



THE FUNDAMENTALS OF LIFE

Practice is key to mastering basic movement skills for daily routines, activities and sports.

If your child always seems to be tripping over his feet or dropping things, he may be struggling with his fundamental movement skills (FMS).

FMS are the building blocks for more complex movement patterns that children will need for physical recreation and sports. Before riding a bicycle, children must first learn how to balance. Before they can play basketball, they have to be able to catch a ball.

Providing opportunities to develop FMS proficiency between ages of two and eight is important. "While reflexes and reactions, such as grasping and sucking, can occur naturally in infants, being able to balance, run, jump or throw requires a healthy amount of exposure and practice as children enter their toddler and preschool years," says Dr Miriam Lee, Senior Manager (Design and Planning) of ActiveSG, the national movement launched by SportSG to encourage Singaporeans of all ages — including the little ones — to take part in sporting activities.

Dr Lee recommends encouraging your child to take part in a variety of sports and activities: "Let them experience different types of outdoor environments and play with different types of equipment, so that their bodies can be adaptable to different situations. In doing so, they can also develop a healthy dose of confidence and positive self-esteem."

There are over 25 ActiveSG Sport Centres island-wide with facilities and play spaces such as swimming pools, gyms, stadiums, badminton, tennis and multi-purpose courts. ActiveSG also offers a wide variety of programmes such as academies and clubs, school holiday programmes,

fitness classes and more, which are suitable for children and their parents too (see box below).

OFF TO THE RIGHT START

K1 and K2 children from eight preschools participated in the 'Nurture Kids' programme in 2017, initiated by SportSG. The aim is to promote good eating and sleep habits, limiting screen time, as well as fun games activities to develop their fundamental movement skills. All in support of their holistic development, this programme will be expanded to about 130 preschools by July 2019.

HOW TO GET ACTIVE

- > Visit your nearest ActiveSG sports facility (www.myactivesg.com/Facilities/Sport-Centres). Look for child-friendly features such as pools with giant slides or water play areas.
- > Download the ActiveSG App and take part in GameOn Nila where you can collect Activity Stars through treasure hunts and visits to ActiveSG facilities.
- > Take part in parent-child bonding programmes (www.myactivesg.com/Programmes). School holiday programmes are also available in March, June, September and December. Check out: water confidence courses, Aqua Fun (giant inflatables in the pool), archery and Boogie Bounce (trampoline exercise).
- > Celebrate National Day through sports at GetActive! Singapore from 1 to 10 Aug 2019. For details of what's happening at 14 festival sites around Singapore, go to events.myactivesg.com/getactive2019.



MY World @ Woodlands Circle was one of the first preschools to participate in the 'Nurture Kids' pilot programme. A key element of 'Nurture Kids' is the close collaboration between ActiveSG FMS trainers and EC educators, with both parties sharing the teaching responsibilities. Mr Alif Hafiz Bin Masnor, an ActiveSG instructor for the programme, elaborates: "With our guidance and working together, the teachers gain more confidence to conduct the sessions. They can also integrate topics such as addition and subtraction, and even colours as part of the physical activity. Most importantly, the activities follow the pedagogical principles of learning through play. This not only enhances their physical development, but their cognitive and social development as well."

"By becoming more competent in their movements, our children are showing more confidence in controlling and managing their bodies, as they negotiate their physical and social environments. We have also observed that movement and play experiences do promote attentiveness, physical fitness and positive self-esteem," says Ms Sivarranjani Jayakumar, a K2 English Language Teacher at the centre.

Teacher Sivarranjani is also appreciative of the coaching by ActiveSG trainers. Besides demonstrating the appropriate use of FMS strategies, materials and assessment tools, the trainers gave constructive feedback after observing the teachers conducting the lessons. For example, she says, "The trainers showed us how physical, visual and verbal prompts or cues can be used to help children who face movement difficulties. We also needed to decrease the prompts as children became more independent."

EAT WELL, GROW WELL

Being active is not the only factor contributing to children's physical growth and development. Having a nutritious diet is just as important.

- ✓ Use the Health Promotion Board's 'My Healthy Plate' (½ plate of fruits and vegetables, ¼ plate of wholegrains and ¼ plate of lean meat) as a guide to prepare balanced meals.
- ✓ Minimise distractions during mealtimes. For example, do not allow screen time at the dining table.
- ✓ Teach your child to be mindful of what they eat. Take them grocery shopping and point out food and beverage products that have the 'Healthier Choice Symbol'.

For more tips, check out go.gov.sg/raisehealthykids and go.gov.sg/preventchildobesity.

MAKE MOVEMENT FUN

Parents need to provide children plenty of opportunities for play and movement. Try these play ideas at home to develop these skills:

- > **LOCOMOTOR SKILLS** move the body from one location to another (e.g. walking, running, leaping, jumping).

Try This: Arrange a rope or tape to form a giant "V" on the floor to serve as a "river". Read your child the "Little Red Riding Hood" story and ask him to think of a safe way to cross the danger-filled "river" (either by leaping or jumping across). Encourage your child to add a run before his jump over the "river" to increase leaping distance.



- > **OBJECT CONTROL SKILLS** use parts of the body to give, receive and handle objects (e.g. throwing, catching, kicking, dribbling).

Try This: Set up a makeshift net with a clothesline and tablecloth, for a game of 'Balloon-minton' between kids. They can use overarm striking movements to send the balloon over the net.



- > **STABILITY SKILLS** focus on maintaining balance, both when the body is stationary (static) and moving (dynamic).

Try This:

For *Static Balance*, place different shapes (e.g. square, triangle, diamond) on the floor. These can be cut from non-slip mats or drawn with chalk. Get your child to balance different parts of his body on each corner of the shape and hold for three counts. Encourage him to name the shape he is balancing on.



For *Dynamic Balance*, hold a hoop vertically, just above the ground. Ask your child to step through the hoop without touching it.



learn



win



→ Three lucky readers will each receive a FUN Start, MOVE Smart! resource guide that provides activities and teaching strategies for parents with children aged three to 10, to get them to connect with the physical world they live in and bond with them.

Simply answer this question:

Name three fundamental movement skills (FMS) that children should learn to develop from young.

Send your answer to beanstalk@mediacorp.com.sg with your name and contact details.

Closing date: **19 August 2019**



Get A Move On

Encourage your child to embrace an active lifestyle.



> Ready to Ride

By Sébastien Pelon

What started as a boring day turns out to be an adventurous one when a boy decides to learn how to ride a bike on his own, with the help of his imaginary friend. Read this heartwarming story with a child who needs the courage to leave his training wheels.

Contributed by *Norhashimah Azli, Associate Librarian, National Library Board*



> Balanced and Barefoot: How Unrestricted Outdoor Play Makes for Strong, Confident, and Capable Children

By Angela J. Hanscom

The author explains how unstructured outdoor play can contribute significantly to the motor and sensory development in children. She also offers practical ideas on how to get children to play creatively and independently outdoors. This book is an easy-to-read guide for parents, educators and anyone who wants to foster healthy and active lifestyles among children.

Contributed by *Jaslin Koh, Librarian, National Library Board*

Events @ NLB



Check out these programmes happening at the libraries.



APSN Tanglin Drama @ the Libraries 2019 ~ Choose Green, Think Green, Grow Green

Ordinary folks work together to save the life of a whale in this stage adaptation of Helmi and the Whale.



Just Teddy by The Kueh Tutus

Children aged two-four years and their grown-ups can help Just Teddy on his quest to find where he belongs in this interactive dance-theatre work.

Registration is required. For more information on the dates, timings, and venues, please visit www.nlb.gov.sg/golibrary.

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Grow@Beanstalk is your one-stop early childhood (EC) resource portal for inspiring stories, useful tips and activity ideas, as well as the latest happenings from the EC sector.



Visit www.ecda.gov.sg/growatbeanstalk, or scan the QR code



You can also share your passion of "Giving a Good Start to Every Child" by "liking" our Facebook page for daily content, and engaging with other parents and EC educators.



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