

Understanding the Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS)



What are fundamental movement skills?

Fundamental movement skills (FMS) are the building blocks of movement. They are a specific set of gross motor skills that use different body parts such as feet, legs, trunk, hands, arms and head. They are essential for children's participation in sport and physical activity throughout life.

FMS are characterised into three groups:

- **Stability Skills** - help children control their balance and posture e.g. balancing, twisting & stretching.
- **Locomotor Skills** - movements that transport the body from one place to another e.g. running, jumping, hopping, leaping, galloping, side-sliding and skipping.
- **Object Control Skills** - movements that involve handling and controlling objects like balls or bean bags e.g. kicking, catching, overarm throwing, underarm throwing, stationary dribbling and striking a stationary ball.

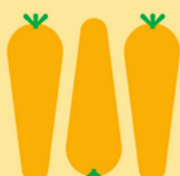


Why teach FMS?

- Children do not naturally learn these skills as part of normal growth and development. **FMS needs to be intentionally taught.**
- The more **skilled** and **proficient** children become in performing FMS, the more **confident** they will be to join in with games and sports.
- Being physically active practising FMS has important **health benefits** and assists in **developing relationships** and **social skills.**
- Children will be more likely to be physically active throughout their lives leading to **improved health** and **wellbeing**
- Teaching FMS helps children meet recommendation of **180 minutes*** of **daily physical activity.**
- Increasing physical activity can also **improve children's focus** and **reduce behaviours** that disrupt children's learning.

**Reference from the Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years*

Outcome 3: Children become strong in their physical learning and mental wellbeing



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Planning & Teaching FMS



Lesson Planning

Warm up

- Gets muscles and the brain ready for movement
- **Active movement songs** are great e.g. Hokey Pokey; Jack in the box; Head, shoulders, knees & toes

Teach skill

- **Role model** the skill
- Use child-friendly **teaching cues** e.g. 'Swing your arms forward and reach for the stars as you jump'
- Minimise wait time with **short explanations**

Explore

- Engage children in **1-2 fun games which practice the skill** e.g. What's the time Mr Wolf (running) or Leaping lily pads (leaping).
- **Plan** equipment and set up ahead to minimise wait times

Cool down

- Enables children to relax their muscles and settle down before transitioning to the next activity
- **Active movement songs** e.g. Follow the leader or Row row row your boat



Munch & Move resources such as **Franky & Friends** and **FMS in Action** contain great examples of **warm up** activities, **teaching cues**, **fun games** and **cool down** activities to match each FMS.

- Focus on **fun** and encouragement to build child **confidence** and participation.
- Minimise technique correction. Children aren't expected to 'master' FMS until primary school.
- **Start** with easier stability and locomotor skills then progress to object control skills.
- Include FMS **practice daily** in line with Munch & Move recommendations.
- For object control activities, **ensure everyone has a piece of equipment** to practice with to avoid waiting (reduce group sizes if necessary).
- **Practice movements on both sides** of the body. Ask children if they can identify any differences between their left and right sides: 'Is one side easier?'

Teaching FMS doesn't require special equipment - look around to see what you already have!

Some ideas:

- Rolled up newspaper 'balls'
- Suspended balloons or balls in stockings for batting practice
- Soft toys for jumping over, catching, throwing or target practice
- Scarves for throwing and catching
- Cling wrap tubes or pool noodles to use as 'bats' or 'hobby horses' for galloping
- Hoops for jumping in/out or throwing targets
- Witches hats, cones or shoes for goal posts
- Cut a hole in a large cardboard to create a tunnel to crawl through



You don't have to be an FMS expert!
But you will become one as you join in and learn with the children - enjoy the fun.



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Tips for developing gross motor skills



Tips for Stability Skills:

- Incorporate bending, stretching and twisting into 'warm-up' and 'cool-down' activities.
- Hold out your hands to help with balance.
- Progress skills by moving whilst balancing a bean bag on different parts of the body, creating an obstacle course or through dance and yoga.



Stability skills are needed to progress onto locomotor and object control skills.



Tips for Object Control Skills:

- Start with easier tasks like rolling or tossing a ball before moving on to more complex throwing, catching, kicking or bouncing.
- Choose larger, light weight balls to start.
- Progress skills by using smaller balls, incorporating target practice or throwing/catching different sized objects e.g. tennis balls, bean bags or frisbees.
- Consider the set-up of your activity to reduce chaos e.g. ensure balls are kicked/thrown towards a wall or fence and/or run activities in small groups.
- Store equipment in a bag/bin when explaining the skill to prevent children from getting distracted.

Tips for Locomotor Skills:

- Start with simple movements like running and jumping then progress to more complex hopping, leaping and skipping.
- Demonstrate the skill and use child-friendly teaching cues e.g. for running - 'look straight ahead', 'swing your arms' and 'knees up'.
- Progress skills by positioning objects for children to jump/hop/leap over (e.g. cones, dots, soft toys, string, chalk line) or by increasing speed/distance or making the terrain more challenging.
- Practise during transitions (e.g. side-sliding to the bathroom before morning tea).



Outcome 1: Children develop their emerging autonomy, inter-dependence, resilience and agency



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How to embed daily FMS into your service



Environment set up

- Set up both your outdoor and indoor environments to encourage FMS practice e.g. draw chalk lines/ shapes on concrete, or place masking tape lines on the floor for spontaneous FMS games.

Planning and role sharing

- Focus on one FMS skill per week and practice daily, so no matter which day children attend, they have opportunities to practice.
- Share responsibility for teaching FMS activities to build the confidence of ALL educators.



Embedding FMS

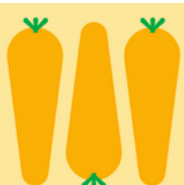
- Incorporate FMS into transition and group time as well as music and movement time.
- Expand on children's interests e.g. underarm rolling for bowling down superhero toys.
- Start with small changes to incorporate FMS into your service daily.

Even if you practice only two or three skills a month you will easily cover them all in a year!



Quality standard 1.2.1: Educators are deliberate, purposeful and thoughtful in their decisions and actions

Quality standard 3.2.2: Resources, materials, and equipment allow for multiple uses, are sufficient in number and enable every child to engage in play-based learning.



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