

# Incorporating Physical Literacy in our Practices



**PHYSICAL LITERACY** is the combination of mastering fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills. It helps children involve themselves in and react to physical activities going on around them. For children to have success in any sport it is important they master movement skills before sport specific skills. In other words, learning fundamental movement skills before fundamental soccer skills will improve performance ability.



In previous generations children played outside, in the backyard, street, local park a lot more than the current generation of children. Electronic devices, video games and TV unfortunately keep them inside. This leads to their physical inactivity and poor physical literacy. Therefore it's even more prudent now that these fundamental movement skills are incorporated in our soccer programs. Our grassroots soccer programs must incorporate these skills within their practices. Twisting, turning, changing of direction, jumping, bounding, skipping etc. can all be incorporated with a ball or without a ball.

Physical literacy can be described as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life."

– Dr Whitehead, International Physical Literacy Foundation



# ACTIVE START



At this introductory level the objective is to get children moving and to keep them active. Allowing these young players to be active, creative and to have fun in a positive, safe environment will allow them to grow, and fall in love with our game.

Interactive physical literacy activities will be the underlying form of competition for male and female players 4 and 5 years of age.

## RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT

Cones  
Balls  
Pinnies

Pylons  
Agility ladder  
Agility poles

Hurdles  
Balancing Beams  
Play/Crawl tunnels  
Skipping Ropes

"Agility, balance, coordination, and speed are valuable in almost all sports. Developing these ABCs, as well as prediction and interception, is an important part of physical literacy, and can be achieved through involvement in a variety of sports and programs." - **Canadian Sport for Life**

## #1 - HUNGRY HIPPO



### ORGANIZATION

Players are placed in a 20x20m area with a ball (Hippo food) per player. Parents can accompany the players (yellow). The Hungry Hippo (the coach) is positioned in the middle of the playing area.

### PROCEDURE

Players start with ball in hands and throw it to the coach who throws it away and they have to bring it back as quickly as they can using: a certain # of steps, a different body part (touching elbow, knee, head, etc.), dribble the ball back etc.



## TOP TIP

Grassroots players should participate, formally or informally in a variety of additional activities. Swimming and well structured gymnastics programs are recommended to enhance the full range of basic movement skills and physical literacy.



# U4 - U6

## #2 - WHAT'S THE TIME, MR. WOLF?



### ORGANIZATION

All Players are positioned on one side of a 20x20m area. At the youngest age group's, U4-U5 parents should take part with their child (Yellows).

### PROCEDURE

The coach or a player is "Mr Wolf", who stands at the opposite end of the playing area from the players, facing away from them. A

call-and-response then takes place: all players chant in unison "What's the time, Mr Wolf?", and Mr Wolf will answer in one of the two ways:

- 1) Mr Wolf may call a clock time (e.g., "3 o'clock"). The other players will then take that many steps, counting out loud as they go ("One, two, three"). Then they ask the question again.
- 2) Mr Wolf may call "Dinner time!", when Mr Wolf will turn around and chase the other players back to their starting point. If Mr Wolf successfully tags a player, that player becomes the new Mr Wolf for the next round.

**Variations:** Change up the types of moves the players make e.g. instead of taking steps they can hop, skip, jump, shuffle or even dribble the ball using "x" number of steps/touches.

## #3 - OBSTACLE COURSE

### ORGANIZATION

Using a 20x20m area set up a variety of obstacles that the players can move through. Parents (Yellows) should accompany the children through the course.

### PROCEDURE

One-by-one the children will enter the obstacle course and move through the different obstacles. The coach should position his/herself at the start of the course to help start the players at the correct time. Be creative and develop obstacles that will challenge the children to use different movement skills to overcome each part of the course. A,B,C'S: Hop's, Skip's, Jumps, Sprints, Forward/backwards running, shuffles etc. should all be incorporated.



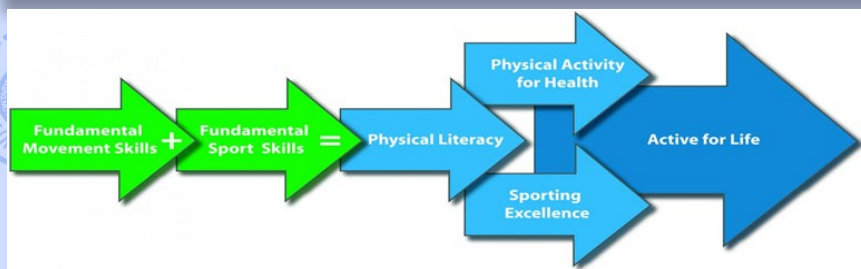


# FUNDAMENTALS



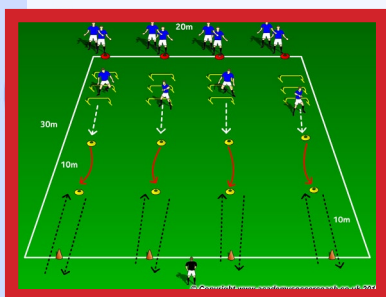
Skill development at this stage should be well structured, positive and FUN; and should concentrate on developing the ABC's of Agility, Balance and Coordination plus Speed. Coaches should create a stimulating learning environment where the atmosphere is about freedom and fun.

Encourage your players to take part in unstructured play every day, with their friends. Learning to understand the movements going on around them is a critical skill to be developed at this age.



“Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.” - **The International Physical Literacy Association**

## #1 - RELAY RACE



### ORGANIZATION

Players split into 4 groups of 3  
(or 3 groups of 4)

### PROCEDURE

Players race through the 4 stages of the obstacle course performing a variety of fundamental movement skills eg. forward/backwards running, skipping, hopping, bear-crawls, frog jumps, lateral shuffles etc.



When facilitating the learning of Fundamental Movement Skill's do not do so in isolation. FMS training should be disguised in activities & always be FUN. Constant repetition of a movement is not enjoyable training for a young player.



# U6 - U9

## #2 – CONTINUOUS MOVEMENT

### ORGANIZATION

Players are divided into 3 or 4 groups and placed in a 20x20m area. 1 ball per group.

### PROCEDURE

Players move around the area using different types of movement dictated by the coach: running, backwards running, hopping, skipping etc. Players throw the ball to each other using a

variety of techniques: overhead throw, under-arm throw, chest/bounce pass, 1 hand throw under opposite leg, American football “snap”.

**PROGRESSIONS:** Players can only play to players in same team (red only pass to red), players must pass to a different team each time (Red must play blue or yellow).



## #3 – TUNNEL TAG

### ORGANIZATION

Players are placed inside a 20x20m area. 1 player is selected as the “Chaser”.

### PROCEDURE

On the signal, the “Chaser” will attempt to tag the other players. When a player gets tagged, he/she must use their body to form a tunnel.

Some examples might be: standing with feet spread, hands and feet touching the ground

with body arched, one hand and one foot on the ground. Encourage the players to be creative. The Coach could have some players demonstrate tunnels before the game started.

Once tagged, the player must freeze in the form of a tunnel. To become unfrozen, another player must go through their tunnel. Once a player goes through the tunnel, the frozen player is now free to rejoin the game. The game ends when all the players are frozen or after a given period of time.

If you want to have winners, there are a few options:

1. Last 1 or 2 players to be frozen are the winners.
2. At the end of time, if there are still players unfrozen, the players win.



# LEARN TO TRAIN



Players are now moving from self-centred to self-critical, and they have a high stimulation level during basic skills training.

Although, players in this age group are able to work in small groups to achieve common goals, they are ultra-competitive and the presence of competition is essential in creating a fun and challenging environment essential for stimulating learning.

“Physical literacy is the cornerstone of both participation and excellence in physical activity and sport. Individuals who are physically literate are more likely to be active for life.” - Canadian Sport for Life

## #1 – THE HUDDLE



### ORGANIZATION

Players divided into groups of 6-7. One Player is selected as a target (yellow) and another selected as a chaser. Target player tucks a pinnie into the back of his/her shorts.

### PROCEDURE

Players, excluding the chaser, join hands to form a circle

- The circle must stay intact and the players must move together to prevent the chaser from catching the target player and stealing the pinnie.
  - Players work together for around 1 minute or until the chaser steals the pinnie.
  - Chaser can go under the legs or the arms, or around the group, but cannot go over the top. After 1 minute change the chaser and the target player.
- Competition can be created between groups.

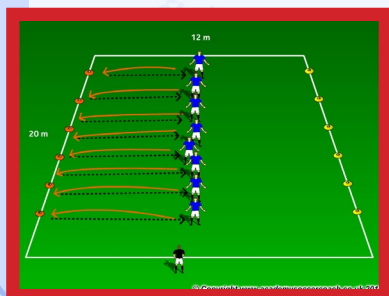


**TOP  
TIP**

To ensure players remain engaged all training; including FMS training must be competitive. Think about implementing a scoring system where points are awarded for group success.



## #2 - REACTION LINE



### ORGANIZATION

Players are positioned in a vertical line down the centre of a 12x20m area. Each side of the area is marked with a coloured cone (orange & yellow). Coach is positioned at the front of the area in full view of all players.

### PROCEDURE

On the spot players perform the movement dictated by the coach e.g. running on the spot, high knees, jumping jacks, one leg hops, jumping etc. When the coach calls

out a colour (orange or yellow) players must move to that side of the area and return to the starting point as quickly as possible. Coach must be creative in the types of movements both at the starting position and as the players travel to and from the side of the area. To simulate reactions the coach can also play opposites, give the colours soccer teams such as orange is Barcelona, Yellow is Real Madrid and call out players or facts that relate to those teams. Players are then required to think fast and react based on verbal communication.

## #3 - HANDBALL

### ORGANIZATION

Players placed in 20x20m area with 2 nets positioned on either endline. Balls positioned around the outside of the playing area. Players are divided into 4 equal teams of 3.

### PROCEDURE

- 2 handball games going on within the same playing area
- Players can only take 2 steps in possession.
- Players score by putting the ball into their opponents net.



“Individuals who are physically literate move with competence and confidence in a wide variety of physical activities in multiple environments that benefit the healthy development of the whole person” - PHE CANADA



## Additional Physical Literacy Resources

<http://www.ontariosoccer.net/player/grassroots/grassroots-resources>  
<http://www.phecanada.ca/programs/physical-literacy/what-physical-literacy>  
<http://canadiansportforlife.ca/ltad-stages/active-life>



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