

MOVEMENT in the Primary Grades

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Building Locomotor Skills

Developing locomotor skills – moving the body from one place to another – opens up a wide range of healthy activities for students. Having proficient locomotor skills enables students to engage in most physical activities, throughout their life.

Because of this it is important that students develop a variety of locomotor skills on, or in, different environments, including:

- indoor spaces such as a gym, and outdoor spaces such as a playing field;
- in water such as swimming pools, lakes or the ocean;
- on ice and snow such as skating lessons, skiing, tobogganing, or just playing outdoors in the winter; and
- in the air during activities such as hopping, leaping or jumping.

What to Practice When Getting from One Place to Another

Different skills: Walking, running, hopping, skipping, galloping, swimming, sliding, crawling, slithering (and copying different animals).

Different directions: Travelling forward, backwards, sideways to the left and to the right.

Different speeds: Slow, fast, stop, start, freeze.

Different levels: Low to the ground, normal height, as tall as you can be.

And of course these can all be combined in many different ways – “hop forward, fast and low”.



A Learning Sequence

In teaching skills, there is generally an accepted sequence: learning the skill in isolation, adding variety to the skill, and use the skill in a game or activity. Below is an example of what the accepted sequence looks like, using hopping.

Have students learn the skill in isolation:

1. Stand on one foot.
2. Hop with one foot and land on the same foot.
3. Repeat the hop multiple times.
4. Lean slightly forward as you hop and move forward.

Add variety to the skill: Once students can hop, challenge them to hop forward, backwards and sideways, and to hop using their other foot.

Use the skill in a game or activity: For example, hopping around an obstacle course, or as part of a relay. Using the skill this way automates the skill as the student is thinking about the obstacle course or relay rather than thinking specifically about the skill.

