

Physical Literacy at Summer Camp

1-week unit for ages 3 - 5 years

Are you looking to add some physical activity to your summer camp? This collection of physical literacy lesson plans has been developed for summer camp leaders and early childhood educators who are running 1-week programs.

Each of these sessions takes about 30 minutes to complete with a group of children. At the end of each session, kids will have enjoyed a series of fun activities, and they will have taken one more step in developing their physical literacy.

What is physical literacy?

Physical literacy is when kids have developed the skills and confidence to participate in many different physical activities and sports. Fundamental movement skills such as throwing, catching, running and jumping are the beginning of physical literacy.

Physical literacy is important because it gives kids the confidence to stay active for life. It's not about being a "superstar athlete"—everyone can learn fundamental movement skills, and everyone can become physically literate!

How to use these session plans

1. Decide what time of day that you will run your physical literacy sessions.
2. Review each session plan in advance to ensure that you have the needed equipment.
3. Establish a session routine for the children (e.g. coming together and listening to your instructions at the start of each session).
4. Make sure that the children understand your expectations for each session (e.g. stop and start on your signal, put away equipment, etc.).

Tips for running a fun session

1. Manage each session so that every child feels included. For example, avoid setups where children with more advanced development might dominate.
2. If necessary, select partners and teams to make sure that all of the partners or teams are balanced for ability.
3. Ensure maximum participation for every child by minimizing line-ups and avoiding games with large circles. Whenever possible, stick to small group activities that use small teams or groups of 2-4 children each.

Enjoy your camp! For more session plans and information on physical literacy, visit:

ActiveForLife.com

Session 1: Balance

3 - 5 year olds

EQUIPMENT: Tape, chalk or ropes to create lines, music

Introduction (2 - 3 minutes)

Greet the children, introduce yourself, and bring them to the centre of the activity area.

Ask the children to hold hands and form a circle with you, then sit down.

If available, you can use existing circle markings on the floor.

Ask children to sit with their hands on their knees with their eyes looking at you (crisscross-apple-sauce).

Explain in 20-30 seconds what you will be doing today.

Today we will be practicing how to balance.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Be consistent with your introductory routine and instructions.
- Comments and “coaching” should be minimal-to-none at this age.
- If you do make comments, make sure they are positive and constructive.

Activity 1: Simon says (5 - 8 minutes)

- When the leader says “*Simon says...*”, children watch what the leader does and then follow the command.
- The leader should hold each balance position with the children for 10-15 seconds before giving another command.
- If the leader does not say “*Simon says...*” before a command, children remain still.
- If a child moves when the leader has not said “*Simon says...*”, the child must quickly sit down and stand up. (Child continues to play. This avoids elimination from the activity.)
- Suggestions for commands:
 - » *Wide star (legs wide, arms wide)*
 - » *Narrow star (legs together, arms wide)*
 - » *Reach up high (legs together, hands together reaching up)*
 - » *Reach up very high (on tippy toes)*
 - » *Squat / chair (arms forward, knees bent)*

- » *Landed airplane (arms out to side, lean forward, front leg bent, back leg stretching straight back with toes touching the ground)*
- » *Advanced challenge: Stork stand / tree stand (balance on one foot, other foot placed against support leg below knee, arms stretched out at sides at shoulder height)*

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Leader can choose a child to demonstrate a balance position for others to copy.
- Praise children for staying balanced.

CUES

- *Head up*
- *Look forward*
- *Hold yourself steady*

Activity 2: Line statues (5 - 8 minutes)

- Children find space on a line in the activity space.
- Lines can be court markings, floor seams, wood slats, ribbons, strings, or ropes.
- Tape (indoor) or chalk (outdoor) can also be used to create lines in activity space.
- Leader explains that when the music starts, children are to walk along the line.
- Children walk forward, following the lines on the floor.
- *When the music stops, I want you to freeze like a statue.*
- Allow children to “freeze” for 5-10 seconds before restarting music.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Encourage children to freeze in positions that were demonstrated in Activity 1.
- Praise children for making “great statues!”

CUES

- *Head up*
- *Look forward*
- *Hold yourself steady*

Activity 3: Balance tag (10 minutes)

- Children spread out around activity space.
- Leader explains that they are playing tag and the leader is “it”.
- *To be “safe” you must freeze and balance in a “wide star” position.*
- *If you get tagged before freezing, you must hop on one foot 5 times before rejoining the game.*
- The leader will progress by asking the children to freeze in different positions, ultimately finishing with a stork stand (most challenging).
- Once children understand the game, leader can pick a child to be “it”.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Demonstrate the positions to children.

Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Ask children to sit quietly in a circle and review what they learned today.

Talk about things the group did well.

Session 2: Locomotion

3 - 5 year olds

EQUIPMENT: None

Introduction (2 - 3 minutes)

Greet the children, introduce yourself, and bring them to the centre of the activity area.

Ask the children to hold hands and form a circle with you, then sit down.

If available, you can use existing circle markings on the floor.

Ask children to sit with their hands on their knees with their eyes looking at you (crisscross-apple-sauce).

Explain in 20-30 seconds what you will be doing today.

Activity 1: Space bubble (2 - 3 minutes)

- This activity develops each child's awareness of personal space and promotes safety.
- Tell the children to stand up and spread out so they are not touching each other.
- Demonstrate what their "space bubble" is.
- Keep feet on the ground and reach arms in all directions.
- You should not be able to touch anyone else.
- Ask the children to make their own space bubble like you demonstrated.
- Explain: To stay safe, their bubble should not touch anybody else or any objects around them, such as walls or equipment.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Demonstrate what could happen if children are not aware of their space bubbles (e.g. bumping into a wall or equipment, banging into somebody with their hand or body).

Activity 2: Making shapes (6 - 8 minutes)

- Explain that the children will now make shapes with their bodies within their space bubble.
- Demonstrate that the space bubble gets bigger or smaller depending on the size of the shape.
- Ask the children to imitate you as you make the following shapes:
 - » Star (arms and legs stretched wide, standing or lying down)
 - » Ball (crouch and tuck as small as possible)
 - » Candle (stand straight and tall with arms above head)
 - » Flamingo (stand on one leg with arms out to sides)
- Give the children an opportunity to invent their own shapes.
- If time permits, ask a few children to demonstrate their shapes, and ask the other children to imitate.

Activity 3: Be free and do like me (6 - 8 minutes)

- Ask the children to stand up and spread out so they are not touching each other.
- Ask the children to imitate you as you demonstrate the following skills:
 - » Jump up and down (start on two feet and land on two feet)
 - » Jump side to side
 - » Hop (start on one foot and land on one foot, alternate left and right)
 - » Walk at different speeds, directions, and patterns (shapes, zigzag, etc.)
 - » Skip (step, hop, step, hop...)

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- From time to time, ask the children to freeze.
- Check that they are maintaining their space bubbles.

CUES

- *Head up*
- *Look around*
- *“Space bubble”*

Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Ask children to sit quietly in a circle and review what they learned today.

Talk about things the group did well.

Session 3: Object Manipulation

3 - 5 year olds

EQUIPMENT: Bean bags, hoops, soft balls, music, inflatable pool or container

Introduction (2 - 3 minutes)

Greet the children, introduce yourself, and bring them to the centre of the activity area.

Ask the children to hold hands and form a circle with you, then sit down.

If available, you can use existing circle markings on the floor.

Ask children to sit with their hands on their knees with their eyes looking at you (crisscross-apple-sauce).

Explain in 20-30 seconds what you will be doing today.

Today you are going to learn how to throw underhand.

Activity 1: Musical hoops (5 - 8 minutes)

- Leader places several hoops around activity space.
- *When the music starts, I want you to walk around the activity space without touching any of the hoops.*
- *When the music stops, I want you to jump into a hoop and freeze.*
- Repeat the activity with different locomotion movements:
 - » run
 - » jump
 - » hop
 - » gallop
 - » skip
- Ask children to “freeze” in interesting shapes.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Remind children that it is not safe to step on the hoops.
- If there are enough hoops, have one child per hoop.
- If there are not enough hoops, have two children per hoop at most.

CUES

- *Head up*
- *Look where you are going*
- *Space bubble*

Activity 2: Fill the hoop (5 - 8 minutes)

- Leader places a hoop on the ground.
- Leader demonstrates how to underhand throw a bean bag into the hoop.
- Leader divides children into groups of 2-3 children.
- Each group has their own hoop and space for throwing underhand.
- Children can choose to stand 1-3 metres away from the hoop, depending on their confidence and ability.
- Leader encourages children to begin fairly close to hoop (for success).
- After 1-2 minutes, leader asks children to move further away from the hoop for added challenge.
- *How far can you go?*

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Leader can use music to start and stop activity.
- Praise children for their efforts.
- Don't correct technique too much. Pre-school children need time to develop mature throwing patterns.

CUES

- *Look where you are going*
- *Step when you throw*
- *Swing your arm*

Game: Fill the pool (8 - 10 minutes)

- Leader places a small inflatable pool in the centre of the activity space.
- Leader places a hoop in each corner of the activity space.
- Leader fills each hoop with several bean bags and/or soft balls.
- Leader explains that the game is to "fill the pool up".
- *When I turn on the music, I want you to jog around the play area.*
- *When I stop the music, I want you to "fill up" the pool with the bean bags and balls by using your underhand throw.*
- Children can only take one bean bag or ball at a time.
- Children throw the ball or bean bag into the pool, and then they get another one until all bean bags and balls are in the pool.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- A large box or similar container can also be used as the "pool".

CUES

- *Look where you are going*
- *Step when you throw*
- *Swing your arm*

Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Ask children to sit quietly in a circle and review what they learned today.

Talk about things the group did well.

Session 4: Locomotion

3 - 5 year olds

EQUIPMENT: Hoops

Introduction (2 - 3 minutes)

Greet the children, introduce yourself, and bring them to the centre of the activity area.

Ask the children to hold hands and form a circle with you, then sit down.

If available, you can use existing circle markings on the floor.

Ask children to sit with their hands on their knees with their eyes looking at you (crisscross-apple-sauce).

Explain *in 20-30 seconds what you will be doing today.*

Today you will be practicing how to move in different ways.

To stay safe, remember your "space bubble".

Activity 1: Simon says (8 - 10 minutes)

- When the leader says "*Simon says...*", children look at what the leader is doing and then follow the command.
- Leader signals to the children to stop after 5-10 seconds, then gives a new command.
- If the leader does not say "*Simon says...*" before a command, children should remain still.
- If a child moves on a command when the leader does not say "*Simon says...*", the leader asks the child to sit down and stand up quickly. (Child continues to play. This avoids elimination from the activity.)
- Once the leader has done several commands, children may be given turns to lead the activity.
- Suggestions for commands:
 - » *Jump on the spot (two feet)*
 - » *Hop on the spot on one foot (one foot)*
 - » *March like a soldier on the spot (knees up)*
 - » *Walk around slowly*
 - » *Follow the leader while walking quickly*
 - » *Jump around on two feet*
 - » *Hop around on one foot*
 - » *Skip around*
 - » *Walk like a crab*

- » *Walk like a duck*
- » *Leap like a frog*
- » *Roll like a log*

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Make sure children spread out and find space.
- Make sure children face the leader.

CUES

- *Heads up*
- *Look where you are going*
- *“Space bubble”*
- *Listen carefully*

Activity 2: Island hopping (8 - 10 minutes)

- Leader places hoops around the activity space (one hoop per child).
- Leader explains that the hoops are islands.
- Leader calls out a way for children to move (see Activity 1 above).
- Children must move around the “water” between and around the islands (hoops).
- When the leader calls “shark attack!”, children must jump onto an island to be safe.
- Once you have played a few rounds, take away half of the hoops.
- Children are now allowed to “share” their island with one other friend.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- For safety, tell the children not to step on the hoops.

CUES

- *Heads up*
- *Look where you are going*
- *“Space bubble”*
- *Listen carefully*

Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Ask children to sit quietly in a circle and review what they learned today.

Talk about things the group did well.

Session 5: Object Manipulation

3 - 5 year olds

EQUIPMENT: Small foam balls, bean bags, hoops, water balloons, and other various equipment.

Introduction (2 - 3 minutes)

Greet the children, introduce yourself, and bring them to the centre of the activity area.

Ask the children to hold hands and form a circle with you, then sit down.

If available, you can use existing circle markings on the floor.

Ask children to sit with their hands on their knees with their eyes looking at you (crisscross-apple-sauce).

Explain in 20-30 seconds what you will be doing today.

Today we will learn how to catch a ball. Do you know games where you catch a ball?

Activity 1: Hoop catch (5 minutes)

- Leader spreads one hoop per child around activity space.
- Using as many different types of equipment as possible (e.g. various size balls, bean bags, foam blocks, balloons, badminton bird, rubber chickens, etc.), leader places one piece of equipment in each hoop.
- Children spread out around activity space, and leader demonstrates the game.
- *When I start the music, you can run around the hoops, but don't touch them.*
- *When I stop the music, jump into a hoop and pick up the thing in that hoop.*
- *Toss it up and down and catch it until I say "freeze".*
- *When I start the music again, put it down in the hoop again and you can run again.*
- Repeat activity.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- Remind children to keep their heads up when running and be aware of others.

Activity 2: Underhand catch (10 minutes)

- Leader asks children to sit in a semi-circle so they can see the leader.
- Leader demonstrates what your hands look like when you catch a ball at or below waist level (underhand catch).
- *Hands in front of your stomach, palms facing upwards—like a bowl.*
- *Watch the ball with your eyes.*
- Leader chooses one child to help to demonstrate an underhand catch.
- Using a bean bag or soft foam ball, leader and helper stand about 1 metre apart and gently toss and catch the bean bag or ball.
- Leader then divides children into pairs and gives each pair a soft foam ball or bean bag.
- Leader designates two lines where children stand and face each other (e.g. lines on floor, or use tape or cones to mark lines if needed).
- Partners stand across from each other so that all balls or bean bags are being tossed in the same direction.
- Children start about 1 metre from each other.
- As catching improves, leader can move children further apart.

CUES

- *Hands in front of stomach*
- *Palms upward*
- *Hands like a bowl*

Activity 3: Hot potato (10 minutes)

- Leader organizes children into groups of 3 or 4.
- Each group finds their own space and forms a small circle.
- Leader gives a “hot potato” to each group (bean bag or small foam ball).
- *When the music starts, throw the “hot potato” underhand to another child in your circle.*
- *That child tries to catch the “hot potato” and then throws it to someone else.*
- *When I stop the music, everyone must “freeze”.*
- *If you have the “hot potato” in your hands, hop up and down 5 times.*
- Repeat activity a few times.

TIPS FOR INSTRUCTION

- For added fun in Activities 2 and 3, water balloons can be used outdoors on a hot summer day (after children have practiced with a bean bag).
- Gently remind children of the cues for catching.
- Praise children for their efforts.

Wrap-up (2 minutes)

Call the children into a circle and review what they learned.

When you catch in front of your tummy, what shape do you make with your hands?