

# Jumping & Balancing

## WEEK THREE

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**THIS SET OF LESSONS PROVIDES** games and activities to help children develop fitness, strength, body awareness, spatial concepts, balance, jumping, and hand eye coordination, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).



***Special Olympics***  
**young athletes™**

[www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)



## Overview

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

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

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

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

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

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

**>> See the Young Athletes Toolkit online at:**  
[www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

# Jumping & Balancing

WEEK DAY

three

1

2

3

## Opening Sports Song (5 min.)

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

**EXPLAIN** "We're going to start a NEW week of Young Athletes! Remember, an athlete is someone who plays sports and exercises the muscles in their body. We are all going to be Young Athletes while we play new games and exercise the muscles in our body. Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

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

- The runner on the team goes run run run, run run run, run, run, run. The runner on the team goes run run run - all through the day.
- The athletes in our class walk real slow, walk real slow, walk real slow. The athletes in our class walk real slow - all through the town.
- The player on the court goes jump jump jump, jump jump jump, jump jump jump. The player on the court goes jump jump jump - all through the game.



**Coach Says** (5 min.)

**PURPOSE** Shifting of body weight to engage balance muscles is an important functional and sports related skill. Other skills to be developed include identifying body parts, general fitness, motor skills (balance), motor coordination, body awareness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Encourage athletes to try these new balancing techniques while manipulating their bodies so that their muscles will need to counteract shifts in weight. "Great warm-up! Now let's play "Coach Says" using our bodies. I want you to look at what I do with MY body and try to do it with your own. I want you to COPY what I do. Look at me, see how I am:

- Standing on one foot, standing with one foot in front of the other, standing on tip toes, standing on my heels...You try!
- Now try it with your arms out/in/up/down, or eyes closed/open.

**Balance Beam/Ropes** (5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Balance beams/ropes

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills, body awareness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Let's play with our balance beams/ropes!" Walk along the balance beam/ropes nice and straight.

- Now try walking with one foot on each side of the balance beam/ropes like I am (straddling rope).
- Great! Now let's walk on TOP of the balance beam/ropes with one foot in front of the other. Go very slowly to keep your balance.



# Jumping & Balancing

WEEK DAY

three

1

2

3

## Foot Trap (4 min.)

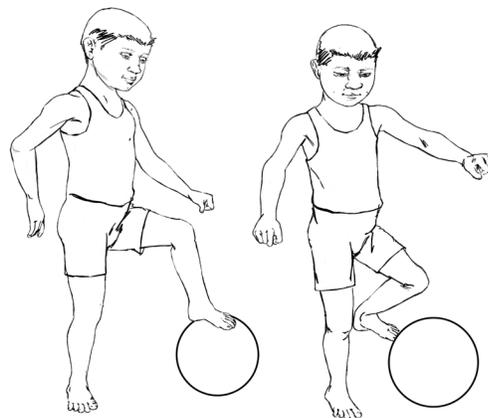
**EQUIPMENT** Slow motion ball; Use various sized balls for athletes to experience various amounts of challenge to their balance (smaller ball = smaller challenge).

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills (kicking & trapping), body awareness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Now we are going to use our feet to trap a ball. Take your foot like I am, and place your foot on top of the ball. Stand like this and balance. Then, take your foot off and kick the ball to another athlete/coach."

**Tips:** Encourage athletes trying this skill with smaller balls if larger ones are too difficult.

- Give children opportunities to practice kicking the ball from a stand still trap. If athletes master this begin having them trap a rolling ball.
- Now, when another athlete kicks the ball to you, try to stop the ball while it's moving by putting your foot on top of it the same way.
- Once it stops, get your balance, and then kick the ball back.
- Great job passing the ball back and forth using foot traps!



## Step and Jump *(6 min.)*

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

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills (balance and direction), body awareness, adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** “OK athletes, now we are going to jump off of our balance beams/ropes and try to land on the floor markers.

- Step onto the balance beam/rope, then bend your knees, and jump to the floor markers.
- As athletes master jumping to a floor marker, move the markers further away, raise the level of the jump, and alter the floor marker position to allow for twisted jumps if athletes have balance skills.

## Closing Sports Song *(5 min.)*

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

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

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



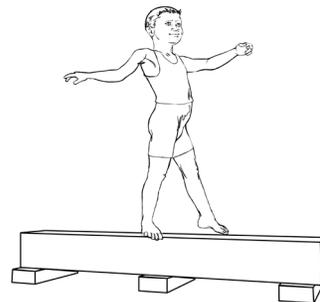
## Opening Sports Song (4 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Balance beam/rope

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song (Wheels on the Bus melody). Sing along with me and do what I do."

### SING AND DEMONSTRATE **Wheels on the Bus Melody**

- (On balance beam/rope) The player on the court goes jump jump jump, jump jump jump, jump jump jump. The player on the court goes jump jump jump - all through the day.
- (On balance beam/rope) The athletes in our class jump on and off, on and off, on and off. The athletes in our class jump on and of - all through the town.
- The athletes in our class jump forward and back, forward and back, forward and back. The athletes in our class jump forward and back - all through the game.



## Coach Says (4 min.)

Adapt the Activity from Day 1, having athletes stand on a balance beam or rope as they stand on one foot, tip toe, heels, etc.



## Rolling and Trapping *(5 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Ball

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, identification of body parts (toes touching), strength, general fitness/flexibility, motor skills (rolling, trapping), body awareness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Arrange athletes in pairs facing one another on the ground with their legs outstretched in a straddle position so that their legs are touching in the shape of diamond.

- Give them a slow motion ball/ball to roll back and forth between them.
- Now we're going to practice rolling these balls to our partners like we started last week.
- Face sitting your partner with your legs out and spread like this (demonstrate).
- Make sure your toes are touching your partner's toes.
- Next, one of you rolls the ball to the other on the ground like this (demonstrate). Stop the ball with your hands, and roll it back.
- If athletes are physically able to, encourage them to advance to a kneeling or standing position.
- Try passing the ball to your partners on your knees like this (demonstrate).
- Try passing the ball to your partners standing up and rolling it to them like this (demonstrate crouching position).
- Great job!!



**Foot Trap** (4 min.)  
Repeat Activity from Day 1.

**Jumping High** (5 min.)

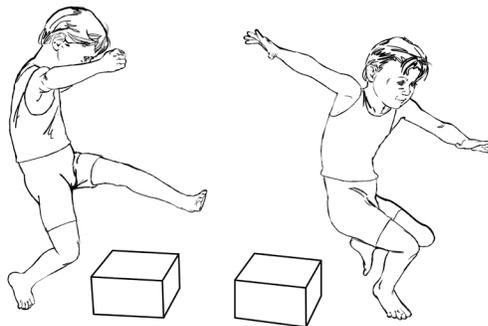
**EQUIPMENT** Floor markers, dowel, bean bags, cones, hoops, balls, balance beam/rope, and blocks. Equipment should be already placed around room. Spread the equipment around the room so that athletes can have a chance to jump over the various pieces.

**PURPOSE** Identify and locate sports equipment, motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills (jumping, balance, grasp), body awareness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Introduce the skill of jumping over equipment to the athletes.

**Tips:** Children can jump onto or off of equipment if their feet cannot clear the floor (for instance they can jump over the bean bag, or on top of it); If they are jumping off of the equipment as opposed to over it, challenge them to reach for an object (ex: scarf) while doing so.

- Yesterday we jumped on an off of our balance beams onto our floor markers.
- Today, we're going to try to jump OVER our equipment.
- Jump onto the equipment first- THEN see if you can jump OVER it!



## Frog Hoppin' / Leapin' Lizards *(5 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Floor markers placed around the room

**PURPOSE** Identify and locate sports equipment (floor markers), motor coordination, strength, general fitness, motor skills (hopping & running), body awareness and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "OK athletes, now we're going to play Leapin' Lizards! Everyone is going to LEAP/HOP from one floor marker to another just like a leapin' lizard!"

**Tips:** If the child takes off or lands flat-footed, encourage leaning forward and bending the knees; If leaping is difficult for the child, run along the child's side, holding his/her hand and practice leaping onto a marker over an object.

- You can jump from one to the next (demonstrate) or over them (demonstrate).
- If athletes master jumping from one to the next, and/or over the markers, encourage them to run and land either onto or over the marker:
- Now that you can hop onto the marker, and over the marker, try running first and then landing on the marker.

## Closing Sports Song *(5 min.)*

Repeat the song used in Day 1 to end the Lesson.

**Opening Sports Song** (2 min.)  
**with Leapin' Lizard**

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song (Wheels on the Bus melody). Sing along with me and do what I do."

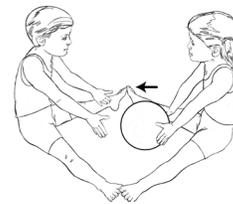
**SING AND DEMONSTRATE** **Wheels on the Bus Melody**

- The athletes on the team leap over the mark, over the mark, over the mark. The athletes on the team leap over the mark - all through the day.
- The player on the court runs forward and back, forward and back, forward and back. The player on the court runs forward and back - all through the town.
- The athletes in our class leap on the mark, on the mark, on the mark. The athletes in our class leap on the mark - all through the game.

**Coach Says:** (3 min.)  
**with a bean bag** Adapt the Activity from Day 1 by having them first jump on, then over a bean bag, then play catch with it.

**Jumping High** (4 min.)  
Repeat Activity from Day 2.

**Rolling & Trapping** (5 min.)  
Repeat Activity from Day 2.



**Foot Trap** (4 min.)  
Repeat Activity from Day 2.

## Frog Hoppin'/ Leapin' Lizards

(5 min.)

Repeat Activity from Day 2.

## Goalie Drill

(5 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Two cones to form each goal and slow motion ball placed around room.

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, (shift weight to react to ball movements), strength, general fitness, motor skills (grasping, running), body awareness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movement).

**EXPLAIN** Arrange athletes so that they are standing in-between two cones forming a goal. "OK Leapin' Lizards, let's practice being goalies! Stand in-between the two cones. The space in-between the cones is called a GOAL."

### DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD



- When the coach or your partner rolls or kicks the ball into the goal, use your hands to stop the ball like this.
- The goalie's job is to stop the ball before it goes in-between the cones, the goal. Let's practice being goalies!

## Closing Sports Song

(2 min.)

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



**You have finished Week Three: Jumping & Balancing Lessons. You can now begin Week Four: Trapping & Catching.**

