

LOCOMOTOR SKILLS



Running

is a rapid movement that involves transferring weight from one foot to the other with a brief loss of contact with the ground by both feet. Speed and maturation of running style increases with age as the child's muscle strength, balance and coordination improve.

- Three year olds can run around obstacles and corners.
- Four year olds can more skilfully navigate sharp turns and manage on a variety of surfaces.
- Five year olds can stop quickly on a signal and can run backward as well as forward.

Tips:

- The child's arms move in opposition to their legs and elbows are bent.
- There should be a brief period where both feet are off the ground.
- Ensure there is a narrow foot placement, landing on the heel or toe rather than flat-footed.
- Encourage them to try running faster by landing on the balls of their feet and toes.
- The non-support leg should be bent to approximately 90 degrees.

Games to play:

- Running skills are readily included in other activities.

See Activity plan 24 - Lily pad jumping.



Jumping

is the action of pushing off with both feet and landing with both feet.

- Three year old children can jump off the bottom stair, and jump over a line on the floor.
- Four year old children can jump with two feet from a stationary position approximately 60 centimetres.
- Five year old children can jump with two feet from a stationary position approximately 80 centimetres.

Tips:

- Prepare to jump by bending the knees and pushing the arms forcefully behind.
- Stretch both arms forcefully forward and upward reaching all the way above the head to create momentum.
- Take off and land on both feet simultaneously.
- Thrust the arms downward during landing.

Games to play:

See Activity plan 24 - Lily pad jumping.



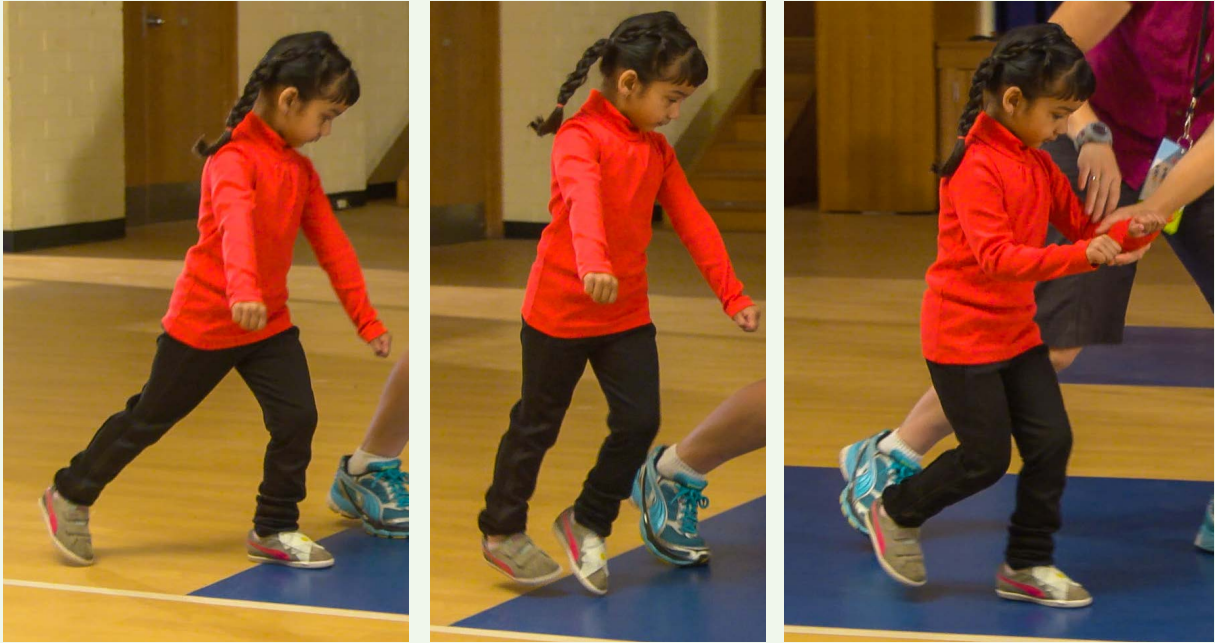
Hopping

requires the ability to balance on one leg and then generate enough force in the stance leg to hop, clear the ground and land without putting the other leg down or falling over.

- Three year old children are learning to hop on their preferred leg.
- Four year old children can hop on a preferred leg four to six times and are starting to hop on their non-preferred leg.
- Five year old children can hop on either leg and can hop forwards along a line.

Games to play:

See Activity plan 25 - Hopping fun.



Galloping

is stepping off one foot then sliding with the other foot in a forward direction. Weight is transferred from the front foot to the back foot with a small lift, before the front foot takes the next step. The stepping foot is always the front foot.

- Four year old children can perform a basic gallop with a preferred leg emerging.
- Five year old children can gallop on either leg and alternate with another rhythmic pattern such as side sliding. Skipping ability also emerges at this age as children need to be able to hop with control on both legs prior to the development of this skill.

Tips:

- Arms bent and lifted to waist level at take off.
- Step forward with the lead foot followed by a step with the trailing foot to a position next to or behind the lead foot.
- There needs to be a brief period where both feet are off the floor.
- Ensure the child maintains a rhythmic pattern for at least four consecutive gallops.

Games to play:

See Activity plan 26 - Gallop go round.

COMBINED LOCOMOTOR SKILLS

See Activity plan 27 - Animal safari obstacle course.

See Activity plan 28 - Obstacle course.