson Plan Summary Cards include an outline of the activities, list of equipment needed, and page numbers to find the activity descriptions. The cards, Young Athletes Activity Guide, Suggestions from Teachers, and training videos are included in the online Toolkit (see website below).

Playing at home: Give families the Lesson Plan Summary Cards and encourage them to sing the songs and play one or two games with their child at home before the next session. Help them learn about the activities by including them in your group sessions and/or providing a family training session. Be sure they have access to the Activity Guide and Videos for more information.

>> See the Young Athletes Toolkit online at:
www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes

Opening Sports Song (5 min.)

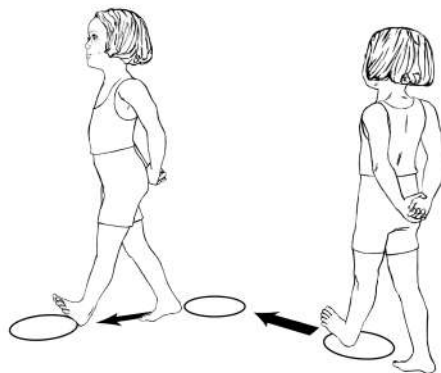
EQUIPMENT Whistle, floor markers (distributed around room to create a path), tambourine or drum.

PURPOSE Start each Young Athletes class with a gathering/warm-up song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with. This will help them warm-up, serve as a gathering activity, create body awareness and support adaptive skills (following directions, singing along, imitating motor movements).

EXPLAIN "It is time for Young Athletes! Let's start with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

SING **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

- The athletes in our class swing their arms, swing their arms, swing their arms. The athletes in our class swing their arms, - all through the day.
- The runner on the team runs real fast, runs real fast, runs real fast. The runner on the team runs real fast - all through the town.
- The runner on the team runs real slow, runs real slow, runs real slow. The runner on the team runs real slow - all through the game.



Follow the Leader (5 min.) and Follow a Path

EQUIPMENT Tambourine or drum, floor markers

PURPOSE Strength, general fitness, motor skills

DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD "Great warm-up! Now let's play Follow the Leader! March around the room; swing your arms!"

- Use a tambourine or drum or overhead clapping to lead athletes around room, marching.
- Encourage athletes to swing arms and lift knees high.
- March around room, following a path (floor markers).
- Repeat with Follow the Leader: running; walking backwards.

Side Stepping (4 min.)

EQUIPMENT Floor markers, short balance beam, long balance beam

DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD "Let's do some Side Stepping!"

Tips: Encourage child not to crouch or make extra movements when walking or sidestepping and to keep his/her hips and feet facing forward. Try placing a beanbag on the child's head to encourage good posture and balance.

- Encourage athletes to sidestep right and left onto floor markers.
- Side step to the right, across path.
- Side step to left across the path.
- Use the same side step to move across short balance beam and longer balance beam.



Walking & Running

WEEK DAY

two

1

2

3

Running Styles *(5 min.)*

EQUIPMENT Whistle

DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD Choose a variety of running/walking styles to teach children. Then explain at the sound of the whistle (or other command signal like hand clapping) you will tell them to switch their running/walking styles.

- Stomp slow/fast
- Run slow/fast
- Run backwards
- High knees run (Raise knees high when running)
- Tiptoe walk

Or, create a foot race (competition) using different running styles

Bridges and Tunnels *(5 min.)*

PURPOSE Strength, general fitness

DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD "OK, now we are going to play Bridges and Tunnels! First let's make our tunnel!" If physically able, have one athlete bend forward so that hands and feet are on the ground to form a bridge and tunnels. Encourage other athletes to crawl (inchworm, walk) under tunnel or bridge.



Bridges and Tunnels *(continued)*

Tunnels

"Who can bend like this to make a tunnel? (Hands and feet on ground, bottom up making tunnel) Awesome, he/she made a tunnel. Now, who can go under his/her tunnel? Great! After you go under the tunnel you make a tunnel right next to him/her! Great, now our tunnel is even bigger!"

- One athlete forms a tunnel by touching the ground with his/her feet and hands or by getting down onto hands and knees.
- The other athletes crawl, scoot, under the tunnel.
- Once they go under the tunnel, have each athlete extend the tunnel (by forming a tunnel next to the person who started the activity).



Tips: Make note of approximately how many times the child can perform the activity or how long the child hold up the bridge or tunnel. Encourage more repetitions or more time over several weeks to develop muscular strength and endurance. Encourage bridges and tunnels to be rigid and strong while people and objects pass under and through.

Bridges

"OK! Now we are going to play bridges. Who can bend like this to make a bridge? (Sit on ground. Place hands/feet flat on ground. Push bottom off ground.) Great! Now let's make a bridge and go under the bridge!"

- One athlete forms a bridge by sitting with his/her hands and feet flat on the ground and pushing his/her bottom off the ground.
- The other athletes crawl, scoot, under the bridge.
- To make it easier have athletes place their feet or hands on the wall or an object and other athletes go under.



Walking & Running

WEEK DAY

two

1

2

3

Closing Sports Song (5 min.)

PURPOSE End each Young Athletes class with a closing/cool-down song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with.

EXPLAIN "It is time to end Young Athletes. Let's sing If You're Happy and You Know It. Sing along with me and do what I do."

- SING**
- If you're happy and you know it, clap and stomp (wiggle your body; fly like a bird: walk around with arms outstretched)
 - If you're happy and you know it then your face will really show it if you're happy and you know it clap and stomp, (wiggle your body; fly like a bird: walk around with arms outstretched).



Opening Sports Song (5 min.) with Scarf

EQUIPMENT Scarf for each athlete.

EXPLAIN "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

SING AND DEMONSTRATE **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

"The athletes in our class bend and stretch, bend and stretch, bend and stretch. The athletes in our class bend and stretch - all through the day."

- Grab opposite corners of scarf, place hands on hips. Start with feet apart, directly below hips. Slowly bend down with scarf in two hands towards your toes, when you sing bend. Come back up, hands on hips when you sing stretch. When you sing all through the day, twirl whole body or scarf around over head.

"The athletes in our class bend and stretch, bend and stretch, bend and stretch. The athletes in our class bend and stretch - all through the town."

- Grab two (or opposite) corners of scarf, place hands on hips. As you sing, move the scarf with body. Start with feet apart, directly below hips. Slowly bend right and back to center, bend left and back to center when singing the words bend and stretch. When you sing all through the town, twirl whole body or scarf around over head.

"The athletes on the team catch a scarf, catch a scarf, catch a scarf. The athletes on the team catch a scarf - all through the game."

- Have athletes suggest additional motions and lead.



Walking & Running

WEEK DAY

two 1 2 3

Follow the Leader (5 min.)

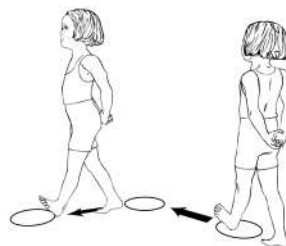
With Side Steps, Follow the Path, Bunny Hop, Inch Worm

EQUIPMENT Floor markers, bean bags or small ball

WARM UP Set up space with 3 floor markers placed about two feet apart in a line. Place bean bags or small ball on the 2nd floor marker so athletes can side step from first marker to second marker, pick up bean bag/ball, side step to last marker, and place ball on last marker. Adapt by adding more markers and/or increasing distance between markers.

DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD "Great warm-up! Now let's play Follow the Leader!"

- March around the room, swing your arms!
- March around the room, hands on head! Side step to the right.
- Great! Side step again. Side step one more time! Now side step to the left. One big side step and again, and again!
- Now this time, side step to marker, pick up bean bag, side step to next marker, drop the bean bag on marker!
- Encourage athletes to side step right and left onto a variety of floor markers (plastic disks, hoops).



Run and Carry (6 min.)

EQUIPMENT Floor markers, hoop on floor with balls or bean bags in it, hoop on block for target Make a path with 10 floor markers that leads to target (hoop on block), placing markers about one foot apart. Place balls/bean bags in a small hoop on the ground, next to the 5th floor marker) so athletes can pick up bean bag/ball, walk/run/side step to last marker and throw ball/bag through hoop (target). Adapt by adding more markers and/or increasing distance between markers.

PURPOSE Strength, general fitness, motor skills (walk, side-step, throw to target, run)

- WARM-UP**
- Have athletes run a short distance, pick up the ball or bean bag and return it back to you.
 - Repeat this a couple of times for each child.
 - Then line up athletes at the first floor marker (the marker furthest away from target).

DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD "Great! Now you're ready to learn a Run and Carry Routine. Watch me do the routine! Now you do it. When I say GO! You do it!"

- walk/run/side step along the path
- stop to pick up ball/bag
- keep going on path to target
- stop on last marker and throw ball/bean bag into target
- follow path back (walking/running/side stepping)
- touch the next person's hand and say "GO!"

Tip: Repeat Run and Carry routine using walk, run, side-step, walk backwards, etc.



Walking & Running

WEEK DAY

two

1

2

3

Running Styles (6 min.)
Repeat the Activity from Day 1.

Obstacle Course (5 min.)

EQUIPMENT Set up a 5 station course with floor markers (dots for jumping on), bean bags with hoop (throwing bean bag through hoop), a series of hurdles (cones with dowel/stick), balance beam, area to run to finish (through a ribbon).

EXPLAIN Now we get to run the obstacle course! Watch and follow me!

DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD Show the athletes how to go through the obstacle course. Then assist athletes in moving through course.

Station 1: Jump on Dots

- Arrange 10 dots in zigzag pattern, close to one another.
- Athlete will bunny hop on two feet from dot to dot.
- Athlete will jump to the right, then jump to the left, zigzagging down length of dots.

Station 2: Throw Bean Bag Through Target (basket, hoop)

- Use floor marker to show where athlete stands.
- Athlete will throw bean bag or small ball to a hoop held parallel to the floor or to a bucket.
- Progress to throwing through target (hoop on cone or block) from distance of 3 feet.
- Throw underhanded and if child is able proceed to throwing overhand.
- Move distance closer or further away, depending on skill of athlete.



Obstacle Course *(continued)***Station 3: Step/Jump Over Hurdles**

- Make hurdle using two cones and one dowel or stick. Place dowel through holes in cone.
- Adjust height as needed for athletes and always start the bar at the lowest height.
- Always start the bar at the lowest height. If he/she is unable to jump, they can step over hurdle.

Station 4: Walk on Balance Beam

- Athletes will independently walk the length of the beam, alternating steps.
- Add various ways to move down the beam for advanced athletes (walk backwards, side-steps, change directions – forward to backwards).
- Add length to the beam by using multiple beams.

Station 5: Run to Finish Line (through ribbon)

- When athlete steps off beam, he/she should run to the finish line.
- Teach athletes to run through the line.
- Introduce this skill several times as some may stop, not wanting to hit or touch the finish line.
- The finish line is a long ribbon. To set the finish line, attach the ribbon to one side of the area while holding the other end of the ribbon in your hand (or have another person hold the other end).
- As the athlete touches the ribbon, let it go.

Closing Sports Song *(3 min.)*

Repeat song used in Day 1 to end the lesson.



Special Olympics
youngathletes™

Opening Sports Song (3 min.) with Bunny Hop

EXPLAIN "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

SING **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

- The athletes in our class can bend and stretch, bend and stretch, bend and stretch. The athletes in our class can bend and stretch - all through the day.
- The athletes in our class can hop like a bunny, hop like a bunny, hop like a bunny. The athletes in our class can hop like a bunny - all through the town.
- The athletes in our class can go up and down (on your toes) up and down. The athletes in our class can go up and down - all through the game.

Step and Jump (6 min.)

EQUIPMENT Balance beams, ropes, floor markers. Use the balance beam/rope and floor markers to set goals for athletes to jump to.

PURPOSE Introduction to Balance and Jumping skills. Motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills (balance and direction), body awareness.

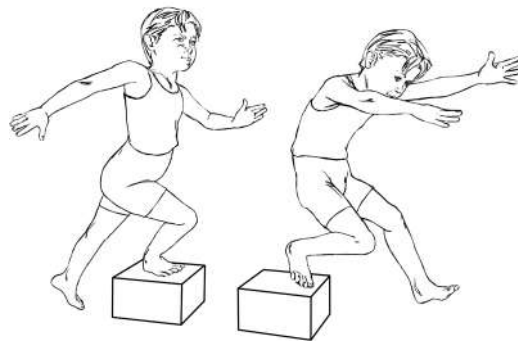
EXPLAIN "OK athletes, now we are going to jump off of our balance beams/ropes and try to land on the floor markers."



Step and Jump *(continued)*

DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD

- Step onto the balance beam/rope, then bend your knees, and jump to the floor markers.
- If athletes are physically able, allow them to jump onto the balance beam/rope as well.
- As athletes master jumping to a floor marker, move the markers further away, raise the level of the jump, and alter the floor marker position to allow for twisted jumps.
- For example, an athlete could face forward but jump to a marker to their side. Assure that balance skills have been acquired first.



Run and Carry *(6 min.)*

Repeat Activity from Day 2.



Walking & Running

WEEK DAY

two 1 2 3

Coach Says (5 min.)

PURPOSE Introduction to Balance and Jumping skills. Identification of body parts, general fitness, balance, motor coordination, body awareness. Shifting of body weight to engage balance muscles is an important functional and sports related skill.

DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD

Tips: Encourage the child to mimic your movements; try placing a bean bag on the child's head to encourage good posture and balance; encourage landing with two feet at the same time.

"Now let's play Coach Says using our bodies. I want you to look at what I do with MY body and try to do it with your own. I want you to COPY what I do. Look at me, see how I am..."

- Standing on one foot, standing with one foot in front of the other, standing on tip toes, standing on my heels...You try!
- Now try it with your arms out/in/up/down, or eyes closed/open.
- Encourage athletes to try these new balancing techniques while manipulating their bodies so that their muscles will need to counteract shifts in weight.

Obstacle Course (7 min.)

Repeat Activity from Day 2.

Closing Sports Song (3 min.)

Repeat the song used in Day 1 and Day 2 to end the lesson.

