Community Sport - FUNdamentals

Reference Material

Community Sport – FUNdamental Reference Material

National Coaching Certification Program

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About this Reference Material

The information in this document has been assembled to give you the best possible support as you prepare to become a Community Sport coach in Canada's National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP).

We have compiled expert information on the seven topics essential to your development as a Community Sport coach. From basic information on child-centred coaching to detailed information on long-term athlete development to tips galore on how to explain and demonstrate sport skills, it's all here!

Best wishes on your journey as a coach!

1 CHILD-CENTRED COACHING

This section introduces the concept of child-centred coaching. Child-centred coaching is the foundation of Community Sport coaching, as it ensures that your program meets children's sport needs, provides positive experiences for children, helps children achieve their full potential, and boosts children's self-esteem.

There are five topics in this section:

1.1 Why Children Participate in Sport

In recent decades, many studies in a number of countries have looked at why children participate in sport. Given the length of time and the many locations involved, it's striking how similar the results are. Here are examples of some of the latest research findings.

Top Reasons Children Participate in Sport	
1 To have fun	2 To be with friends
3 To learn new skills	4 To be active

Source: Coakley, 2007; Ewing and Seefeldt, 1996; Gould, Feltz, Horn, and Weiss, 1982.

Top Reasons Children Give for Dropping a Sport	Top Reasons Children Give for Getting Involved Again in a Sport They Dropped
1 I lost interest	**Boys**
2 I wasn't having fun	1 Practice was more fun
3 It took too much time	2 I could play more
4 Coach was a poor teacher	3 Coach understood players better
5 Too much pressure (worry)	4 There was no conflict with studies
	5 Coaches were better teachers
	6 There was no conflict with social life
	Girls
	1 Practice was more fun
	2 There was no conflict with studies
	3 Coach understood players better
	4 There was no conflict with social life
	5 I could play more
	6 Coaches were better teachers

Source: Ewing and Seefeldt, 1988.

1.2 General Motives for Participation in Sport

In general, people participate in sport for one or more of the reasons listed below. Coaches need to be able to recognize and respect individual differences in this area, because athletes drop out when programs don't match their reasons for being in sport. Put another way, coaches need to work with those they coach to give them a program that meets their needs or recommend a program that will.

There are many reasons individuals participate in sport programs. Many of them can be grouped into four general motives:

- **Affiliation**: Wanting to be part of a group or team, a desire to have positive and friendly relations with others.
- **Achievement**: The desire to grow and improve, to reach a goal; a wish to improve, master new skills, and pursue excellence.
- **Sensation**: A desire to experience playing the game; a desire to experience the sights, sounds, and physical feelings surrounding a sport or the excitement in a sport.
- **Self-direction**: The desire to have a sense of control of their lives, to feel in charge.

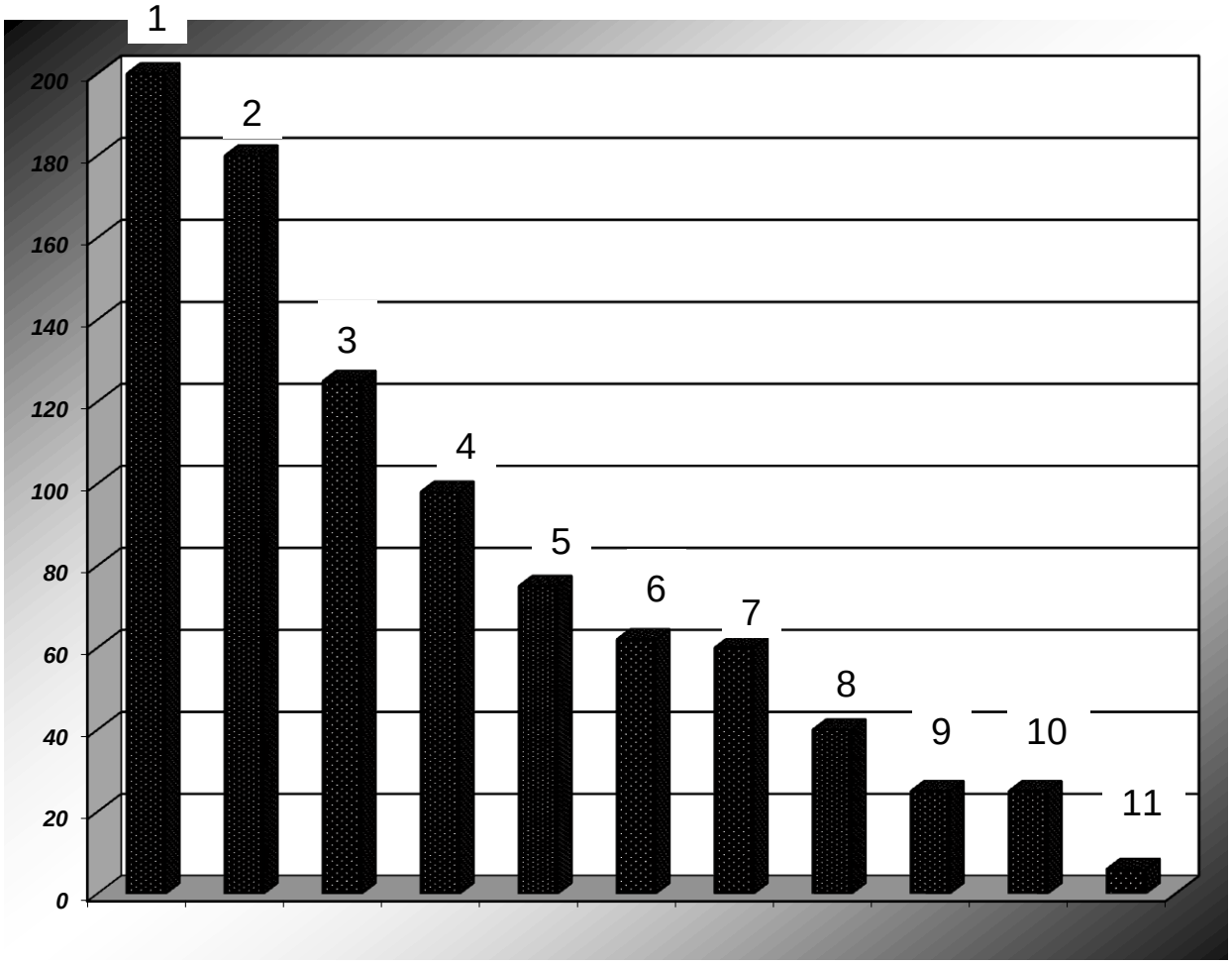
The purpose of a coach is to support the needs of his or her participants. There is a direct link between why individuals participate and the functions of a coach.

1.2.1 Four Functions of a Community Coach

1. Foster a sense of belonging among teammates
2. Give every child an opportunity to succeed and to feel good about himself or herself
3. Keep children involved in practices and competitions
4. Give children opportunities to make decisions within the context of the team

1.3 What Parents Expect of Coaches

Parents play a pivotal role in determining the activities their children play. Understanding the expectations of parents helps coaches manage communication more effectively.



Legend

1 Make sport enjoyable
2 Respect children as individuals
3 Be a knowledgeable leader
4 Be safety conscious
5 Act in a mature and adult manner
6 Be fair
7 Respect rules and officials
8 Give equal opportunity for playing time
9 Plan activities effectively
10 Be approachable
11 Strive to win

Source: Government of British Columbia, 1994.

Self-esteem in Children

What is self-esteem?

Self-esteem is an outcome of how positively an individual feels about himself/herself. A person's self-esteem can be directly affected by the positive and negative comments of others toward him/her, including those received during participation in sport.

The importance of self-esteem in sport

Sport gives participants the opportunity to acquire new abilities and to assess their skills in competition. Participants with high self-esteem tend to learn quicker and perform better than those with poor self-esteem. One of the most important phases of self-esteem development occurs between ages of six and 11. Therefore, parents, coaches, and other adults who work directly with young participants play significant roles in helping them feel good about themselves.

Even remarks that seem insignificant to the person who made them may have an impact on a participant. Parents and coaches should always point out things that the participant is doing well, as well as those that need to be improved. Positive reinforcement can be given on how a participant is performing a skill/activity, and can also be provided for aspects of behaviour that have little to do with performance in sport (e.g., following the rules, playing fair, being on time, taking good care of equipment, making others laugh or relax).

What you say matters a lot to participants, and so does body language. Coaches can directly impact the self-esteem of participants and therefore must carefully assess the potential impact of the words they use and the comments they make on participants before they are made.

Indicators of Low Self-esteem in Children

The following behaviours may indicate that a child has low self-esteem:

- ❑ He/she avoids performing a task or accepting a challenge or drops out after an initial error or poor performance.
- ❑ He/she cheats or lies to avoid losing a game or to avoid being perceived as a poor performer.
- ❑ He/she shows signs of regression by acting immaturely for his/her age.
- ❑ He/she becomes uncompromising in order to hide a feeling of incompetence, frustration, or powerlessness.
- ❑ He/she finds excuses ("The coach is stupid") or diminishes the importance of the event ("I don't like this sport anyway").
- ❑ He/she marginalizes himself/herself by losing or reducing contact with his/her friends or with others in general.
- ❑ He/she experiences mood swings, is sad, cries, has temper tantrums, is frustrated, or is silent.
- ❑ He/she expresses negative comments about himself/herself (e.g., "I never do anything well," "No one loves me," "I'm ugly," "It's all my fault").
- ❑ He/she has difficulty accepting compliments or criticism.
- ❑ He/she is excessively concerned about the opinions of others.
- ❑ He/she is highly influenced by his/her friends, even when the influence is very negative.
- ❑ He/she helps too much or never helps at all.

Self-esteem in Children (cont'd)

General Tips to Help Children Improve their Self-esteem

- ❑ Give them a warm and personal welcome when they arrive, and make sure they are happy to be there.
- ❑ Show them that you have confidence in their ability to learn and improve.
- ❑ Show respect for them.
- ❑ Tell them what their positive qualities are and what they do well.
- ❑ Show them you appreciate them as people.
- ❑ Communicate with them in a positive way.
- ❑ Design activities that are suited to their level of performance. Establish realistic goals and expectations based on their abilities.
- ❑ Give sincere and frequent praise, especially to young children. Encourage effort and avoid always focusing on results. However, avoid giving false praise, as children will soon stop valuing your feedback.
- ❑ Avoid games involving an elimination process because they may create unnecessary pressure. Create situations with high chances for success.
- ❑ Be specific when you praise efforts or performance.
- ❑ Praise them for their special achievements; recognize the progress they make.
- ❑ Smile, wink, or nod when you want to express acknowledgment. A pat on the back or a high five is an excellent indication of support.
- ❑ Give them responsibilities. Involve them in the decision-making process and give everyone the opportunity to be a leader (e.g., alternate captains regularly).
- ❑ Ask for their opinions and encourage them to ask questions.

Tips to Help Children Develop Self-esteem in Various Sport Situations

When commenting or providing feedback about the practice

- ❑ Make simple and specific suggestions.
- ❑ Have children take responsibility for their actions.
- ❑ Encourage them.
- ❑ Be enthusiastic and constructive.
- ❑ Avoid giving the impression that coaching is a burden – have fun!
- ❑ Be as specific and thorough with your positive comments as are you are with your corrections.
- ❑ Actively seek their contribution and input.
- ❑ Respect their opinion.
- ❑ Be flexible regarding your positions and opinions.
- ❑ Value their participation.

During a pre-competition talk

- ❑ Avoid dramatization; have children focus on their actions, not on the final result.
- ❑ Be enthusiastic and constructive.
- ❑ Acknowledge their feelings, and listen to them.
- ❑ Remind them of the things they do well.
- ❑ Express the trust you have in them.

After a competition win

- ❑ Always comment on the competition.
- ❑ Enjoy the victory.
- ❑ Emphasize what they did right.
- ❑ Discuss what can be improved.
- ❑ Acknowledge the efforts of the opponent.
- ❑ Refer to what lies ahead and how what was learned in this competition will contribute to future success.

After a competition loss

- ❑ Acknowledge their efforts.
- ❑ Identify things done well and the strong points of the performance.
- ❑ Let them know specifically what can be improved.
- ❑ Ensure they learn from the defeat.
- ❑ Remind children that there will be other opportunities and that what is important is giving their best effort.

1.4 Coaching Philosophy

A philosophy forms the foundation of coaching practices and provides a framework for making decisions. It helps establish guiding principles and goals for a program.

A personal philosophy allows an individual to put into words what is important to him or her as a coach. Sharing the philosophy and consistently applying the philosophy in one's coaching helps establish trust and credibility among players and parents.

A program philosophy tells parents and players what is important to the program. A program philosophy provides the foundation for practice goals, competition decisions, and coaching behaviours. A program philosophy should align the goals of the program with participants' needs and developmental stage.

1.4.1 An Example of a Community Sport's Program Philosophy

- ❑ **Participation**: Everyone gets to play.
- ❑ **Preparation**: We will work hard to develop our skills.
- ❑ **Performance**: Success will be measured by how we execute what we have learned — not by the scoreboard.

1.4.2 An Example of a Community Coach's Personal Philosophy

- ❑ **Fun:** I believe that learning new skills and participating in sport should be fun.
- ❑ **Everyone is important**: I value every child on my team as a unique individual.

1.5 The NCCP Philosophy

In the National Coaching Certification Program, coaching is about helping other people improve and achieve their goals in and through sport and creating a safe environment in which this can take place.

The aim of the NCCP is to:

1. Provide every participant in a sport program with a positive experience
2. Provide an opportunity for participants to achieve their full potential through sport
3. Use sport as a personal development tool

1.5.1 Provide every participant in a sport program with a positive experience

Every individual who chooses to participate in a sport program must have the opportunity to have a positive experience. The benefits and satisfaction must be such that they will be motivated to continue participating.

1.5.2 Provide an opportunity for participants to achieve their full potential through sport

Each individual has unique interests, abilities, and talents. All participants must be provided with an equal opportunity to explore their interests and to develop their skills and abilities. Sport programs must aim to challenge participants relative to their goals and capabilities.

1.5.3 Use sport as a personal development tool

Sport can provide a forum in which participants can challenge themselves and others.

2 LONG-TERM ATHLETE DEVELOPMENT IN CANADA

This section presents the information on long-term athlete development (LTAD) that you will need to know in your role as a community coach in the Canadian sport system. While most countries with advanced sport systems have developed models and programs designed to ensure the sound long-term development of their athletes, the details of these models and programs vary from country to country. This NCCP and its supporting materials focus on the LTAD model used in Canada's sport system.

Eight LTAD topics are covered:

1 What is Long-term Athlete Development?

2 What Difference Is It Making?

3 Where Does Community Sport Fit in Long-term Athlete Development?

4 Physical Literacy

5 Fundamental Movement Skills

6 Fundamental Sport Skills

7 Getting the Sequence Right: Fundamental Movement Skills BEFORE Fundamental Sport Skills

8 Physical Literacy in Community Sport

2.1 What is Long-term Athlete Development?[1]

Children and youth need to do the right things at the right time to develop in their sport or activity — whether they want to be hockey players, dancers, figure skaters, or gymnasts. Long-term Athlete Development (LTAD) describes the things kids need to be doing at specific ages and stages in their development.

Science, research, and decades of experience all point to the same thing: kids will get active, stay active, and even reach the greatest heights of sport achievement if they do the right things at the right time. This is the logic behind the Long-term Athlete Development model (LTAD).

LTAD is a developmental pathway that guides an individual's experience in sport and physical activity. LTAD experts identified seven stages of human development, each with its own set of characteristics. The name of each stage reflects the stage's main objective (Learn to Train, for example) and is broadly linked to a chronological age range:

- ❑ Stage 1: Active Start (0-6 years)
- ❑ Stage 2: FUNdamentals (girls 6-8, boys 6-9)
- ❑ Stage 3: Learn to Train (girls 8-11, boys 9-12)
- ❑ Stage 4: Train to Train (girls 11-15, boys 12-16)
- ❑ Stage 5: Train to Compete (girls 15-21+/-, boys 16-23+/-)
- ❑ Stage 6: Train to Win (girls 18+, boys 19+)
- ❑ Stage 7: Active for Life (any age)

[1] The material in this section is used with the permission of Canadian Sport for Life and has been modified/adapted from its website (http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/parents/ltad-path).

Certain types of activities are unique to each stage. For example, Stages 1, 2, and 3 develop what we call physical literacy in a fun, stimulating environment before puberty. Physical literacy consists of the *fundamental movement skills* and *fundamental sport skills* that give children the confidence to participate in a variety of sports and physical activities throughout their lifetimes. For more information on physical literacy and its components, see Section 2.4.

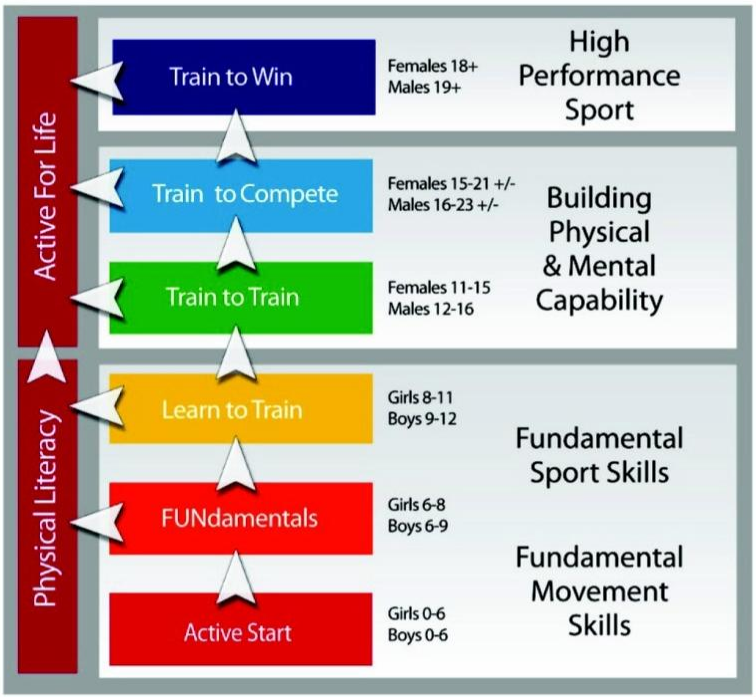
Stage 4 marks the beginning of specialized training. Being physically literate is essential for entry to this stage. Together, Stages 4, 5, and 6 represent the excellence pathway.

Stage 7 is about staying Active for Life through recreational participation in any sport or physical activity. It's also about giving back to the sport community through coaching, officiating, administration, or volunteering.

Some people will enter the Active for Life stage during their teen years, while others may choose to pursue elite sport competition for years or decades before transitioning to the Active for Life stage.

LTAD is part of a bigger movement called Canadian Sport for Life. Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) aims to improve the quality of sport and physical activity in Canada. CS4L links sport, education, recreation, and health and aligns community, provincial, and national programming. As a community coach, you are a pivotal part of the CS4L movement!

Canada's Long-Term Athlete Development Model



2.2 What Difference Is It Making?[2]

Canada's progress in Long-term Athlete Development is starting to change the way some organizations think about developing physical literacy. Groups of sports, led by the "on-ice" sports of Ice Hockey, Ringette, Speed Skating, and Figure Skating, are collaborating to

[2] The material in this section is used with the permission of Canadian Sport for Life and has been modified/adapted from *Developing Physical Literacy* (http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/resources/developing-physical-literacy).

introduce young children to the world of skating — working to develop skating skills, on-ice agility, balance, and coordination so that the child can later enter any one (or more) of these sports for healthy recreation or to develop sport excellence.

Approaching this in a different way, some local recreation organizations are offering young children the opportunity to sign up for year-round programs that combine exposure to a number of different sports, with fundamental movement skill learning opportunities and lots of skill-developing mini-games.

This new approach is also being tried by some sport facilities. Swimming pools are developing "introduction to aquatics" programs that teach water safety and basic swimming — with the opportunity to take the first steps toward competitive swimming, water polo, synchronized swimming, and diving.

With creative thinking, local recreation providers and groups of national sport organizations could put together programs such as:

- ❑ Introduction to ball games — teaching the throwing, hitting, catching, passing, and kicking skills that could lead to later involvement in basketball, volleyball, soccer, rugby, team handball, and other similar games.
- ❑ Introduction to hitting games — teaching children to hit stationary and moving objects with a variety of bats and racquets, providing the building-block skills for softball, baseball, hockey, golf, tennis, badminton, racquetball, or squash.
- ❑ Introduction to being "on-the-water" — making children safe and comfortable around boats and introducing them to the idea of propelling a boat using paddles, oars, and sails to encourage children to take up canoeing, kayaking, rowing, and sailing.

As a nation, we have to change the thinking of many groups that work with young children. Too many organizations think of children as a resource to be brought into their sport and to be kept in that single sport for as long as possible — the "get them early and keep them" approach. This "get them and keep them" approach restricts the range of physical literacy skills that children develop, diminishes their all-round athletic development, and stops too many children from experimenting with different sports — and finding the one that is just right for them. Long-term, both the sports and the children are hurt by this approach.

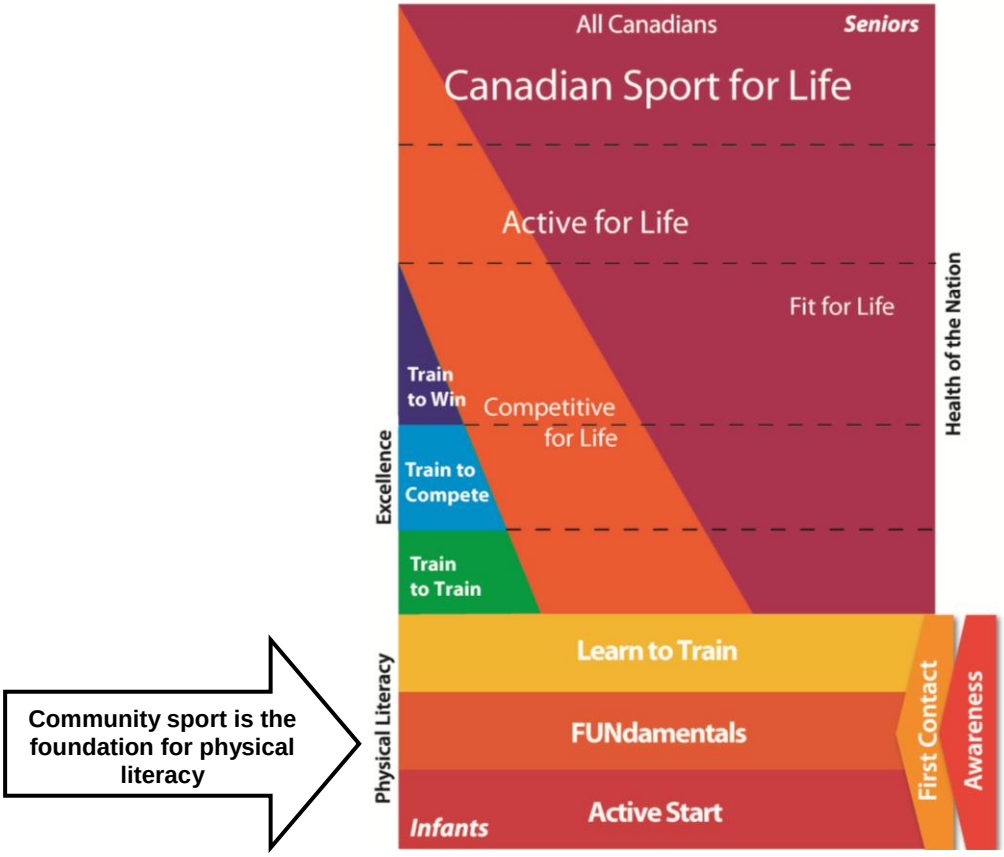
2.3 Where Does Community Sport Fit in Long-term Athlete Development?

Community sport represents most participants' entry point into sport, encompassing the Active Start, FUNdamentals, and Learn to Train stages. It is often in community sport that participants first develop basic sport skills and abilities and where the foundation for athlete development takes place. There are participants of all ages involved in community sport because, over time, they will choose to do one of the following:

- ❑ Increase their training commitment to a sport and progress to the Train to Train stage in one or two sports
- ❑ Move back and forth between an increased commitment stage and community sport as their abilities, interests, peer groups, personal priorities, and opportunities change
- ❑ Stay in community sport into adulthood and participate for fun and fitness

It is part of healthy child development to explore different sports. Experience has shown that:

- A focus on FUNdamentals and participation in many sports at early ages is key to elite performance as adults in sports where champions are generally 20+ years old (called "late-specialization sports" — all team sports and most individual sports fall into this category)
- Emphasis on a single sport at an early age does not result in better performance in that sport as an adult than a person who played multiple sports at a young age
- Emphasis on a single sport at an early age often results in burnout and dropout.



Note: In addition to the material in Canadian Sport for Life, which applies to everyone, there is additional information in **No Accidental Champions** that applies to Canadians with a disability. You can find this and other resources at http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/resources/ltad-resource-papers.

2.4 Physical Literacy[3]

Physical literacy is the development of fundamental movement skills (see page 16) and fundamental sport skills (see page 23) that permit a child to move confidently and with control, in a wide range of physical activity, rhythmic (dance), and sport situations. Physical literacy also includes the ability to "read" what is going on around one in an activity setting and react

[3] The material in this section is used with the permission of Canadian Sport for Life and has been modified/adapted from *Developing Physical Literacy* (http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/resources/developing-physical-literacy).

appropriately to those events. For full physical literacy, children should learn fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills in each of the four basic environments:

- **On the ground** — as the basis for most games, sports, dance, and physical activities
- **In the water** — as the basis for all aquatic activities
- **On snow and ice** — as the basis for all winter sliding activities
- **In the air** — basis for gymnastics, diving, and other aerial activities

2.4.1 Why Does Physical Literacy Matter?

Physical literacy gives children the tools they need to take part in physical activity and sport, both for healthy lifelong enjoyment and for sporting success, and is a key component of Canada's Long-term Athlete Development (LTAD) program.

Being physically active is more important to health than just about any other part of life over which we have control. Recent research suggests that it is better for your health to be overweight and active than to be of normal weight and be inactive. For this reason alone it is critical that children develop the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that give them the very best chance of staying active throughout their lives.

When children have confidence in their ability to take part in recreational and sporting activities without fear of showing themselves up, the probability that they will join in is high; and if they enjoy the activity they will likely continue with it. Their movement confidence develops gradually as children grow and learn, and children constantly compare their own level of ability with the ability of the children with whom they play. Physically literate children who move with skilful purpose KNOW that they move well, and this confidence encourages them to try new and different activities without fear.

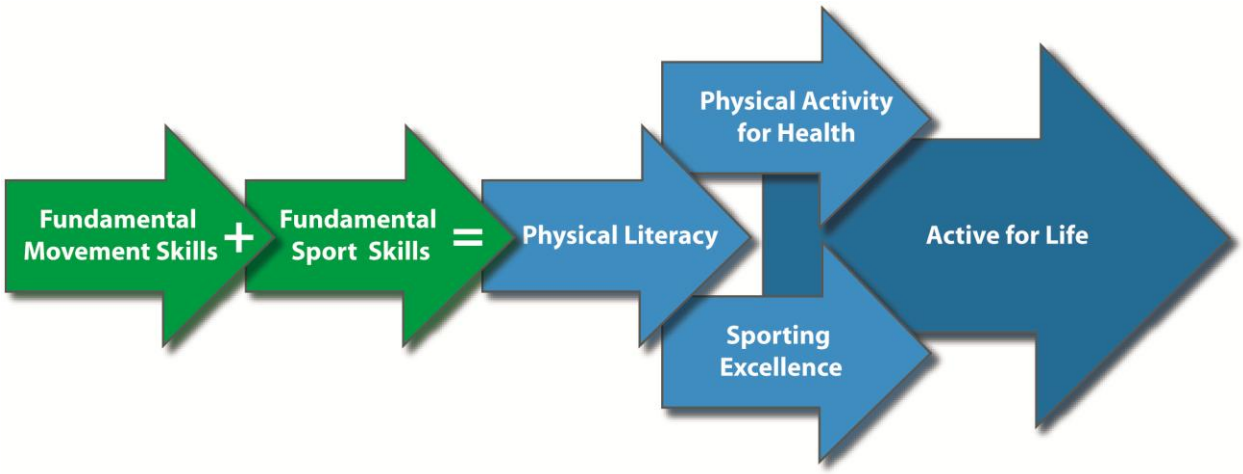
Physical literacy also provides a foundation from which sporting excellence can grow.

Developing the highest levels of sporting excellence in late-specialization sports requires about 10 years of deliberate practice and requires that the child first develop his or her athletic abilities and, only when these have been refined, specialize in sport-specific techniques and skills.

All too often, early overspecialization in a single sport leads to a failure to become physically literate, to poorer ultimate performance than would otherwise be the case, and to injury, burnout, and early retirement from sport.

Physical literacy is, therefore, the key to both developing habits of lifelong physical activity for enjoyment and health and to developing athletes who have the strong foundation that will permit them to reach the highest levels of international sporting excellence — to become world-class athletes.

Physical Literacy Leads to an Active Life



2.4.2 What Happens if Children are NOT Physically Literate?

Research shows that without the development of physical literacy, many children and youth withdraw from physical activity and sport and turn to more inactive or unhealthy choices during their leisure time.

A child who misses out on developing physical literacy is at a great disadvantage. On the playground and in the park, children really like to play with other children who have the same level of skill as they do and who can “keep the game going,” and if you can’t keep the game going, you won’t generally be asked to join in.

Children who are physically skilled often enjoy vigorous healthy play, while the less skilled are often left out. This creates a vicious cycle; those with the skills play, and through that play further develop their fitness and skill. In contrast, those who are less skilled play less, have fewer opportunities to refine and develop their skills, and fall farther and farther behind their skilled peers. Eventually many of the less skilled children stop trying and withdraw from physical activities that would help them become fitter and develop their skills.

2.4.3 When and How Do Children Become Physically Literate?

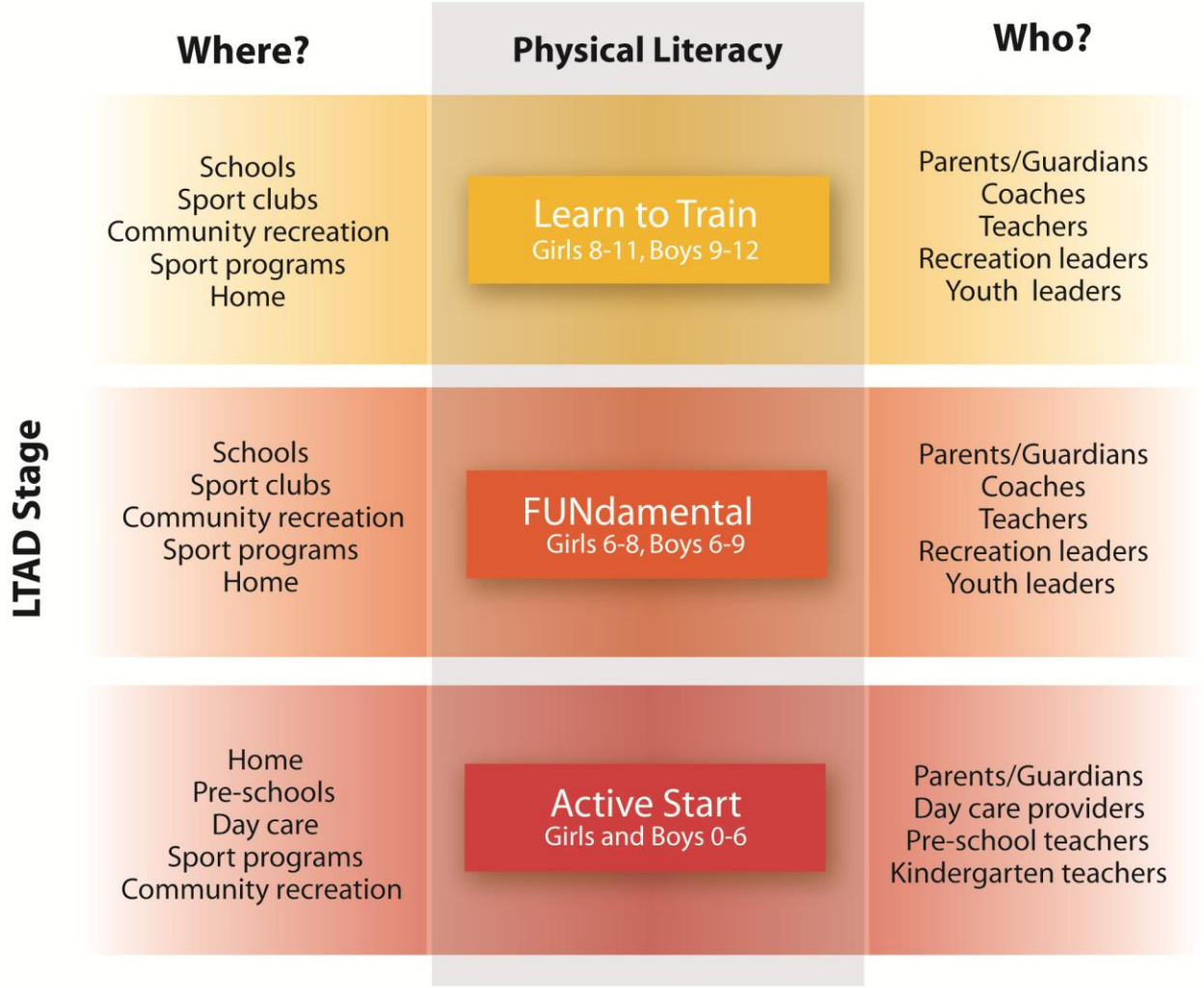
Physical literacy is developed during the first three stages of Canada’s LTAD model, meaning the time from birth to the start of adolescence: from birth to approximately age 11 for girls and to age 12 for boys.

While it’s true that many children DO develop good physical skills on their own by trial-and-error, there are many who do not; and for those the consequences can be severe. To prevent this from happening, every child in Canada needs to develop physical literacy.

Developing physical literacy in our children will take the combined efforts of parents/guardians, day-care providers, schools personnel, community recreation leaders, and everyone involved in the Canadian sport system. Each has a role to play if we are to be successful.

This teaching needs to occur in a wide range of settings, and because of this, many different people need to be involved. The following figure gives some idea of the range of settings and the range of people who need to understand and be able to teach physical literacy skills.

Teaching Physical Literacy Skills



Ultimately the responsibility for developing a physically literate child rests with parents and guardians. Just as parents and guardians ensure their children are in learning situations that result in them having the ability to read, write, and do mathematics, they must also ensure their children develop physical literacy.

2.5 Fundamental Movement Skills[4]

To become physically literate, children need to master fundamental movement skills, but this mastery does not come all at once, and we need to remember that children are not just “adults in miniature.”

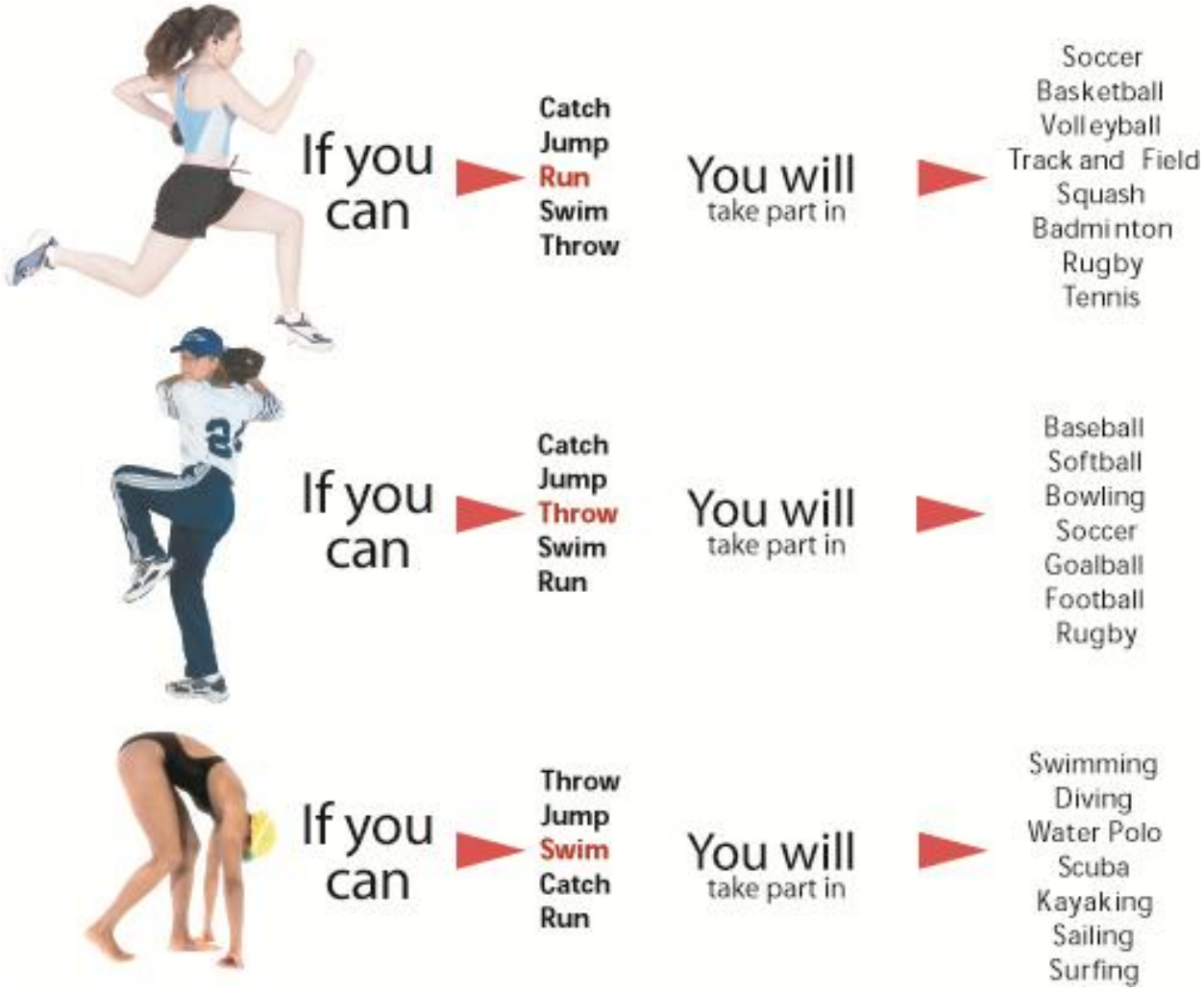
2.5.1 Why Do Fundamental Movement Skills Matter?

Missing out on fundamental movement skills means that children are unlikely to choose to take part in a formal sport activity that requires proficiency in that skill, and this restricts their choice of lifelong health-promoting activities. It also restricts their opportunities for sporting excellence.

[4] The material in this section is used with the permission of Canadian Sport for Life and has been modified/adapted from *Developing Physical Literacy* (http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/resources/developing-physical-literacy).

Being unable to perform even a single fundamental movement skill can seriously restrict later opportunities for recreational or competitive activity, as can be seen from the few examples shown below.

Consequences of a Missing Fundamental Skill



For almost every skill, the developing child needs to go through a series of developmental stages. For example, the following figure shows how throwing changes as the child matures. The goal should be to help each child move to the next most mature version of the skill he or she is learning, rather than pushing the child to perform the skill the way an adult would.

Three Stages in the Development of a Mature Throwing Pattern

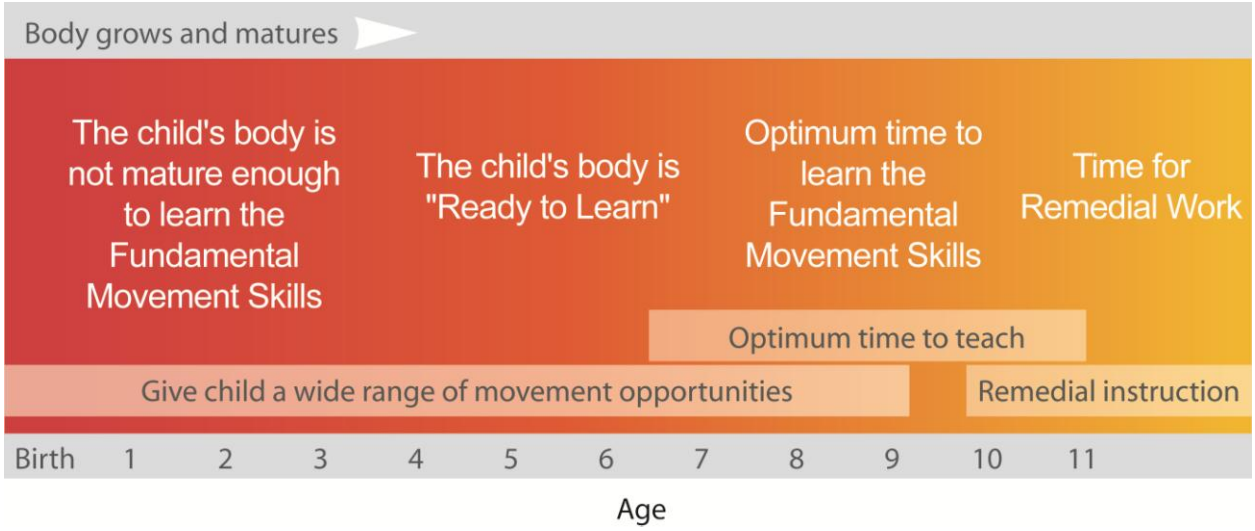
2.5.2 Helping Children Learn Fundamental Movement Skills

Although children mature and learn at different rates, almost all children learn their fundamental movement skills in the same sequence, and go through the same phases:

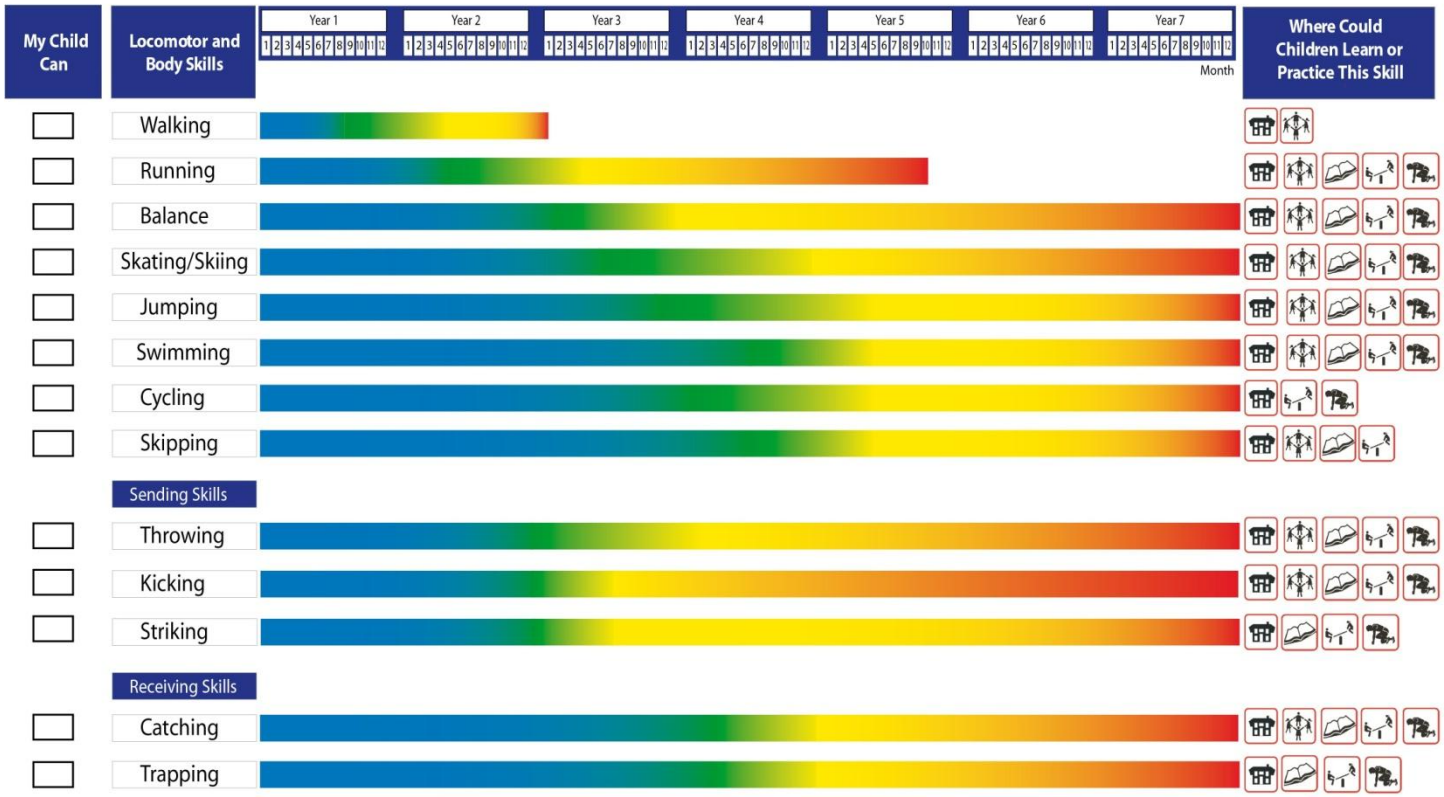
- **When a child can learn a skill:** As a child grows and develops (matures), nerve cells make more connections, while at the same time, the muscles of the body are getting stronger. Until the brain is mature enough and the muscles strong enough, the child simply cannot learn the skill, and trying to teach the child does little good. What is important at this time is providing the child with as many opportunities to explore all possible movements in a rich environment — which means that the child's environment needs to be both safe and challenging.

- **The child is ready to learn the skill:** At a certain point in maturation, all the hardware — the muscles and nerves — have developed enough that the child has the potential to perform a particular skill (the readiness factor) and now has to learn it. As the skill begins to emerge naturally, learning can be dramatically improved through opportunities for fun practice using lots of different equipment and materials. Giving the child some simple instruction and lots of practice can help the child develop confidence that stays with him or her for life.
- **The optimum time to learn the skill:** For every emerging skill there is a “best” time for the child to learn. At this time, helping the child through simple instruction and practice can improve learning and pay great dividends. While the “best” time to teach a particular skill to an individual child varies, there is great consistency in the sequence in which children learn skills. An indication of the best time to teach some of the more common fundamental movement skills can be found in the figure on page 20.
- **Time for remedial work:** If the child goes too long without learning a skill, then learning it may become more difficult. However, the sooner the child starts to overcome the learning deficit, the easier it will be to catch up — and develop the skill and confidence needed to be fully active with friends and peers.

Learning Fundamental Movement Skills



When and Where Children Learn and Practise Fundamental Movement Skills



Body not mature enough for skill
Normal onset of skill
Best time to teach/practice
Intervention program if skill not learned

* Time -lines based on Bressan E.S., and Rathbone, I. (2007). Fundamental Motor Skill Development. A paper prepared for Long-Term Athlete Development - Canadian Sport Centres - PacificSport.

Note 1: There is tremendous variability in the normal time of onset of skills among children, and this chart should be considered ONLY as a rough guide to the sequence of development that might be expected.

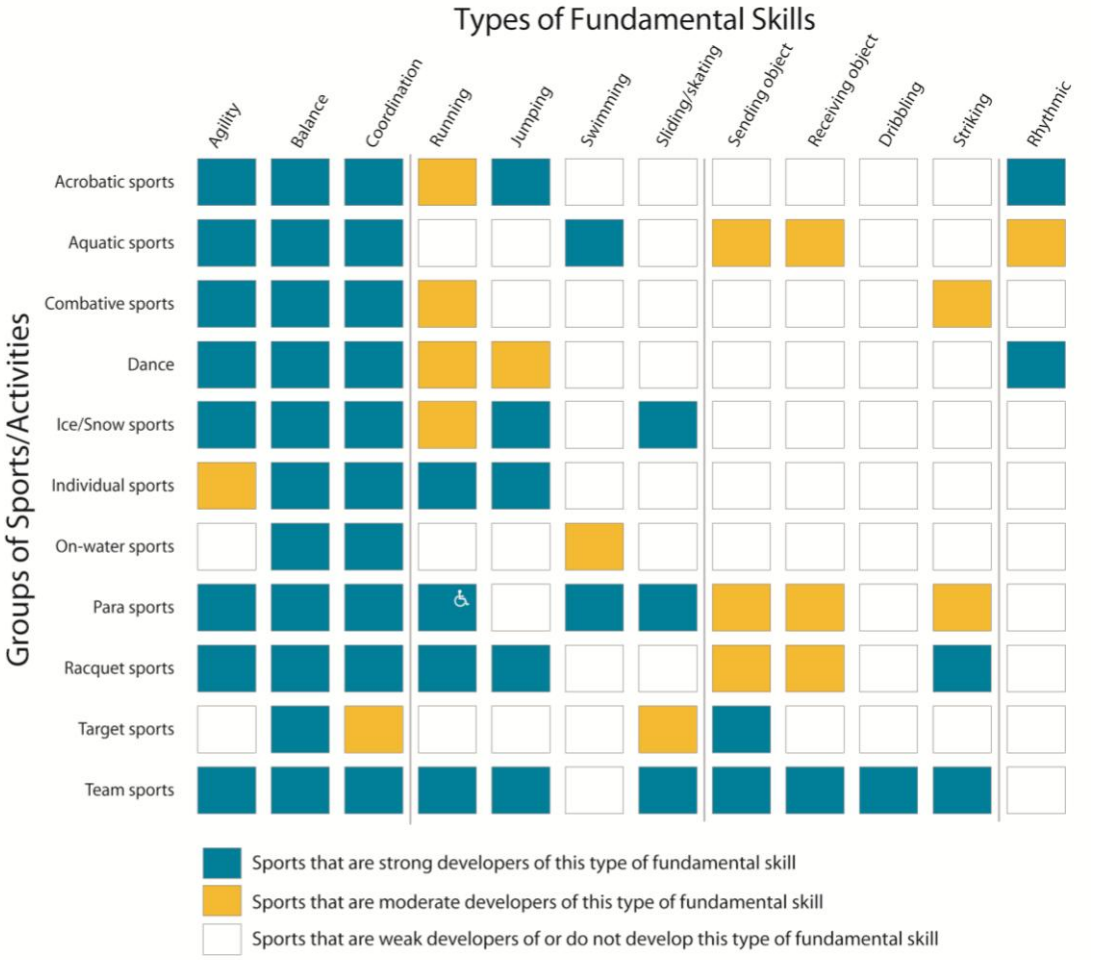
If you have concerns about the development of your child see your pediatrician.

Key

In the home
Preschool
School
Organized sport
Community Recreation

All children should be exposed to a wide range of fundamental movement skills in a wide range of settings including on-land, on ice/snow, in water, and in the air. Since agility, balance and coordination are critical, children should be given the opportunity to learn running, jumping and throwing; gymnastics; swimming; and ice/snow activities. Communities should consider establishing single programs that expose children to the whole range of skills.

Sports That Contribute to the Development of Fundamental Skills



Sport groupings

Acrobatic sports
*Gymnastics
*Rhythmic Gymnastics
Freestyle Aerials
*Trampoline
Sport Parachute
*Diving
Ski jumping

Aquatic sports
*Swimming
Synchro
Waterpolo

Combative sports
Boxing
Fencing
Judo
Karate
Taekwondo
Wrestling

Target sports
Archery
Biathlon
Shooting
Golf
Lawn bowls
Bowling
Curling

Ice/Snow sports
*Figure Skating
Speed skating
Bobsleigh
Skeleton
Luge
Alpine skiing
Freestyle skiing
Snowboarding
Cross-country skiing

Individual sports
Athletics
Cycling
Equine
Triathlon
Weightlifting

Racquet sports
Badminton
Racquetball
Squash
Table tennis
Tennis

Team sports (ice)
Broomball
Hockey
Ringette

Team sport (floor)
Basketball
Volleyball

Team sports (Field)
Baseball
Cricket
Field hockey
Football
Lacrosse
Rugby
Soccer
Softball
Ultimate frisbee

On-water sports
Canoe/Kayak
Rowing
Waterski
Wakeboard
Yatching

Para sports
Goalball (Visually impaired)
Boccia (Cerebral Palsey)
Wheelchair rugby (Quadriplegics)
Sledge hockey (Various disabilities)

Notes:

For Para sports (sports for persons with a disability) running includes alternate means of locomotion, including wheelchairs.

Sports in red: Indicates the most common sports for persons with physical or intellectual disability.

*Early specialization sports

2.5.3 The ABCs: Useful In All Sports

Agility, balance, coordination, and speed are valuable in almost all sports. Developing the ABCs — agility, balance, and coordination — is an important part of physical literacy, and there are a number of activities in which they can be learned and refined.

Some sports and activities are better at developing one or more of the ABCs than others, and the key sports are:

- ❑ Gymnastics is a great way for young children to learn and develop their ABCs, while athletics (track and field) is a great way to develop speed and coordination.
- ❑ Skating and skiing provide great opportunities for the development of balance, coordination, and speed, while soccer helps with speed, agility, and coordination.
- ❑ In addition to developing confidence and safety in the water, swimming or synchro (Aquasquirts) develops balance and coordination.
- ❑ Cycling, skateboarding, and horse riding all develop balance and the judgment of speed.

Some Other Skills to Develop

It's easy to understand why physical literacy needs to include the skills of running, jumping, throwing, kicking, catching, and other skills, along with agility, balance, coordination, and speed. But there are two other skills whose importance is less obvious: prediction and interception.

Think for a moment about what it takes to catch a softball hit high into the air.

As the catcher, the child needs to be able to:

- ❑ See the ball leave the bat, and predict where it will land.
- ❑ Move to where he or she thinks the ball will land — and get there for when the ball arrives. This is the ability to intercept the ball, and this is a physical literacy skill that needs to be learned.
- ❑ Catch the ball!

This ability to predict and intercept is also critical to many stick, bat, and racquet sports, where the child needs to predict where the ball or puck is going, and then move the bat, racquet, or stick so that the moving "stick" makes solid contact with the moving "ball."

Learning to predict and intercept requires two things and is helped by a third:

1. Lots of opportunities to try to catch, intercept, and hit lots of different-sized and different-shaped objects moving in many different directions at many different speeds. Many children find it much harder to do this with small balls moving slowly than with balls moving a bit faster.
2. Good instruction, particularly about how to position the body and what to look for.
3. Sufficient maturation of the brain and vision, which usually happens between the ages of 4 and 7.

2.6 Fundamental Sport Skills[5]

Running, jumping, catching, kicking, throwing, and hitting something with a stick, bat, or racquet of some kind are the basic building blocks of the many sports played by the vast majority of people on earth. A person who can perform these fundamental sport skills well can learn to play many sports with ease. Making good decisions in sport situations is another skill fundamental to each sport.

2.6.1 What's the Difference between Fundamental Sport Skills and Fundamental Movement Skills?

Throwing is a fundamental movement skill — and a child learning this skill will learn to throw lots of different-sized balls with one hand or with both hands and will learn to throw the ball at different speeds — sometimes for accuracy using a lot of different targets and sometimes for distance.

When the child learns to throw a softball, using a softball pitching motion and trying to get the ball to pass over home plate, he or she has moved from learning a fundamental movement skill to learning a fundamental sport skill.

2.7 Getting the Sequence Right: Fundamental Movement Skills BEFORE Fundamental Sport Skills[6]

For children to have success in sport — either as a health-related recreational activity or in competition — it is important that they master fundamental movement skills before learning fundamental sport skills, and important that they learn fundamental sport skills before being introduced to specific techniques.

A couple of examples might help:

- Kicking skills:
  - In the **Fundamental Movement Skill** stage, children learn the basic kicking action, ideally with each foot. They kick a wide variety of balls and try different things — kicking as far as they can, kicking to hit a target, kicking to keep the ball on the ground, kicking the ball as high in the air as they can.
  - In the **Fundamental Sport Skill** stage (e.g., soccer), children learn to kick a soccer ball without touching the ball with the hands. They learn how hard they have to kick the ball to get it to another team member and how to kick the ball with the inside of the foot to increase passing accuracy.
- Catching skills:
  - In the **Fundamental Movement Skill** stage, the child learns to catch — with both hands together in a two-handed catch, and then with one hand. They catch a wide variety of balls of different sizes and weights and learn to catch the ball while they are standing still and when moving toward the ball — skills that can be transferred to any sport they later take up.

[5] The material in this section is used with the permission of Canadian Sport for Life and has been modified/adapted from *Developing Physical Literacy* (http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/resources/developing-physical-literacy).

[6] The material in this section is used with the permission of Canadian Sport for Life and has been modified/adapted from *Developing Physical Literacy* (http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/resources/developing-physical-literacy).

- In the **Fundamental Sport Skill** stage (e.g., baseball), the child learns to catch a baseball, using a baseball glove. As skill level improves, the child learns to catch the baseball first when it is thrown and then when it is hit with the bat — learning to catch it at ever greater distances from where it is hit.

2.8 Physical Literacy in Community Sport[7]

2.8.1 Physical Literacy during the Active Start Stage

Ages: 0-6

Objectives: Learn fundamental movements and link them together into play (www.ltad.ca).

Physical activity is essential for healthy child development during the critical first six years of life and is especially important during the first three years, since brain growth is extremely rapid, and learning creates more brain cell connections than in later years. Among its other benefits, physical activity during this time:

- Lays the foundation for future success in skill development by helping children enjoy being active, learning to move efficiently, and improving coordination and balance
- Creates neural connections across multiple pathways in the brain, particularly when rhythmic activities are used
- Enhances development of brain function, coordination, social skills, gross motor skills, emotional development, leadership, and imagination
- Helps children to build confidence and develop positive self-esteem
- Helps builds strong bones and muscles, improves flexibility, develops good posture, improves fitness, promotes a healthy body weight, reduces stress, and improves sleep

Things to Think About

At this age, physical activity should always be fun and part of the child's daily life, not something he or she is required to do. Active play in a safe and challenging environment is the best way to keep children physically active.

Organized physical activity and active play are particularly important for the healthy development of children with a disability if they are to acquire habits of lifelong activity. Because this is a period when children with a disability rapidly outgrow their mobility aids, communities need to find effective ways — for example, equipment swaps or rentals — to ensure that all children have access to the equipment they need to be active.

Children with sensory disabilities (visual impairment or hearing loss) often require more repetitions to learn movement skills and different ways of getting information from the instructor. To find out more, contact your local organization providing support for persons with the specific disability.

Active Start — Physical Literacy Activities

Encourage the child to run — not just in a straight line, but with stops and starts and changes in direction. Tag and chasing games are excellent.

Play catching games with the child. Use a wide range of soft objects and balls of different sizes. Start with catching a large ball with two hands, and progress toward smaller balls and eventually

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one-handed catching. Remember — balls that don't bounce too much are great for learning, as are bean-bags.

Play games making body shapes — upside-down and right-side up. Pretend to slither like a snake, and roll like a rolling pin on the floor or down a small grassy slope.

Play throwing games — and start with soft objects that the child can hold easily in his or her hand. Try to get the child to throw at a target and sometime to throw as hard as they can. Get children to use both the left and right hand when they throw.

For quiet times or when in small spaces, play balancing games. Stand on one foot and then try the other — try balancing on different body parts, and try walking along any painted lines on the ground.

Jump, make shapes in the air, jump to see how high the child can go or how far. Make imaginary "rivers" and get the child to jump from one bank to the other. Try jumping from one foot or from both. Make sure the child bends at the knees when landing.

Introduce children to water activities and learn-to-swim programs. Get them on skates or skis and out on the ice or snow so that they learn to slide.

Ride a tricycle, or a bike — with or without training wheels to develop dynamic balance.

Formal competition is not recommended for this stage.

2.8.2 Physical Literacy During the FUNdamentals Stage

Age: Boys 6-9, Girls 6-8

Objective: Learn all fundamental movement skills and build overall motor skills (www.ltad.ca).

This is a critical stage for the development of physical literacy, and it is during this time that the foundations of many advanced skills are laid down.

Skill development for children this age is best achieved through a combination of unstructured play in a safe and challenging environment and quality instruction from knowledgeable teachers/leaders/coaches in community recreation activities, schools, and minor sport programs.

Skill development during this stage should be well structured, positive and FUN and should concentrate on developing the ABCs of agility, balance, coordination and speed, plus rhythmic activities.

Hand and foot speed can be developed especially well by boys and girls during this stage and if this window of opportunity to develop speed is missed, body speed later in life may be compromised.

This is a great age for children to take part in a wide range of sports — and they should be encouraged to take part in land-based, water-based, and ice-/snow-based activities at different times of the year.

It is important that all children, including those with a disability, master fundamental movement skills before sport-specific skills are introduced.

Strength, endurance, and flexibility need to be developed, but through games and fun activities rather than a training regimen.

Learning to “read” the movements going on around them and to make sound decisions during games are critical skills that should be developed at this stage.

Things to Think About

Children this age should not specialize in a single sport. Although they may well have a preferred sport that they take part in once or twice a week, they should take part in other sports or activities at least 3 to 4 times per week.

Children this age have a strong sense of what is “fair” and should be introduced to the simple rules and ethics of sports. Basic tactics and decision-making can be introduced.

Using equipment that is the right size and that fits well makes learning activities much more enjoyable and also safer. Equipment swaps and rentals are one way to keep the cost of participation down — and this is particularly important for children with a disability who need specialized sports equipment.

Fundamentals — Physical Literacy Activities

Encourage children to engage in unstructured physical play with their friends every day, regardless of the weather.

Continue to play catching, throwing, hitting, running, and other physically demanding games with both boys and girls.

If possible, enrol children in programs that offer a wide variety of different activities (multi-sport programs) or in a wide range of different activities. Try as many different activities as possible.

Provide lots of opportunities for children to practise skills using modified games and activities. Encourage children and their parents to practise at home to help children move from competency to proficiency, demonstrate confidence, and enjoy their participation in sport.

Attend parent-teacher or other school meetings and advocate for quality physical education programs in the school — with sufficient time allocated (recommended allocation 150 minutes per week — 30 minutes per day) taught by a qualified physical educator.

Don’t be concerned with the score. At this age many programs that include competition don’t keep score. This puts the focus of the program on learning and having fun, rather than on doing whatever it takes to win matches, games, and leagues.

Don’t believe the myth that early specialization in sports such as soccer or hockey will lead to far better performance later in life. Developing all-round athletes at this age is far better, but remember that a few sports (such as gymnastics and figure skating) do require early specialization.

All competition opportunities should be FUN based.

Putting Competition in Its Place

Historically, the competition structures in many Canadian youth sports have created a situation where young athletes compete too much and practise too little. There are a variety of reasons why.

Often, it has been the result of the desire of parents and coaches to see “real games” and watch their children compete for trophies and titles. We tend to see children as miniature adults, and we want to watch them play the “real” game and compete like our sports heroes.

Other times it has been due to a simple lack of facility time, so sport groups sacrifice practice and training hours to “get the games played.” Children learn skills best during these early stages. Too often, this window of opportunity is missed because competition shifts the focus from skill development to winning.

Over-competing and undertraining can have significant negative effects on athlete development:

- ❑ Athletes develop an increased risk of overuse injuries to muscle and bone structures.
- ❑ Athletes face a greater chance of burnout and dropout from activity.
- ❑ Athletes reinforce bad habits in skills performance.

To avoid these problems, competition structures and calendars need to be adjusted to meet the needs of athletes, not coaches, clubs, and parents. The challenge is that dysfunctional competition structures can become “tradition” in certain sports and regions. It becomes difficult to introduce changes even if the changes can significantly benefit the playing experience of the children and their long-term development as athletes.

Good Rationale for Competition

Competition structures such as leagues, tournaments, and season calendars need to be backed by a good rationale. We should ask one question: How does the competition format and schedule serve the best development of the athletes?

Research shows that there are optimal training-to-competition ratios that optimize athlete skill development. By scheduling training and competition according to these ratios, competition will foster long-term athlete development and success while reducing the likelihood of burnout and dropout from activity.

At the same time, competitions and competitive events should also be designed and selected according to the quality and level of competition in relation to the developmental needs of the athlete.

Role of Competition

Training and competition schedules need to be adjusted at different LTAD stages to ensure optimal development and performance. At early stages, practising is much more important than competing. At later stages, competing and performing steadily increase in priority.

The table below outlines general recommendations for training-to-competition ratios. In later stages, competition can also include competition-specific training such as practice games, time trials, or other training tools that mimic competition.

Stage	Recommended Ratio
Active Start	No specific ratios; little or no competition
FUNdamentals	All activity FUN based
Learn to Train	7 practices to 3 competitions/games
Train to Train	3 practices to 2 competitions/games
Train to Compete	2 practices to 3 competitions/games, including competition-specific training

Source: http://canadiansportforlife.ca/ten-key-factors/more-about-competition

2.8.3 Physical Literacy During the Learn to Train Stage

Age: Boys 9-12, Girls 8-11 (ends with the onset of puberty)

Objective: Learn overall sport skills (www.ltad.ca).

This is the most important stage for the development of sport-specific skills as it is a period of accelerated learning of coordination and fine motor control. It is also a time when children enjoy practising skills they learn and seeing their own improvement.

It is still too early for specialization in late-specialization sports. Although many children at this age will have developed a preference for one sport or another, for full athletic development they need to engage in a broad range of activities, playing at least 2-3 different sports.

While competition is important, it is learning to compete that should be the focus — not winning. For best long-term results, 70% of time in the sport should be spent in practice, with only 30% of the time spent on competition.

This is an important time to work on flexibility.

Develop endurance through games and relays.

Things to Think About

This is the time to develop and refine all fundamental movement skills and learn overall sport skills. The brain is nearing adult size and complexity and is capable of very refined skill performance. Late developers (those who enter puberty later than their peers) have an advantage when it comes to learning skills as the Learn to Train stage lasts longer for them.

By this age, children have developed clear ideas about the sports they like and in which they feel they have success, and this should be encouraged. The focus should be on playing at least 2-3 sports in different seasons. Focusing only on one sport year-round should be discouraged.

Learn to Train — Physical Literacy Activities

Continue to encourage children to engage in unstructured physical play with their friends every day, regardless of the weather.

Enrol children in minor sport programs each season, and have them try different positions or events — they might find something they are very good at that was unexpected.

Encourage children to take every opportunity to play different sports at school, during physical education classes, in intramurals, or on school teams if their school has them.

Try to have children take part in some land-based, some water-based, and some snow-/ice-based activities.

Keep children working on flexibility, speed, endurance, and strength. For strength activities, they should use their own body weight, Swiss balls, or medicine balls — not heavy weights.

Keep sport and physical activity FUN.

Tracking the End of Childhood

The Learn to Train stage of development ends with the onset of puberty and the rapid growth that accompanies this important life event. There are some simple ways to track the onset of adolescence, and many parents already have the tools and the records that can help.

Many parents go through the birthday ritual of measuring how tall a child has become — and often have the birthday heights etched on the kitchen door frame. Recording these heights on each birthday tells us how tall the child is, and if we look at how much the child has grown since

the last birthday we get a measure of how fast he or she is growing. This is called the “height velocity”.

During the years from about age 6 until the onset of puberty, children grow at a fairly constant rate, usually about 5-6 cm per year. If you keep track of this and then one year this value has increased, you’ll know that the child is starting the adolescent growth spurt and puberty is not far behind. Recording and plotting height every 3 months from about age 8 onward provides an even more accurate picture. For more details, see the document “The Role of Measuring Growth in Long-term Athlete Development” at **www.ltad.ca**.

A recommended practice-to-competition ratio is 7 practices to 3 competitions/games.

3 SAFETY

This section presents the information on safety that you will need to know in your role as a community coach. There are four safety topics in this section:

1 Sport Safety through Risk Management

2 Preventing Sport-related Injuries: What to Do and When to Do It

3 Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

4 Concussion Questions and Answers

3.1 Sport Safety through Risk Management

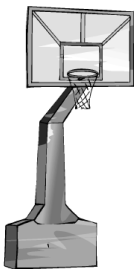
By its very nature, physical activity can present some risk of injury. One of the key responsibilities of the coach is to manage the potential risks that present themselves during practice or competition.

The main risk factors can be categorized as follows:

Environmental Risks

Factors related to the weather and/or its effects on the site or location where the sport takes place.

Examples: Lightning, rain, puddles/mud on the playing surface, heat and humidity, cold.



Equipment and Facilities Risks

Factors related to the quality and operating conditions of the equipment and the facilities.

Examples: A ski binding that does not release, ill-fitting helmet, damaged gymnastics apparatus, debris on the playing surface.

Human Risks

Factors related to the participants and to the people who are associated with them, such as parents, coaches, officials, and event organizers. Human risks may also be related to a participant's individual characteristics (e.g., height, weight, level of physical preparation, ability) or behaviour (e.g., carelessness, panic, aggression). Human factors related to coaches include their training and experience, their supervision of the participants, as well as the decisions they make about situations in which they place the participants.

Examples: Matching participants of uneven strength and ability in a combative sport, forgetting to spot a gymnastics participant.

3.2 Preventing Sport-related Injuries: What to Do and When to Do It

Before the Season
❑ Have a medical profile completed for each participant ❑ Inform parents of possible risks ❑ Ensure facilities and equipment meet established safety requirements ❑ Create and fill in a facility safety checklist ❑ Review last season's injuries or common injuries in your sport
During the Season
Before a practice or competition ❑ Inspect equipment and facilities ❑ Meet with the officials ❑ Prepare an Emergency Action Plan ❑ Plan specific safety measures for the practice/competition **During a practice or competition** ❑ Inform participants of specific safety measures relating to activities, facilities, and equipment ❑ Ensure there is proper supervision ❑ Evaluate participants ❑ Ensure that fair play principles are followed **After a practice or competition** ❑ Store equipment safely ❑ Fill in an accident report if necessary
After the Season
❑ Review the injury log maintained throughout the season

3.3 Emergency Action Plan (EAP)

An Emergency Action Plan (EAP) is a plan designed by coaches to assist them in responding to emergency situations. The idea behind having such a plan prepared in advance is that it will help you respond in a responsible and clear-headed way if an emergency occurs.

An EAP should be prepared for the facility or site where you normally hold practices and for any facility or site where you regularly host competitions. For away competitions, ask the host team or host facility for a copy of its EAP.

An EAP can be simple or elaborate but should cover the following items:

- ❑ Designate in advance who is in charge in the event of an emergency (this may very well be you).

- ❑ Have a cell phone with you and make sure the battery is fully charged. If this is not possible, find out exactly where a telephone that you can use is located. Have spare change in case you need to use a pay phone.
- ❑ Have emergency telephone numbers with you (facility manager, fire, police, ambulance) as well as contact numbers (parents/guardians, next of kin, family doctor) for participants.
- ❑ Have on hand a medical profile for each participant, so that this information can be provided to emergency medical personnel. Include in this profile a signed consent from the parent/guardian to authorize medical treatment in an emergency.
- ❑ Prepare directions to give to Emergency Medical Services (EMS) to enable them to reach the site as rapidly as possible. You may want to include information such as the closest major intersection, one way streets, or major landmarks.
- ❑ Have a first aid kit accessible and properly stocked at all times (all coaches are strongly encouraged to pursue first aid training).
- ❑ Designate in advance a “call person” (the person who makes contact with medical authorities and otherwise assists the person in charge). Be sure that your call person can give emergency vehicles precise instructions to reach your facility or site. Ensure that bystanders know that there is a designated call person who will contact EMS so that duplicate calls are not made.

When an injury occurs, an EAP should be activated immediately if the injured person:

- ❑ Is not breathing
- ❑ Does not have a pulse
- ❑ Is bleeding profusely
- ❑ Has impaired consciousness
- ❑ Has injured the back, neck, or head
- ❑ Has a visible major trauma to a limb

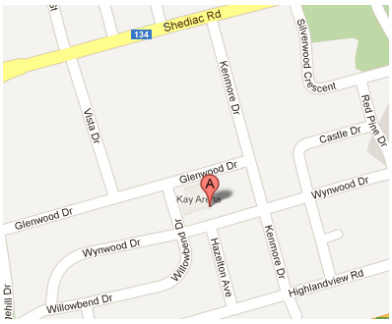
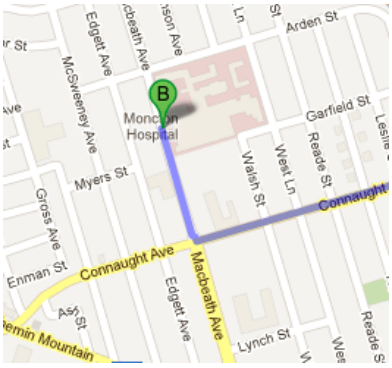
Emergency Action Plan

Attach allergy/medical and emergency contact information for team members and coaching staff.

Emergency Numbers:	9-1-1 (if available in your community)	
Coach Information:	**Head Coach:** _____ **Cell:** _____	**Assistant Coach:** _____ **Cell:** _____
Home Facility:	**Tel:** _____ **Address:** _____ _____ **Nearest Major Intersection:** _____ _____	**Map:**
Nearest Hospital:	**Tel:** _____ **Address:** _____ _____	**Map:**
On-site Charge Person(s) ❑ Clear the risk of further harm to the injured person by securing the area and shelter the injured person from the elements ❑ Designate who is in charge of the other participants ❑ Protect yourself (wears gloves if he/she is in contact with body fluids such as blood) ❑ Assess ABCs (checks that airway is clear, breathing is present, a pulse is present, and there is no major bleeding) ❑ Wait by the injured person until EMS arrives and the injured person is transported ❑ Fill in an accident report form		**Option 1:** _____ **Option 2:** _____ **Option 3:** _____
On-site Call Person(s) ❑ Call for emergency help ❑ Provide all necessary information to dispatch (e.g. facility location, nature of injury, what, if any, first aid has been done) ❑ Clear any traffic from the entrance/access road before ambulance arrives ❑ Wait by the driveway entrance to the facility to direct the ambulance when it arrives ❑ Call the emergency contact person listed on the injured person's medical profile		**Option 1:** _____ **Option 2:** _____ **Option 3:** _____

Emergency Action Plan: Example

Attach allergy/medical and emergency contact information for team members and coaching staff.

Emergency Numbers:	9-1-1 (if available in your community)	
Coach Information:	**Head Coach:** S. Good **Cell:** (xxx) 987-6543	**Assistant Coach:** H. Brown **Cell:** (xxx) 456-7890
Home Facility:	**Tel:** (xxx) 123-4567 **Address:** Kay Arena 99 Wynwood Drive Moncton, NB **Nearest Major Intersection:** Shediac Road and Kenmore Drive	**Map:** 
Nearest Hospital:	**Tel:** (xxx) 555-5555 **Address:** The Moncton Hospital 135 MacBeath Avenue Moncton, NB	**Map:** 

On-site Charge Person(s) ❑ Clear the risk of further harm to the injured person by securing the area and shelter the injured person from the elements ❑ Designate who is in charge of the other participants ❑ Protect yourself (wears gloves if in contact with body fluids such as blood) ❑ Assess ABCs (checks that airway is clear, breathing is present, a pulse is present, and there is no major bleeding) ❑ Wait by the injured person until EMS arrives and the injured person is transported ❑ Fill in an accident report form	**Option 1:** S. Good **Option 2:** R. Good **Option 3:** T. Green
On-site Call Person(s) ❑ Call for emergency help ❑ Provide all necessary information to dispatch (e.g., facility location, nature of injury, what, if any, first aid has been done) ❑ Clear any traffic from the entrance/access road before ambulance arrives ❑ Wait by the driveway entrance to the facility to direct the ambulance when it arrives ❑ Call the emergency contact person listed on the injured person's medical profile	**Option 1:** H. Brown **Option 2:** V. Smith **Option 3**: B. Whiting

3.4 Concussion Questions and Answers[15]

There is a lot to know about concussions and their proper management. This section deals in depth with the most common issues associated with concussions. Read on to learn:

- ❑ What is a concussion?
- ❑ What actually happens?
- ❑ How do concussions occur?
- ❑ Who should the child tell?
- ❑ What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?
- ❑ When should an ambulance be called?
- ❑ How are concussions diagnosed?
- ❑ When can the child return to school?
- ❑ When can the child return to normal activity?
- ❑ Are there different return to play guidelines for different sports?
- ❑ What is the role of the coach in the child's return to play?
- ❑ How can the child cope with the symptoms of concussion?
- ❑ How can children prevent concussions?

3.4.1 What is a Concussion? — Definition

A concussion is a common form of brain injury and can be caused by a direct or indirect hit to the head or body (for example, a check to the boards, a hit to the head, or a car crash). Rapid movement of the head, such as whiplash, can also cause a concussion.

In a concussion, there is a change in the brain function, which results in a variety of symptoms. With a concussion, there is no visible injury to the structure of the brain, meaning that tests like MRI or CT scans usually appear normal. Your brain still LOOKS fine, but it does not run normally.

3.4.2 What Actually Happens? — Definition

When a person suffers a concussion, the brain suddenly shifts or shakes inside the skull and can knock against the skull's bony surface. A hard hit to the body can result in an acceleration and/or deceleration injury when the brain brushes against bony protuberances inside the skull. Such force can also result in a rotational injury in which the brain twists, potentially causing a shearing of the brain nerve fibres. It is not yet known exactly what happens to brain cells in a concussion, but the mechanism appears to involve a change in chemical function. In the minutes to days following a concussion, brain cells remain in a vulnerable state. New research emphasizes that the problem may not be the structure of the brain tissue itself, but how the brain is working. The exact length of this change is unclear. During this time period, the brain does not function normally on a temporary basis and is more vulnerable to a second head injury.

[15] The material in this section is used with the permission of Parachute and has been modified/adapted from *Concussion Questions and Answers* (www.parachutecanada.org/active-and-safe/item/concussion-questions-and-answers).

3.4.3 How Do Concussions Occur? — Definition

Most concussions occur as a result of a collision with another object while the object or person is moving at a high rate of speed. Forces such as these (and others) can result in deceleration and rotational concussive injuries.

3.4.4 Who Should the Child Tell?

It is extremely important to seek medical advice immediately upon receiving a blow to the head or body that results in signs or symptoms of a concussion. Often, concussions can go untreated (and even unnoticed by others) because few symptoms are visible to casual observers. Many times, the symptoms of a concussion may not be identified until the child recovers to the point where increased exertion causes symptoms to worsen. In many cases, children do not even know that they have been concussed.

Although symptoms may not be immediately apparent, it is important to be aware of possible physical, cognitive, and emotional changes. You can never be too careful! Symptoms may actually worsen throughout the day of the injury or even over the next day or two. Without proper management, a concussion can result in permanent problems and seriously affect one's quality of life.

It is important for children to tell a family member, friend, teammate, trainer, or coach if they think they have hurt their head. Because a concussion affects the function of the brain and can result in symptoms such as memory loss or amnesia, it is important that others be aware of the signs and symptoms of concussions to help identify the injury in others. If children think they have hurt their head, they should tell their coach or parents immediately. It's very important to congratulate children at this point for being smart and saying they've been hurt. Children should be removed from the current activity, whether it is sports or school, immediately and medical attention should be sought immediately.

3.4.5 What are the Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion? — Definition

Following a concussion, children may experience many different signs and symptoms. A symptom is something children will feel, whereas a sign is something children's friends, family, or coach may notice. It is important to remember that some symptoms may appear right away and some may appear later. Just as no two people are the same, no two concussions are the same and so the signs and symptoms may be a little different for everyone. Some may be subtle and may go unnoticed by injured children, as well as their friends and family.

Contrary to popular belief, most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness.

For a detailed list of signs and symptoms of a concussion, see the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool on the next page.

Symptoms may get worse not just during activity, but later that day and the next.

3.4.6 When Should an Ambulance be Called?

A child getting a blow to the head doesn't necessarily mean an ambulance is needed. If a child loses consciousness or is dazed and confused, or if a neck or back injury is suspected, erring on the side of caution is the right response. It's better to overreact than to underreact.

Pocket CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL

To help identify concussion in children, youth and adults

RECOGNIZE & REMOVE

Concussion should be suspected **if one or more** of the following visible clues, signs, symptoms or errors in memory questions are present.

1. Visible clues of suspected concussion

Any one or more of the following visual clues can indicate a possible concussion:

Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
Lying motionless on ground/Slow to get up
Unsteady on feet / Balance problems or falling over/Incoordination
Grabbing/Clutching of head
Dazed, blank or vacant look
Confused/Not aware of plays or events

2. Signs and symptoms of suspected concussion

Presence of any one or more of the following signs & symptoms may suggest a concussion:

- Loss of consciousness
- Seizure or convulsion
- Balance problems
- Nausea or vomiting
- Drowsiness
- More emotional
- Irritability
- Sadness
- Fatigue or low energy
- Nervous or anxious
- "Don't feel right"
- Difficulty remembering
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Confusion
- Feeling slowed down
- "Pressure in head"
- Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Amnesia
- Feeling like "in a fog"
- Neck Pain
- Sensitivity to noise
- Difficulty concentrating

3. Memory function

Failure to answer any of these questions correctly may suggest a concussion.

"At what venue are we at today?"
"Which half is it now?"
"Who scored last in this game?"
"What team did you play last week/game?"
"Did your team win the last game?"

Any athlete with a suspected concussion should be IMMEDIATELY REMOVED FROM PLAY, and should not be returned to activity until they are assessed medically. Athletes with a suspected concussion should not be left alone and should not drive a motor vehicle.

It is recommended that, in all cases of suspected concussion, the player is referred to a medical professional for diagnosis and guidance as well as return to play decisions, even if the symptoms resolve.

RED FLAGS

If ANY of the following are reported then the player should be safely and immediately removed from the field. If no qualified medical professional is available, consider transporting by ambulance for urgent medical assessment:

- Athlete complains of neck pain
- Increasing confusion or irritability
- Repeated vomiting
- Seizure or convulsion
- Weakness or tingling/burning in arms or legs
- Deteriorating conscious state
- Severe or increasing headache
- Unusual behaviour change
- Double vision

Remember:

- In all cases, the basic principles of first aid (danger, response, airway, breathing, circulation) should be followed.
- Do not attempt to move the player (other than required for airway support) unless trained to so do
- Do not remove helmet (if present) unless trained to do so.

from McCrory et. al, Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport. Br J Sports Med 47 (5), 2013

3.4.7 How are Concussions Diagnosed?

With a concussion, there is no visible injury to the structure of the brain, meaning that tests like MRI or CT scans usually appear normal.

Concussions typically resolve fully with proper rest and management in about a week or two, but concussions that are not diagnosed can lead to long-term and more serious health implications. The first and most important step is to consult a doctor, preferably one familiar with concussion management.

There are many potential factors that may help to inform individual diagnosis, concussion management, and recovery, although many of these are still being researched to find the exact link. For example, severity is probably impacted by a number of factors such as the child's history of previous head injuries, including number of past concussions, length of recovery time, timing between past concussions, age, and style of play. Factors such as this may lead to a different, slower recovery, which is why concussion history should always be monitored.

Return to activity while still concussed and symptomatic can lead to an increased risk for another concussion, more intense symptoms, and a prolonged recovery.

Diagnosing a concussion may take several steps. The child's doctor may ask questions about the concussion and sport history and the most recent injury, and will conduct a neurological exam. This can include checking the child's memory and concentration, vision, coordination, and balance.

The child's doctor may request further tests including a CT scan or MRI; these tests can be important to assess for other skull or brain injury but they do not inform concussion diagnosis. In the majority of concussions, there will not be any obvious damage found on these tests.

***Neuropsychological testing*:** Sometimes the role of neuropsychological testing is important in identifying subtle cognitive (i.e., memory, concentration) problems caused by the concussion and may at times help to plan return to pre-injury activity. In addition, balance testing may be required. Usually these are arranged by the concussion expert.

3.4.8 When Can the Child Return to School?

Sometimes children who have a concussion may find it hard to concentrate in school and may get a worse headache or feel sick to their stomach if they are in school. Children should stay home from school if their symptoms get worse while they are in class. Once they feel better, they can try going back to school at first for half days and if they are okay with that, then they can go back full-time.

3.4.9 When Can the Child Return to Normal Activity? — Return to Play

Children should not return to activity or play until they have completed the 6 Steps to Return to Play and have been cleared by their doctor. A concussed child should be removed from activity immediately and should be assessed by a medical doctor. Given that symptoms may worsen later that night and the next day, children should not return to their current activity. When children are concussed, their ability to assess their situation may be impaired. Post-concussive symptoms may intensify with an increase in activity, so it is important that return to activity is gradual and monitored/supervised by a medical professional.

The 6 Steps to Return to Play include:

1. No activity; mental and physical rest until symptom free
2. Light aerobic activity like walking or stationary cycling
3. Sport-specific activity like skating or running

4. Training drills without body contact
5. Training drills with body contact — only once cleared by a physician
6. Game play

These steps do not correspond to days, though each step should take a minimum of one day. If symptoms return during this process, children should stop the activity and return to rest until symptoms resolve before they try any activity again. A physician should be consulted if symptoms persist.

3.4.10 Are There Different Return to Play Guidelines for Different Sports?

Overall, the Return to Play Guidelines outlined in this document can be applied to all activity. However, it is recommended that coaches check with their National Sport Organization to see if sport-specific Return to Play Guidelines have been developed.

3.4.11 What is the Role of the Coach in the Child's Return to Play?

Coaches have the FINAL SAY about whether the child plays.

- ❑ Awareness about and treatment of concussions is changing rapidly right now.
- ❑ The Community Sport resources you are using reflect the most up-to-date and most reputable information on the topic.
- ❑ Unfortunately, the latest research in this area has not reached all parents and doctors.
- ❑ Sharing concussion resources with parents/caregivers and doctors will go a long way toward educating others about the current consensus of experts in the field. It should also help coaches resist pressure to play from parents and children.
- ❑ Setting out policies and guidelines about return to play and getting agreement on them at the start of the season also lowers the risk of conflict about return to play during the season.

IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT… it's essential to err on the side of caution. Exertion makes concussion symptoms worse. In addition, because the child isn't as well coordinated as usual and his or her decision-making is poorer, the risk of another injury is greater.

One of the greatest risks associated with returning to play too soon is that the child will get hit again and suffer Second Impact Syndrome. While rare, Second Impact Syndrome is a condition in which a second concussion occurs before the brain has completely healed from the first concussion; the syndrome causes rapid and severe brain swelling. Second Impact Syndrome can result from even a mild concussion that occurs days or weeks after the initial concussion. Most cases of Second Impact Syndrome occur in young athletes.

The coach's role in return to play has a strong educational component. Concussion education at the start of the season is really important. Key messages involve what a concussion is, why it's important to tell coaches or other adults about a suspected concussion, and what can happen if you aren't honest about a suspected concussion. Children need to know that rushing back before their brain has had a chance to rest will actually result in them missing MORE playing time.

Coaches also have a responsibility to stay up-to-date on the treatment of head injuries. This Community Sport workshop is a great start. Coaches should also check regularly with leading authorities such as Parachute (www.parachutecanada.org), the Coaching Association of Canada (coach.ca), Hockey Canada (www.hockeycanada.ca), and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (www.cces.ca).

For more detailed information about returning to play, please see the Return to Play Guidelines on pages 42 and 43.

Did you know…?

- ❑ Any athlete who has suffered a concussion should not return to play that day.[16]
- ❑ Children and adolescents who have suffered a concussion should stay out for at least 7 days.[17]
- ❑ Between 80% and 90% of kids who suffer concussions get better in 10-14 days.[18]
- ❑ It takes a lot of energy for the brain to fix itself. The more you rest, the more energy your brain can use directly for healing.[19]
- ❑ Some literature suggests adults' concussions heal more quickly than children's.[20]

[16] Source: Goulet.

[17] Source: Goulet.

[18] Source: Goulet.

[19] Barkhoudarian, Hovda, and Giza, 2011.

[20] Johnson, Kegel, and Collins, 2011.

Guidelines for Return to Play after a Concussion

GUIDELINES FOR RETURN TO PLAY AFTER A CONCUSSION

thinkfirst pensezd'abord CANADA

A concussion is a serious event, but you can recover fully from such an injury if the brain is given enough time to rest and recuperate. Returning to normal activities, including sport participation, is a step-wise process that requires patience, attention, and caution.

Each step must take a minimum of one day but could last longer, depending on the player and his or her specific situation.

STEP 1: NO ACTIVITY, ONLY COMPLETE REST.
Limit school, work and tasks requiring concentration. Refrain from physical activity until symptoms are gone. Once symptoms are gone, a physician, preferably one with experience managing concussions, should be consulted before beginning a step wise return to play process.

STEP 2: LIGHT AEROBIC EXERCISE.
Activites such as walking or stationary cycling. The player should be supervised by someone who can help monitor for symptoms and signs. No resistance training or weight lifting. The duration and intensity of the aerobic exercise can be gradually increased over time if no symptoms or signs return during the exercise or the next day.

SYMPTOMS?	Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.
NO SYMPTOMS?	Proceed to **Step 3** the next day.

STEP 3: SPORT SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES.
Activities such as skating or throwing can begin at step 3. There should be no body contact or other jarring motions such as high speed stops or hitting a baseball with a bat.

SYMPTOMS?	Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.
NO SYMPTOMS?	Proceed to **Step 4** the next day.

STEP 4: BEGIN DRILLS WITHOUT BODY CONTACT.

SYMPTOMS?	Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.
NO SYMPTOMS?	The time needed to progress from non-contact exercise will vary with the severity of the concussion and with the player. **Proceed to Step 5 only after medical clearance.**

STEP 5: BEGIN DRILLS WITH BODY CONTACT.

SYMPTOMS?	Return to rest until symptoms have resolved. If symptoms persist, consult a physician.
NO SYMPTOMS?	Proceed to **Step 6** the next day.

STEP 6: GAME PLAY.

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PREVENTING INJURIES. SAVING LIVES.

GUIDELINES FOR RETURN TO PLAY AFTER A CONCUSSION

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NEVER RETURN TO PLAY IF YOU STILL HAVE SYMPTOMS!

A player who returns to active play before full recovery from the first concussion is at high risk of sustaining another concussion, with symptoms that may be increased and prolonged.

HOW LONG DOES THIS PROCESS TAKE?

These steps do not correspond to days! It may take many days to progress through one step, especially if the concussion is severe. As soon as symptoms appear, the player should return to rest until symptoms have resolved and wait at least one more day before attempting any activity. The only way to heal a brain is to rest it.

HOW DO I FIND THE RIGHT DOCTOR?

When dealing with concussions, it is important to see a doctor who is knowledgeable in concussion management. This might include your physician or someone such as a sports medicine specialist. Your family doctor maybe required to submit a referal to see a specialist. Contact the Canadian Academy of Sport and Exercise Medicine (CASEM) to find a sports medical physician in your area. **Visit www.casm-acms.org for more information.** You can also refer your doctor to **parachutecanada.org** for more information.

WHO DO THESE GUIDELINES APPLY TO?

These guidelines were developed for children over the age of 10; those younger may require special guidelines, and more conservative treatment and care. Return to Play Guidelines should be at the discretion of the physician.

WHAT IF MY SYMPTOMS RETURN DURING THIS PROCESS?

Sometimes these steps can cause symptoms of a concussion to return. This means that the brain has not yet healed, and needs more rest. If any signs or symptoms return during the Return To Play process, they should stop the activity and rest until symptoms have resolved. The player must be re-evaluated by a physician before trying any activity again. Remember, symptoms may return later that day or the next, not necessarily during the activity!

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Source: Parachute.

3.4.12 How Can the Child Cope with the Symptoms of Concussion? — Emotions

The best medical management for a concussion is rest, both physical and mental. A child who has suffered a concussion may often feel lethargic and tired. It is important for children to admit this fatigue to themselves. The brain is telling the child that he or she needs rest, and it is extremely important for the child to listen. If the child continues pushing himself or herself and struggling on, it is likely to make the symptoms worse.

The first thing to fail when children get tired is concentration. If there is something important to get done, it is best for children to complete it when they are fresh after resting. When their attention starts to fade, they may need to stop, rest again, and write down the important things for later.

Many children who have suffered a concussion often complain of being very irritable. Children may find that things that would not normally annoy them suddenly do. Children sometimes find themselves losing their temper, snapping at family members or friends, and being very annoyed over things. This may be because children's own self-control needs a fresh, working brain as well. In order to cope with this, children need to be aware of emotions. Some children have learned personal relaxation methods such as imagery and progressive relaxation methods to optimize their coping skills.

Other symptoms such as dizziness and clumsiness appear because the brain is reacting slowly and less efficiently. Concussions can upset balance organs in the ear, resulting in vertigo. One way to deal with these types of symptoms is to take special care in actions and movements, which means walking slowly and being aware of one's surroundings.

Other problems such as noise sensitivity and visual changes are also the result of a concussion. Putting up with noise and bright lights needs brain energy, and children may find that they do not have the energy level to do so. Children may be around a loud radio, bright lights, or a stimulating environment and find themselves suffering from bad headaches. One way of coping with this is to avoid loud noise and bright lights as much as possible. Many people find it helpful to wear sunglasses everywhere, even indoors.

When dealing with other symptoms, it is crucial for children to take only medications that their doctor has prescribed or approved of. Also, children should not take any drugs not prescribed by a medical doctor, as it may hinder recovery and can put them at risk of further injury. Although symptoms resolve spontaneously in most cases, usually in a couple of weeks, the process of healing from a concussion may take considerably more time. It is important for children to pace themselves and increase activity gradually.

3.4.13 How Can Children Prevent Concussions?

It is important to take a preventive approach when dealing with concussions. This is especially true with recent concussions as the brain is still very vulnerable at that time.

In general, concussion prevention is about the three Es: Engineering, Education, and Equipment.

Engineering

Children should at all times wear appropriate, well-maintained equipment that fits properly.

Education

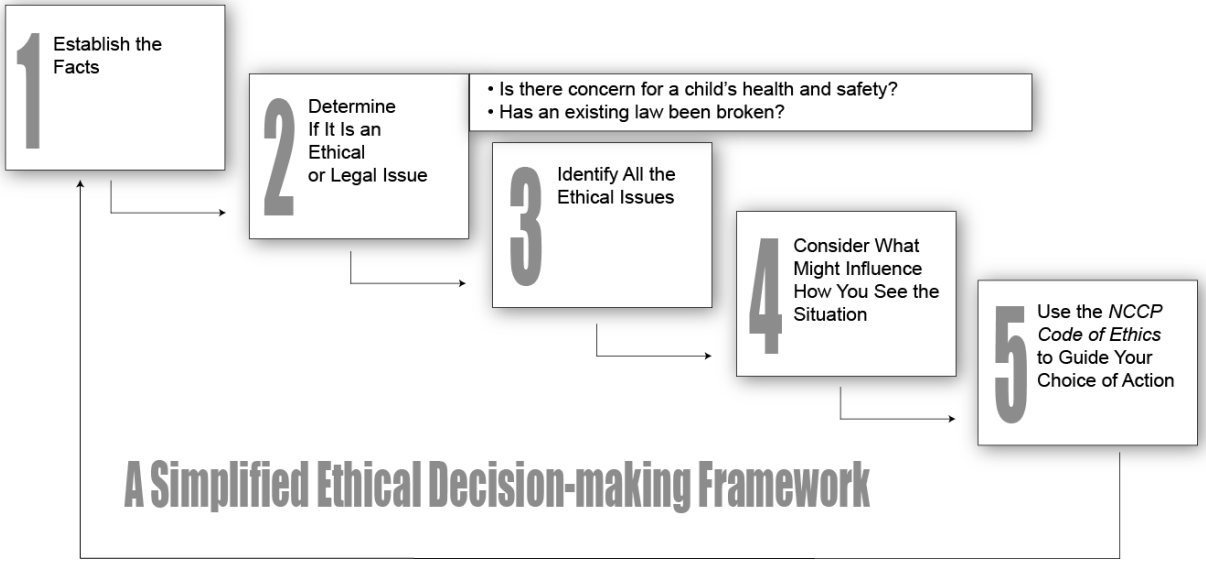
Prevention of concussion and head injury is most successful when children are properly educated and the safety rules of the sport environment are enforced. Concussions are an invisible injury, making it important for children to share information with the people surrounding them. This will help them understand children's situations and educate them for the future.

Equipment

Protective equipment can reduce the risk and severity of injuries to the face and skull, but there is no concussion-proof helmet, nor is there research to support that mouth guards prevent concussions.

4 MAKING ETHICAL DECISIONS

This section presents a simplified ethical decision-making framework. The framework is a five-step tool you can use when you have a tough coaching decision to make. This framework is similar to the ethical decision-making models used in other NCCP modules.



There are five topics in this section, one for each step in the framework:

1 Step 1: Establish the Facts

2 Step 2: Determine If It Is an Ethical or Legal Issue

3 Step 3: Identify All the Ethical Issues

4 Step 4: Consider What Might Influence How You See the Situation

5 Step 5: Use the *NCCP Code of Ethics* to Guide Your Choice of Action

4.1 Step 1: Establish the Facts

Before making any decisions, gather as many facts as possible about the situation. Here are some questions to help you do this:

- ❑ What has happened?
- ❑ Who is involved?
- ❑ Who is affected by the decision or action and in what way?
- ❑ What do all the parties involved have to say about the situation (i.e., what are all the sides of the story)?
- ❑ Has anything like this happened before and, if so, what was done and what were the consequences?

4.2 Step 2: Determine If It Is an Ethical or Legal Issue

Some situations may have legal implications that require specific actions on your part. Here are some questions to help you determine if this is the case:

- ❑ Is there concern for the health and safety of individuals, particularly children? Has harm occurred and, if so, under what circumstances?
- ❑ Has an existing law been broken because the situation involves one or more of the following:
  - ❍ Child abuse – emotional or physical?
  - ❍ Use of or condoning the use of illegal substances (narcotics, performance-enhancing drugs, alcohol, tobacco)?
  - ❍ Harassment: sexual, verbal, or psychological?
  - ❍ Sexual relations with a minor?
  - ❍ Theft or malicious damage to property?
  - ❍ Assault?

If the situation is a legal one, contact authorities.

If the situation is an ethical one and does not have legal implications, try to resolve it.

4.3 Step 3: Identify All the Ethical Issues

Here are some questions to help you clearly identify all the issues that are at play:

Outcomes

- ❑ Did the actions of an individual or group prevent an individual or group from reaching a goal?
- ❑ Did certain actions or non-actions result in harm to anyone?

Means

- ❑ Was the issue related to the way someone did something?
- ❑ Are there guidelines that indicate how a similar situation should be addressed?

Rules and Laws

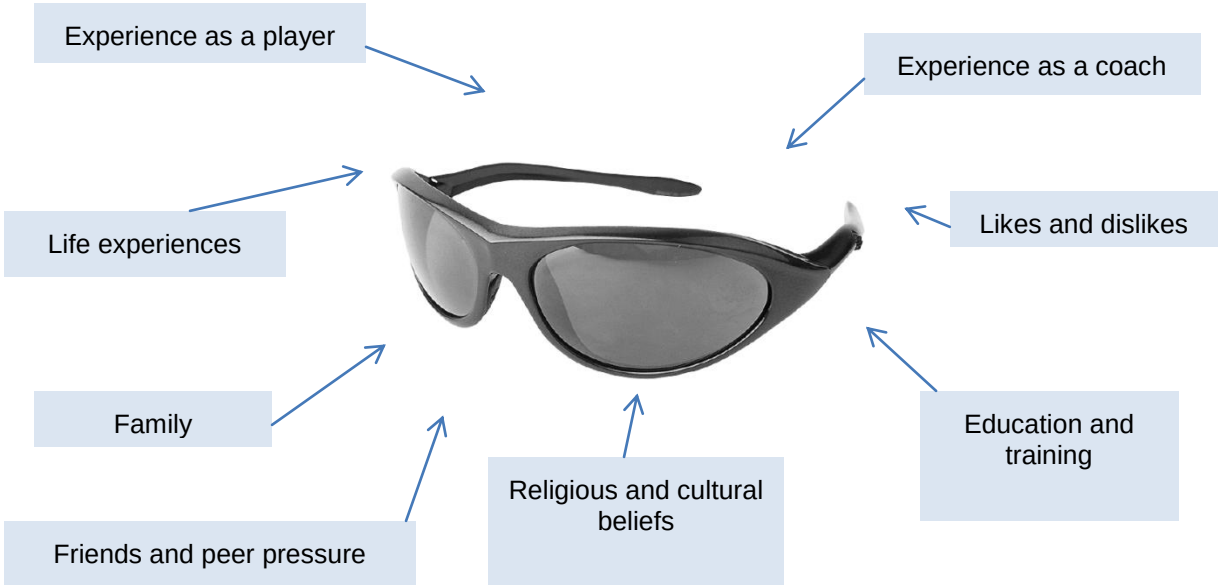
- ❑ Have specific rules or laws (of the game) been broken?
- ❑ Have team policies been violated?
- ❑ Have specific rules or laws been misinterpreted (accidentally or deliberately)?
- ❑ Does the rule or law need to be changed?

Responsibilities and Duties

- ❑ What duties and responsibilities did the parties involved have toward each other?
- ❑ Has an individual or individuals failed to fulfil duties or responsibilities?

4.4 Step 4: Consider What Might Influence How You See the Situation

- ❑ How might the factors in the image below influence how you see an issue?



4.5 Step 5: Use the *NCCP Code of Ethics* to Guide Your Choice of Action

The action you choose should be in line with the *NCCP Code of Ethics*.

The *NCCP Code of Ethics* is based on four fundamental principles.

1. Respect for Participants/Athletes

The principle of *respecting participants/athletes* challenges coaches to act in a manner respectful of the dignity of those involved in sport. The cornerstone of this principle is the basic assumption that each person has value and is worthy of respect.

2. Coaching Responsibly

The principle of *coaching responsibly* carries the expectation that the activities of coaches will benefit society in general and participants/athletes in particular and will do no harm. Fundamental to the implementation of this principle is the notion of competence; i.e., coaches who are well prepared and current in their discipline will be able to maximize benefits and minimize risks to participants/athletes.

3. Maintaining Integrity in Relationships

The principle of *maintaining integrity in relationships* means that coaches are expected to be honest, sincere, and honourable in their relationships. Acting on these values is most possible when coaches have a high degree of self-awareness and the ability to reflect critically on how their views and opinions influence their interactions.

Critical reflection questions existing assumptions about the values and practices that govern coaches' actions. The essential component of critical reflection is an attitude based on open-mindedness, active inquiry, and sincerity.

4. Honouring Sport

The principle of *honouring sport* challenges coaches to recognize, act on, and promote the value of sport for individuals and teams and for society in general. Honouring sport implies that coaches:

- ❑ Act on and promote clearly articulated values related to coaching and sport
- ❑ Encourage and model honourable intentions and actions

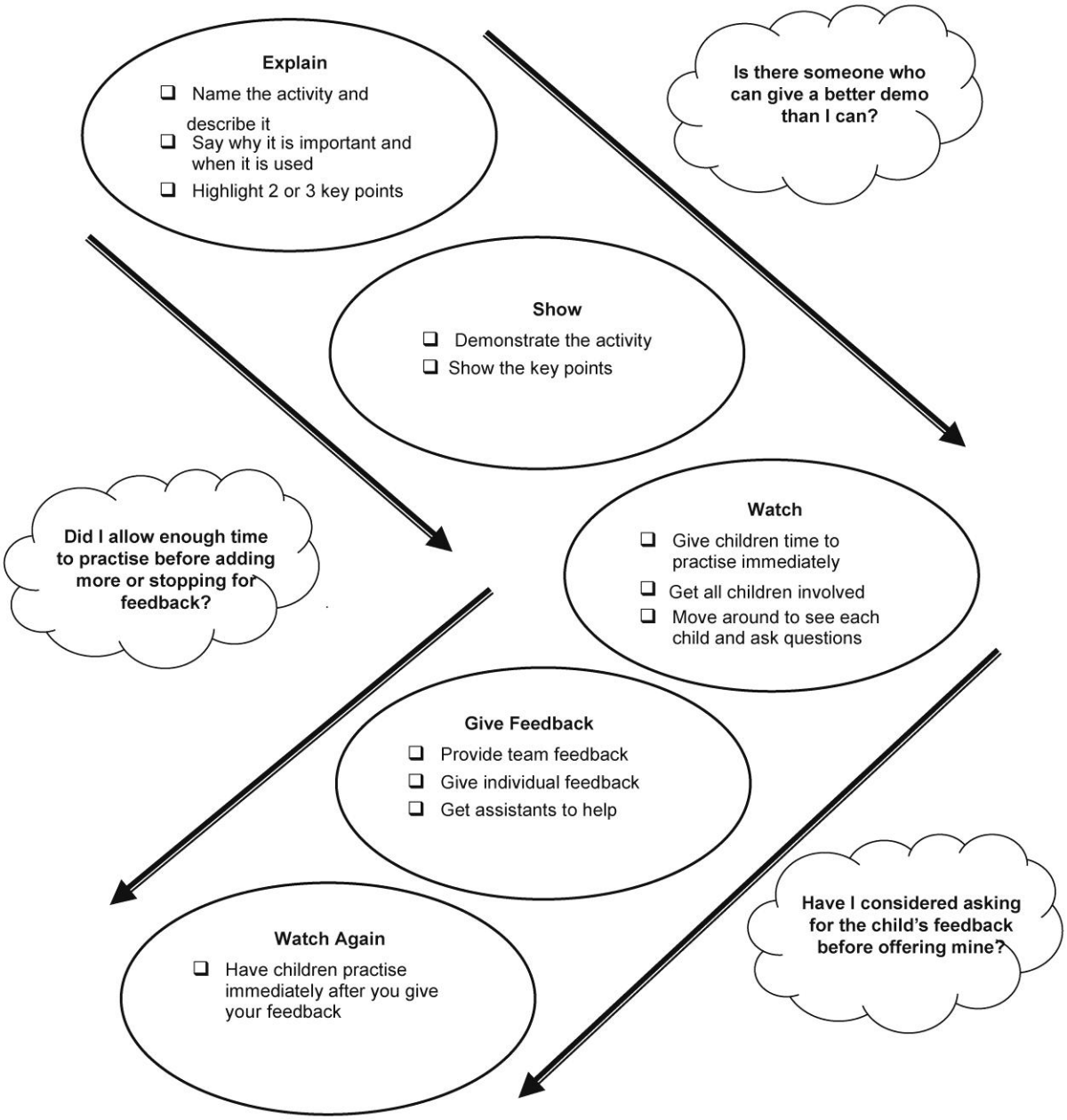
5 EXPLAINING AND DEMONSTRATING SPORT SKILLS

This section presents the information that you as a community coach need to know to explain and demonstrate sport skills to the children you coach. There are two topics in this section:

1 The Steps in Coaching an Activity

2 Key Points for Each Step of Coaching an Activity

5.1 The Steps in Coaching an Activity



5.2 Key Points for Each Step of Coaching an Activity

All five steps in coaching an activity — explain, show, watch, give feedback, and watch again — should take place in an environment that supports learning (e.g., is respectful and enthusiastic).

5.2.1 Explain

- ❑ Position yourself so that everyone can see you. Proper group positioning depends entirely on what you want children to see and on the environment. Here are a few ideas for positioning a group while you are explaining an activity:
  - ❍ If you are outdoors, make sure the sun isn't in children's eyes.
  - ❍ Position children so that distractions are behind them.
  - ❍ Check that you can see both eyes of each child before beginning.
  - ❍ If noise is preventing the group from hearing you, either reposition the group or wait until the group can hear you.
  - ❍ Train children to automatically check when they get into groups that everyone can see.
  - ❍ If possible and when appropriate, position yourself beside the child who most often tries to distract others.
- ❑ Start your explanation by
  - ❍ Naming the activity
  - ❍ Stating the purpose of the activity
  - ❍ Listing three key points about performing the activity
- ❑ Give brief, clear, and complete explanations; avoid long explanations for things you can demonstrate.
- ❑ Use words children can understand.
- ❑ Speak enthusiastically, loud enough, and at a pace that everyone can follow.
- ❑ Give "action" instructions (e.g., "Make as many passes as you can in one minute").
- ❑ Ask questions to verify that children understand what to do.
- ❑ If you lose a child's attention, you may be talking too much. Get children moving as quickly and as often as possible!

5.2.2 Show

- ❑ The main purpose of a demonstration is to create a mental picture of a movement. To promote proper learning, this picture must be accurate, because what you show is what you usually get!
- ❑ In a good demonstration, movements are executed correctly and the demonstration occurs at the right moment (before children try the movement and once they have the necessary skills).
- ❑ Check that the children understand what they are to do.
- ❑ Decide who should demonstrate and what view (front, side, back) the children will see.
- ❑ Consider using children who can do the activity as demonstrators.

- Use the Whole – Part – Whole method of demonstration:
  - A **whole** demonstration of the activity. During this demonstration, direct children's focus to the key points.
  - A **part** demonstration. The demonstrator breaks the activity into its key points, and you provide verbal cues. As the demonstrator performs the key points, call out "straight," "strong," "target," etc., to reinforce each key point.
  - Another **whole** demonstration. The demonstrator presents the whole activity again, and you provide verbal cues.
- After the Whole – Part – Whole demonstration, call for questions of clarification.

5.2.3 Watch

Key points in the watching process:

- Move around to view performance from different points of view.
- Choose observation spots that are safe for both coaches and children.
- Know what to look for:
  - If there are safety issues, intervene immediately.
  - If children are not on task, intervene immediately and ensure that children understand the task.
  - If children are on task but are not immediately successful, let them keep practising and trying to succeed.

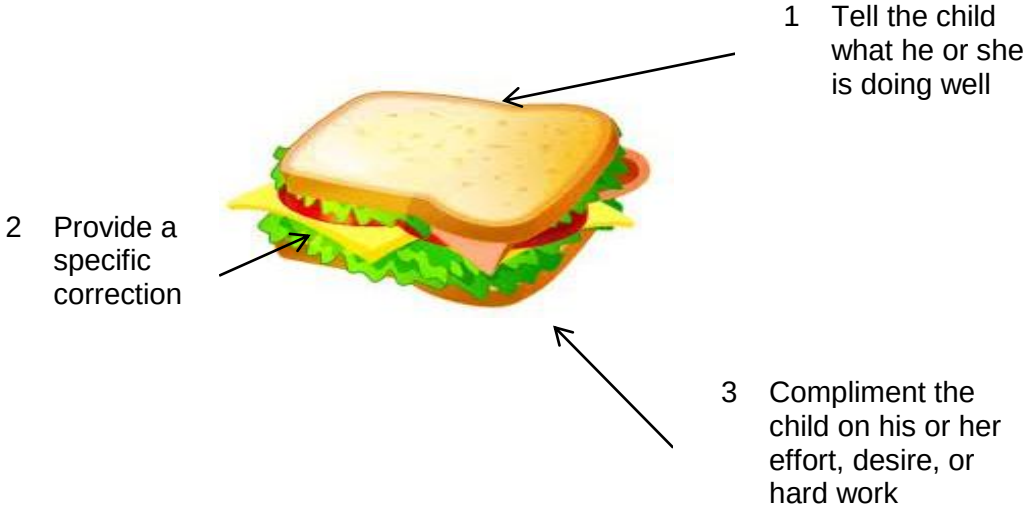
5.2.4 Give Feedback

The way feedback is delivered can have a profound impact on self-esteem. Here are some tips on how to give feedback that will help children improve their skills:

- ***Use the most appropriate form of feedback.*** Feedback can take many forms, so be sure to vary your feedback. While much feedback is verbal, demonstrating and reinforcing skills can be more effective at certain points in the learning process.
- ***Keep it short and simple.*** Use simple words and easy-to-understand language.
  - ***More is not always better.*** Giving feedback too often can make learners so dependent on it that performance suffers when the feedback is removed.

- ***Don't rush your feedback:***
  - ***Give learners time to figure out how things are going.*** Giving feedback too quickly can interfere with learners processing their own feedback and with their ability to evaluate their own performance.
  - ***Before giving feedback, ask learners to describe their own errors.*** This will help learners get better at evaluating their own performance.
- ***Be positive and constructive, not destructive or negative***. Strike a balance between encouraging things done well and pointing out areas for improvement. For example, "Your bounce pass has improved since last practice. The next step is to try to direct the ball where your teammate is going to be."
- ***Be specific.*** Vague feedback doesn't help learners as much as concise, precise feedback. Instead of telling a diver who didn't rotate enough to try harder, say something more like "You didn't rotate enough on that dive; next time tuck tighter." And instead of "Nice one!" say "I like the way you caught the ball with both hands."
- **Focus on what you want to improve.** State what you want to happen: "Next time you do a bounce pass, I want you to extend your arms." Avoid talking about what you don't want to happen: "Stop dropping the ball" will only plant the suggestion to do just that!
- ***Target only what learners can control.*** Give feedback only on the aspects of performance that learners can actually change.

Feedback Sandwich



Here are a few examples of feedback sandwiches.

Situation	Feedback Sandwich
A child throws the ball technically correctly, but to the wrong player	Wow, great step with your opposite foot! Now make sure your foot points in the direction you want the ball to go. With that small adjustment, your ball will go to the right player!
A child finishes the activity first but has missed parts of the activity	You were so fast, I've never seen anyone go that fast. Way to go! Since you're done early, why don't you try the activity again? This time, make sure you go around the cones twice. Since it won't be a race this time, you can go slowly and work on your technique. Great job.
A child pushes another child down in a race	Johnny, I liked how you swung your arms when you were running. When you swing your arms, you need to keep them to yourself. It's not appropriate to push someone else down. Do you think you can swing the arms without touching anyone or pushing anyone? I think you can.
A child starts to cry after failing to perform the skill	That's a hard skill isn't it? Even though the ball didn't go where you wanted it to, your footwork was some of the best I've seen. Let's break it down slowly now. If you release the ball right above your head, the ball will go in the right direction. I bet you can do it. Are you ready to try again? I'll help you.
A child is afraid to try the activity and so sneaks to the back of the line to avoid his or her turn	Pull the child aside: Susan, you're always very quick at picking up new techniques. Do you want to practise over here slowly and when you feel comfortable you can join in the line? I know you can do it.

5.2.5 Watch Again

- ❑ Ensure that you move around to see everyone.
- ❑ Provide positive reinforcement to children who successfully made corrections.
- ❑ Encourage those who were still working on the corrections.

6 SELECTING AND IMPLEMENTING PURPOSEFUL GAMES

This section presents the information that you as a community coach need to know to select and implement purposeful games with the children you coach. There are three topics in this section:

6.1 Activities for a Practice

Taking activities, adding some imagination, and turning the activities into a purposeful game really works with children.

Effective practice planning requires making good activity choices. Good activity choices take into account:

- ❑ Children's specific needs
- ❑ Children's LTAD stage
- ❑ Children's safety
- ❑ Appropriate explanations and demonstrations
- ❑ The logistics of the practice — the number of children, time, space available, and amount of equipment provided

By taking into account the variables listed above, you can select the type and conditions of practice that are most appropriate. This way, you increase the probability that the desired learning or training effects will occur.

The steps described below set out how to design/select the activities of a practice:

- ❑ **Step 1 — Determine what you want children to be able to do (your goal)** during the practice. This may be part of a long-term goal, one that may take several practices or even weeks to achieve.
- ❑ **Step 2 — Assess the nature of the task** you want children to be able to do in terms of the skills (open vs. closed, discrete vs. serial vs. continuous) and the athletic abilities (physical, motor, tactical, and mental) involved.
- ❑ **Step 3 —** Given the nature of the task and its demands, **ask whether it is appropriate to children's age and developmental stage, as well as their stage of skill development**. If it is, proceed to Step 4; if it isn't, return to Step 1 and make the necessary adjustments.
- ❑ **Step 4 — Identify potential risk factors** associated with the activity, and take them into account in the activity you design.
- ❑ **Step 5 — Take into account the logistics of the practice** — number of children, space, and amount of equipment available and how that will affect the design/selection of an activity.
- ❑ **Step 6 —** Design/select **an activity for developing the skill that is safe and ensures maximum activity**.

- ❑ **Step 7 —** Define the **measures of success for the activity**. This measure of success should answer the question: “How do I know the performance of the skill is improving?”
- ❑ **Step 8 —** Think about the best way to **explain** and **demonstrate** the activities to make it easy for children to understand what the activity is about and how it should be performed.
- ❑ **Step 9 —** At the end of practice, assess its effectiveness in achieving your goal.

6.2 Games

Games are effective for developing skills and building confidence when they meet the following criteria:

- ❑ Games are fun
- ❑ Games are safe
- ❑ Games have a graduated challenge, starting from the simple and working to the more complex
- ❑ Games aren’t so hard that children quit
- ❑ Games aren’t so easy that children are bored
- ❑ Games are played in a supportive environment where children encourage one another through compliments and cheering
- ❑ The rules of the game are easily understood
- ❑ Games encourage participation and minimize the elimination of children

When creating games, consider:

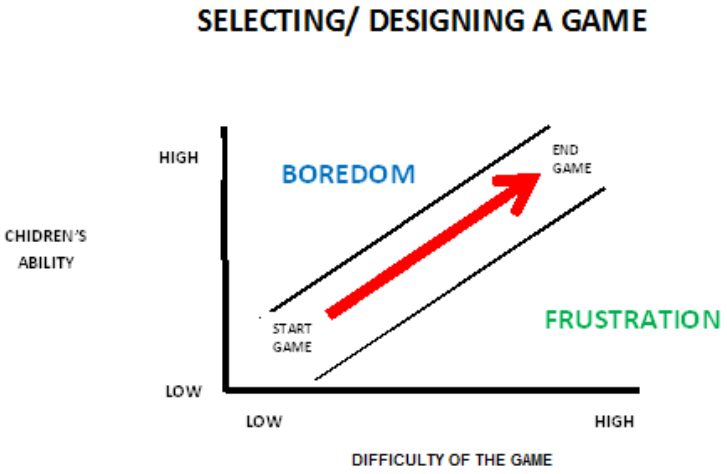
- ❑ Children’s LTAD stage
- ❑ Children’s needs
- ❑ Children’s self-esteem
- ❑ Safety
- ❑ Purpose of the game

6.3 The Challenge Zone

6.3.1 Or, Matching the Difficulty of the Activity with Children's Skill Level

While children are performing an activity, you should verify that they are appropriately challenged. When the demands of an activity are too high for their ability, they may become anxious or discouraged and may have difficulty learning. On the other hand, when the requirements are too low, children may quickly show signs of boredom or lack of interest. The difficulty level associated with the activity must therefore be optimal, i.e., children must feel that they have the ability to succeed but that the **activity represents a challenge**.

Children will be motivated to learn when they are challenged at the appropriate level. This implies there must be a reasonable chance of success OR failure when they are performing an activity. ***As a general rule, if children succeed approximately 2 times out of 3, the activity represents a suitable challenge***.



Source: Adapted from Brunelle, Drouin, Godbout, and Tousignant, 1988.

7 PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

In most of your Community Sport coaching, you will modify practice plans you have been given. This section gives you the information you need to know to tell an effective practice plan from an ineffective practice plan and to modify ineffective practice plans. As you will see as you read this section, the information you need to know to make these changes is all the material you have covered in the previous sections of this module.

There are two topics in this section:

1. The Parts of a Practice Plan
2. Self-reflection after the Practice

7.1 The Parts of a Practice Plan

A well-structured practice plan has five parts:

1. The Introduction
2. The Warm-up
3. The Main Part
4. The Cool-down
5. The Conclusion

The following table summarizes the contents of each part of a practice plan and provides tips on how to structure each part well.

Key Parts of a Complete Practice Plan in Community Sport

Time	Practice Part	Key Contents and Tips
variable *2-3 min*	**Introduction**	**Before practice begins…** ❑ Arrive early ❑ Inspect facilities ❑ Organize equipment ❑ Greet each child as he or she arrives, get a feel for his or her mood **At the beginning of practice…** ❑ Start on time ❑ Ask children to gather in front of you ❑ Talk briefly about the goals of the practice ❑ Give specific safety instructions ❑ End with a team cheer
5-10 min *8-15 min*	**Warm-up**	**General warm-up** ❑ General exercises or games to raise body temperature ❑ Dynamic flexibility exercises **Specific warm-up** ❑ Short activities that children already know and that mimic the movements of the main part ❑ Intensity should gradually increase but not tire the children **Note:** Never skip or rush a warm-up, as this may lead to injury.
15-30 min	**Main Part**	❑ Sequence three or more activities (depending on time and logistics) together in a progressive fashion ❑ Use cooperative games whenever possible ❑ Avoid elimination activities, because children who need the most practice get eliminated first (e.g., if you lose the ball you're out) ❑ If parent assistants are available, set up stations to minimize downtime and line-ups ❑ Aim to improve fundamental movement skills in children ❑ Aim to improve appropriate fundamental sport skills ❑ Play modified mini games that allow everyone to participate
5-10 min	**Cool-down**	❑ Gradually decrease intensity ❑ Follow with stretching
2-3 min	**Conclusion**	❑ Give brief comments on what went well, what needs improving ❑ End with a team cheer ❑ Ensure that nobody is leaving feeling frustrated or in an aggressive mood

Pages 59 through 71 provide detailed information on each of the five parts of a practice plan.

7.1.1 The Introduction

The introduction specifies two things:

- ❑ What you will do immediately *before* practice begins

- ❍ How you will prepare the site and equipment
- ❍ How you will conduct a safety inspection of the facility
- ❍ How you will greet each child as he or she arrives and get a feel for his or her mood

- ❑ What you will do *at the start* of the practice
  - ❍ Provide a brief overview of the session to come
  - ❍ State the goals of the practice

Goal-setting helps ensure that the activities in the practice reflect the LTAD stage of the children you coach. Here are some sample goals for practices for children at different LTAD stages.

Sample Goals for Practices by LTAD Stage

LTAD Stage	Sample Practice Goals
Active Start	❑ Ensure all children have at least 10 minutes of safe free play. ❑ Keep everyone moving. Interactive games are a great way of making this happen. ❑ Ensure that, by the end of practice, all children can identify at least one activity that was fun.
FUNdamentals	❑ Teach fundamental movement skills — running, jumping, throwing, catching, and kicking — through fun activities and games. ❑ Include at least one coordination activity and one agility activity in the warm-up. ❑ Get everyone moving and having fun by keeping games and equipment simple.
Learn to Train	❑ Improve children's strength through activities using their own body weight (e.g., sit-ups and push-ups). ❑ Develop children's stamina through relay-type activities. ❑ Make sure everyone has a chance to compete in the practice's activities and games — it helps develop a healthy level of competition among kids.

Goals should also be **SMART**:

- ❑ **Specific** — I clearly indicated what I want to accomplish
- ❑ **Measurable** — I will be able to tell when and if the goal is achieved
- ❑ **Achievable** — Children's current skills will allow them to achieve this goal
- ❑ **Realistic** — The goal is consistent with children's playing environment
- ❑ **Timely** — There will be enough time in practice to achieve this goal

7.1.2 The Warm-up

The warm-up consists of activities that gradually activate the children and prepare them physically and mentally to perform the main part of the practice. The warm-up has two parts:

1. **The general warm-up** aims to raise the body temperature until the child sweats, to allow for progressive muscle stretching.

2. **The specific warm-up**, designed for the child's particular sport, aims to prepare the warmed muscles for the types of movements the child will perform in the main part of the practice. The movements in the specific warm-up should mimic those of the main part, gradually building in intensity and range of motion.

Here are some examples of games you can use to raise body temperature in a general warm-up:

- **Tag/Freeze Tag**
  - LTAD Stage: Active Start, FUNdamentals, Learn to Train
  - Equipment: N/A or optional, depending on variation
  - The game not only gets everyone moving, but avoiding being tagged encourages agility and coordination. You can make the game even more fun by directing tagged children to freeze in various and crazy poses until a teammate unfreezes them. There are many ways that tagged children can be unfrozen: a simple touch, a completed pass, or other action can be used. Don't hesitate to use the children's creativity!
  - Tip for Engaging Young Children: In a sport setting, it is usually more fun and engaging when the coach is "it" and chases the children. Children tend to love being chased, rather than being the chaser.
  - Variations:
    - Jumping Tag — In this modified game of tag, children are practising the fundamental movement skill of jumping with both feet. This makes the game more challenging so you might have more than one person doing the tagging.
    - Chicken Tag — Use a rubber chicken to tag participants. Those tagged must cluck and move on-the-spot like a chicken until they are unfrozen.
- **Follow the Leader**
  - LTAD Stage: Active Start, FUNdamentals, Learn to Train
  - Equipment: Whistle (optional)
  - Active Start, FUNdamentals: Include a variety of fundamental movement skills such as running, hopping, and turning. You can modify this activity by giving each child a chance to be the leader. Blow a whistle or clap your hands to have the child at the front of the line move to the back so the next child can be the leader. Shout out a fundamental movement skill for the new leader. Be creative! Ask them to walk like a duck, crawl like a crab, or jump like kangaroos. Follow the Leader is a great way to incorporate imagination for this stage of development.
  - Learn to Train: Move between quick dynamic movements that get the heart pumping, coordination and agility movements that connect brain to body, and large-muscle movements that get the blood flowing. Encourage leadership and creativity by giving everyone a chance to lead. This is also a great activity to practise sport-specific skills.
- **Simon Says**
  - LTAD Stage: Active Start, FUNdamentals
  - Equipment: N/A

- Stand facing the children. Call out “Simon says jump up and down”. Continue to call out various actions, always saying “Simon says” before the action. The children perform the action only if you call out “Simon says” before the instruction. The goal is for the children to outwit the leader by performing the action only when you say “Simon says.”
- Tip for Engaging Young Children: Since the purpose of the game is to warm up the children’s bodies, no one should ever be “out” or win. Children should continue to play the game whether they followed the instructions or not. Don’t single out children who missed the instruction; just say to the group as a whole, “I didn’t say ‘Simon says’” and continue with the game. This ensures that all children feel they can continue to play.

Red Light/Green Light

- LTAD Stage: Active Start, FUNdamentals
- Equipment: Markers for starting line (pylons, sweaters, etc.)
- The Game:
  - Have all the children form a straight line in front of a marked starting line or stand along a wall. You are the Stoplight, and they are the cars.
  - The Stoplight stands a good distance away from the starting line.
  - With your back to the cars, call out “Green Light!” All the children start running toward you. Call out “Red Light!” and turn around quickly. All children must freeze. Anyone caught still moving is sent to the starting line.
  - Repeat until a child reaches you without getting caught. He or she becomes the next Stoplight.
  - **Note:** The higher the LTAD stage, the greater the distance should be between the starting line and the Stoplight.
- Tip for Engaging Young Children: It is helpful when you, as the coach, start the game as the Stoplight and show the children how much they can vary the time between shouting out “Red Light” and “Green Light.”
- Variations: Red Light, Green Light, Yellow Light. In this variation. “Green Light” means run and “Yellow Light” means walk. Instead of the cars running, how about jumping? Or rolling? Bouncing a ball? The possibilities are endless!

What Time Is It Mr. Wolf?

- LTAD Stage: Active Start, FUNdamentals,
- Equipment: Markers for starting line (pylons, sweaters, etc.)
- The Game:
  - Have all the children form a straight line in front of a marked starting line or stand along a wall. You are the Wolf.
  - Stand a good distance away from the starting line, with your back to the children.

- The children yell “What time is it Mr. Wolf?”, and you call out a time between 1 and 12 o’clock. The children take the same number of steps toward the Wolf, counting aloud as they go.
- After a few times of calling out, when the children next ask for the time, yell out “Dinner time!” and turn around and run after the children. The children need to run back to the starting line to avoid being caught.
- If a child is caught, he or she becomes the Wolf. Alternatively, if a child reaches the Wolf before he or she shouts “Dinner time!,” the child becomes the Wolf.
- **Note:** The higher the LTAD stage, the greater the distance should be between the starting line and the Wolf.

❍ Tip for Engaging Young Children: It is helpful when you, as the coach, start the game as the Wolf and show the children how much they can vary the time between the times they call out.

❍ Variation: Instead of taking steps, how about hopping or bouncing a ball to the appropriate count?

CANADIAN SPORT FOR LIFE

PHYSICAL LITERACY Warm-up Age 7 and 8

1. Dynamics - This engages large muscle groups to prepare the body for physical activity	
Alternate jogging **20 metres out** and doing activity sequence below on the way back. Activity sequence 1) Butt kicks (C drill) 2) Mini-skip 3) Backward mini-steps fast 4) Side shuffle 5) Grapevine 6) High knees 7) Knee hug and lunge (trunk twist twist)	
2. Accelerations - These drills provide neuromuscular and cardiovascular benefits by maximizing power output	
a) Drop and Go start: Standing to drop down to floor, up and accelerate	Accelerate **10 metres** Jog back
b) Twistie Start "2": Stand sideways with right foot forward, jump up and rotate 180, and back again – then accelerate	Accelerate **10 metres** Jog back
c) Twistie Start "3": Stand sideways with right foot forward, jump up and rotate 180°, back and forth and back again – then accelerate	Accelerate **10 metres** Jog back
d) "2,2,2" - Do two tuck jumps, two pushups, two burpees – then accelerate	Accelerate **10 metres** Jog back
3. Ladders - This drill involves quick steps and eye-feet coordination, which will improve agility, reaction, and awareness	
a) In in out out b) Icky shuffle c) Scissors R d) Scissors L e) Rapid thru f) High knees g) Twisties h) Cross outs	**One pass of each**
4. Weaving Pylon Drill - This drill provides repetition-based cutting manoeuvring – neuromuscular activation training	
Weave through 10 pylons set 1.2 -1.5 metres apart. Two times starting on the right of the first pylon, two times starting on the left of the first pylon. Set up one circuit for every ten athletes.	**Weave 20 metres** Jog back
5. Mini core routine - These activities activate the body's core stabilizing muscles – particularly the trunk section	
a) Plank b) Up up down down plank c) Pointer plank right d) Pointer plank left e) Super man plank right f) Super man plank left g) Side plank right h) Side plank left i) Side plank with snap rollovers	**5 - 10 seconds** each task

For more information on the skills and activities above, visit
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CANADIAN SPORT FOR LIFE

PHYSICAL LITERACY Warm-up Age 9 and 10

1. Dynamics - This engages large muscle groups to prepare the body for physical activity			
Alternate jogging **20 metres out** and doing activity sequence below on the way back. Activity sequence 1) Butt kicks (C drill) 2) Mini-skip 3) Backward mini-steps fast 4) Side shuffle		5) Grapevine 6) High knees 7) Right to lefts one footed hops 8) Knee hug and lunge (trunk twist twist)	
2. Accelerations - These drills provide neuromuscular and cardiovascular benefits by maximizing power output			
a) Drop and Go start: Standing to drop down to floor, up and accelerate			Accelerate **20 metres** Jog back
b) Twistie Start "2": Stand sideways with right foot forward, jump up and rotate 180, and back again – then accelerate			Accelerate **20 metres** Jog back
c) Twistie Start "3": Stand sideways with right foot forward, jump up and rotate 180°, back and forth and back again – then accelerate			Accelerate **20 metres** Jog back
d) "3,3,3" - Do two tuck jumps, two pushups, two burpees – then accelerate			Accelerate **15 metres** Jog back
3. Ladders - This drill involves quick steps and eye-feet coordination, which will improve agility, reaction, and awareness			
a) In in out out b) Icky shuffle c) Scissors R d) Scissors L	e) Rapid thru f) High knees g) Twisties h) Cross outs	i) Out 5x then jump 3 j) Lateral Crossovers	**Two passes of each**
4. Weaving Pylon Drill - This drill provides repetition-based cutting manoeuvring – neuromuscular activation training			
Weave through 10 pylons set 1.2 -1.5 metres apart. Two times starting on the right of the first pylon, two times starting on the left of the first pylon. Set up one circuit for every ten athletes.			**Weave 20 metres** Jog back
5. Mini core routine - These activities activate the body's core stabilizing muscles – particularly the trunk section			
a) Plank b) Up up down down plank c) Pointer plank right d) Pointer plank left e) Super man plank right	f) Super man plank left g) Side plank right h) Side plank left i) Side plank with snap rollovers		**10 - 15 seconds** each task

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PHYSICAL LITERACY Warm-up Age 11 and up

1. Dynamics - This engages large muscle groups to prepare the body for physical activity	
Alternate jogging **20 metres out** and doing activity sequence below on the way back. Activity sequence 1) Butt kicks (C drill) 2) Mini-skip 3) Backward mini-steps fast 4) Side shuffle 5) Grapevine 6) High knees 7) Right to lefts one footed hops 8) Knee hug and lunge (trunk twist twist)	
2. Accelerations - These drills provide neuromuscular and cardiovascular benefits by maximizing power output	
a) Drop and Go Start: Drop down to floor, then up and accelerate	Accelerate **20 metres** Jog back
b) Twistie Start "2": Stand sideways with right foot forward, jump up and rotate 180°, and back again – then accelerate	Accelerate **20 metres** Jog back
c) Twistie Start "3": Stand sideways with right foot forward, jump up and rotate 180°, back and forth and back again – then accelerate	Accelerate **20 metres** Jog back
d) "5,5,5" - Do five tuck jumps, five pushups, five burpees – then accelerate	Accelerate **20 metres** Jog back
3. Ladders - This drill involves quick steps and eye-feet coordination, which will improve agility, reaction, and awareness	
a) In in out out b) Icky shuffle c) Scissors R d) Scissors L e) Rapid thru f) High knees g) Twisties h) Cross outs i) Out 5x then jump3 j) Lateral Crossovers k) Continuous jump	**Two passes of each**
4. Weaving Pylon Drill - This drill provides repetition-based cutting manoeuvring – neuromuscular activation training	
Weave through 10 pylons set 2 metres apart. Five times starting on the right of the first pylon, five times starting on the left of the first pylon. Set up one circuit for every ten athletes.	**Weave 20 metres** Jog back
5. Mini core routine - These activities activate the body's core stabilizing muscles – particularly the trunk section	
a) Plank b) Up up down down plank c) Pointer plank right d) Pointer plank left e) Super man plank right f) Super man plank left g) Side plank right h) Side plank left i) Side plank with snap rollovers	**10 - 30 seconds** each task

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7.1.3 The Main Part

The main part consists of a smooth flow of activities that challenge the children and help them improve sport-specific abilities and fitness. The activities chosen must be appropriate for the sport, as well as children's age, fitness, and ability levels.

Appropriate activities:

- ❑ Promote the learning of skills and give all children opportunities to be active throughout the practice.
- ❑ Encourage children to participate. The more children get to participate — meaning the more they get to touch the ball or puck, for example — the faster they improve their skills.
- ❑ Keep children moving. For this to happen, you must:
  - ❍ Have enough equipment for each child
  - ❍ Ensure that children aren't waiting in line
  - ❍ Rotate children through activity stations
  - ❍ Modify games so children get more playing time
  - ❍ Take children's attention span into account

Checklist for Effective Activities for Each LTAD Stage

Here are some questions to ask to determine if an activity will contribute to an effective practice at any LTAD stage:

- ❑ Will the activity contribute to my practice goal?
- ❑ Does the activity focus on the skill I want to introduce or refine?
- ❑ Will the activity allow the children to be successful after 2 to 3 attempts?
- ❑ Does the activity require supporting skills?
- ❑ Are the supporting skills already familiar to the children?

And here is a checklist you can use to determine if an activity will contribute to an effective practice for a specific LTAD stage.

Active Start	✓ Allows everyone to participate ✓ Incorporates imagination and creativity ✓ Keeps things short — 3 to 5 minutes per activity ✓ Allows for a high probability of success ✓ Allows for lots of variety ✓ **Makes it FUN!**	✓ Involves fundamental movement skills ✓ Makes everyone shine ✓ Limits "all-out" physical effort — a few seconds per activity ✓ Uses equipment that is designed for children
FUNdamentals		

Learn to Train	✓ Refines fundamental movement skills ✓ Introduces basic sport-specific skills and basic tactics ✓ Keeps things short — 5-10 minutes per activity ✓ Limits all-out physical effort — 20-60 seconds at a time ✓ Uses equipment designed for children ✓ Emphasizes practice and learning … NOT competing	✓ Develops confidence and self-esteem ✓ Provides peer interaction and cooperation ✓ Teaches how to put winning and losing into perspective ✓ Highlights giving 100% effort ✓ Allows for a high probability of success ✓ Makes children shine as individuals and as a team ✓ **Makes it FUN!**

7.1.4 The Cool-down

The purpose of the cool-down is to start the body's recovery. The cool-down consists of low-intensity activities that create a transition between the more intense efforts of the main part and the end of the practice. The cool-down also gives children some time to stretch before the practice ends.

A cool-down allows both the children and the coach to:

- ❑ Do relaxation exercises
- ❑ Share highlights
- ❑ Reflect on what they accomplished
- ❑ Share feedback

Here are some sample cool-down activities:

- ❑ **Large Body Rotations**
  - ❍ Body rotations are a great way to slow down the heart and provide some dynamic stretching. Engage the large body parts — trunk, arms, legs — and rotate in a slow, controlled manner. Rotate in both directions to develop balanced flexibility.
- ❑ **Floppy Rag Doll**
  - ❍ The purpose of this activity is to release any muscle tension that might have built up over the practice. Have the children pretend they're floppy rag dolls or bean-bag animals. Start by shaking the entire body; then move to individual body parts. Encourage children to be as loose and floppy as possible. This is a great dynamic stretching activity.
- ❑ **Balloon**
  - ❍ For younger children, pretending to be a big balloon full of hot air is a fun cool-down. Tell the children that their balloon has a small leak, and encourage them to slowly deflate down to the ground.

- **Tree in the Wind**
  - This is a nice cool-down at any age. Stand with the feet wide apart and the knees slightly bent. Raise both arms overhead and gently wave them from side to side, like a tree in the wind.
- **Deep Breaths and Hug**
  - Breathe slowly and deeply in through the nose and out through the mouth three or four times. Then wrap the arms around the shoulders, and give yourself a big hug and a pat on the back. This is a great way to wrap up the cool-down and practice.

7.1.5 The Conclusion

The conclusion consists of the coach providing some comments on the practice, as well as information about the next practice or game. The conclusion should always finish on a positive and friendly note. ALWAYS find something encouraging to say to each child as he or she leaves the practice with a parent or caregiver.

The conclusion also gives children a chance to provide feedback on the practice. However, obtaining feedback from young children can be challenging:

- Children may feel pressure to say they liked an activity because they think that's what you want them to say.
- Children may not have the confidence to speak out in front of their peers.

Here are two examples of how to get around this; both involve relaxation and sharing:

- Have the children lie down on the grass or gym floor with their eyes closed. Ask them to picture in their minds the different games they played during the practice. As you name the different games, have the children tell you whether they liked the activity by raising and lowering their hands.
- Have the children lie down on the grass or gym floor with their eyes closed. Name each game, and ask the children to give a thumbs up or a thumbs down to indicate their likes and dislikes.

The key to both of these approaches is having the children keep their eyes closed so they can't base their opinion on the actions of the other children.

Never leave the practice until all the children have been picked up by a parent or guardian!

7.2 Self-reflection after the Practice

Immediately after practice, reflect on the practice.

The following checklists help identify what went well and should be repeated, as well as what can be added or improved in the next practice. Note the results of these reflections in your practice plan for future reference.

- Self-reflection checklist on meeting your practice goals (use the SMART goal checklist)
  - ✓ Specific — Did I clearly indicate what I wanted to accomplish?
  - ✓ Measurable — Did I achieve what I hoped for?
  - ✓ Achievable — Were the children skilled enough to achieve the goal?
  - ✓ Realistic — Was the goal consistent with children's playing environment?

- ✓ Timely — Was there enough time in the practice to achieve the goal?

- ❑ Self-reflection checklist on giving feedback
  - ❍ Was my feedback...
    - ✓ Encouraging?
    - ✓ Specific?
    - ✓ Positive and constructive?
    - ✓ Focused on WHAT to improve?
    - ✓ Balanced?
    - ✓ Short and simple?
- ❑ Checklist for helping to build children's confidence and self-esteem
  - ❍ At practice today,..
    - ✓ Was I warm and welcoming?
    - ✓ Did I encourage fair play?
    - ✓ Did I allow everyone to shine?
    - ✓ Did I prevent behaviour that made others feel bad?
    - ✓ Did I acknowledge and encourage effort?
    - ✓ Did I provide frequent and sincere praise?
    - ✓ Was I happy to be there?

Practice Planning Checklist

Structure and Organization

- ✓ The practice is organized and well structured (introduction, warm-up, main part, cool-down, conclusion).
- ✓ The length of the practice is appropriate for children's age and ability.
- ✓ Available facilities and equipment are used as fully as needed to achieve practice goals.
- ✓ The practice includes a variety of activities.
- ✓ Activities are planned so there is minimal waiting time for children.
- ✓ The transition from one activity to the next minimizes the time wasted.
- ✓ Activities are presented in the appropriate order in the main part of the practice.

Choice of Activities

- ✓ The activities are appropriate to children's LTAD stage.
- ✓ The activities are adapted to children's skill and fitness level.
- ✓ The activities have well-defined goals, and the purpose of the tasks involved is clear.
- ✓ The activities are relevant to the sport.

Success and Challenge

- ✓ The activities present reasonable challenges to the children.
- ✓ The activities are chosen or designed so that the children succeed on average three out of four times when performing tasks.

Safety

- ✓ Potential environmental, equipment and facilities, and human risk factors have been considered, and the activities are designed accordingly.
- ✓ An Emergency Action Plan is available.

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PRACTICE PLAN

National Coaching Certification Program

TEAM: **DATE:** **TIME:** **LOCATION:** **LTAD STAGE:**

SAFETY NOTES:

PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY: **PRACTICE GOAL(S):**

INTRODUCTORY MESSAGES:

WARM-UP:

ACTIVITIES	TIME	PURPOSE	COACHING POINTS	EQUIPMENT NEEDED
Warm-up activity 1				
Warm-up activity 2				

MAIN PART:

ACTIVITIES	TIME	PURPOSE	COACHING POINTS	EQUIPMENT NEEDED
Main activity 1				
Main activity 2				
Main activity 3				

COOL-DOWN:

ACTIVITIES	TIME	PURPOSE	COACHING POINTS	EQUIPMENT NEEDED
Cool-down activity 1				
Cool-down activity 2				

CONCLUDING MESSAGES:

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Government of British Columbia (1994), Ministry of Government Services, Sports and Commonwealth Games Division. *Sport Parent Survey*.

8.2 Long-term Athlete Development in Canada

Canadian Sport for Life (http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/). Canada's website dedicated to long-term athlete development and related topics. An excellent place to start.

Developing Physical Literacy (http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/resources/developing-physical-literacy). A core resource for parents from Canadian Sport for Life.

List of national sport organizations (http://www.pch.gc.ca/pgm/sc/fed/index-eng.cfm). List of the National Sport Organizations that are supported, in part, by contributions from Sport Canada.

Sport for young people in New Zealand (http://www.sportnz.org.nz/en-nz/young-people/). Information on how to provide a quality sport environment for children of all ages and stages

Long-term Athlete Development for Parents (www.coach.ca). A document published by the Coaching Association of Canada to help coaches explain the facts in an easy, accurate, and user-friendly manner.

8.3 Safety

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8.4 Selecting and Implementing Purposeful Games

Brunelle, J., Drouin, D., Godbout, P., and Tousignant, M. (1988). *La supervision de l'intervention en activité physique*.

How to be a better coach

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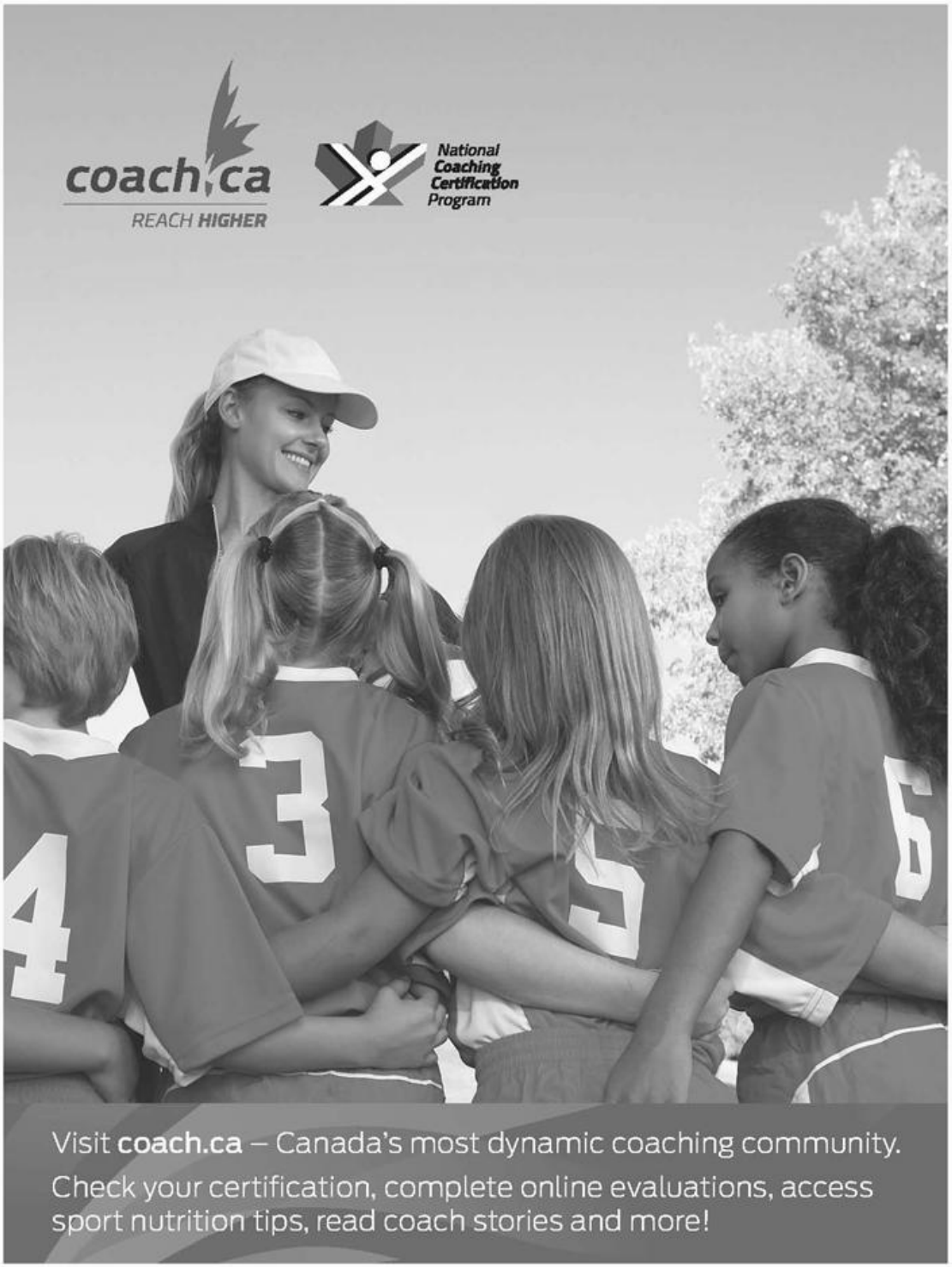
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