



Educator Guide to Fundamental Movement Skills

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** - movements where the body remains in place but moves around its horizontal and vertical axis
e.g. balancing, stretching, twisting.
- **Locomotor Skills** - movements that transport the body from one place to another e.g. running, jumping, hopping, leaping, galloping, side-sliding and skipping.
- **Manipulative Skills** - movements that involve giving force to or from objects
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 their normal growth and development, so FMS need to be taught. It is important that educators provide frequent opportunities for children to explore, practice and develop these skills, whilst keeping it fun.

The more children become skilled and proficient at performing FMS the more confident they will become at joining in with games and sports, leading to improved social skills. They will also be more likely to be physically active throughout their lives.

Teaching FMS can help children to meet the recommended 180 minutes of physical activity (PA) each day (Australian 24-Hour Movement Guidelines for the Early Years). Increasing PA can improve children's capacity to focus and may help to reduce behaviours that disrupt children's learning.



Worimi Artist Lara Went - 'The heart of a child'

Tips for Teaching FMS



***You don't have to be an FMS expert!
Join in and learn with the children -
make it fun!***

- If you can help children correct their technique, that's great! But remember, just joining in, demonstrating and having fun with children encourages their participation in FMS.
- Children aren't expected to 'master' any of the FMS skills until they are in primary school. Focus on practicing FMS regularly, so children can develop at their own pace.
- Start easy and make things more challenging as children improve.
- Practice movements on both sides of the body and ask children if they can identify any differences between their left and right sides: 'Is one side easier?'
- Use games you and the children already know how to play such as *What's the time Mr Wolf?* but everyone has to gallop or leap or hop!
- Incorporate a few FMS at once with Traditional Indigenous Games such as 'Kolap' - practicing static balancing whilst doing an underarm throw!

For more traditional games refer to *Yulunga Traditional Indigenous Games* at <https://www.sportaus.gov.au/yulunga>



Teaching FMS doesn't require special equipment - take a look around and see what you already have that can be used as, or made into, equipment. Some ideas:

- rolled up newspaper 'balls'
- suspended balloons or balls in stockings for batting practice
- soft toys for jumping over or throwing
- scarves for throwing and catching
- cling wrap tubes or pool noodles to use as 'bats' or 'hobby horses' for galloping
- hoops for throwing and catching balls through or jumping in and out of
- witches hats or cones for goal posts
- large cardboard boxes with holes cut out creating tunnels to crawl through





Tips for Stability Skills:

- These skills are needed in order to progress onto Locomotor and Manipulative skills.
- Bending, stretching and twisting can all be incorporated into 'warm-up' and 'cool-down' activities.
- Balance is particularly important - children can be encouraged to hold their hands out to maintain balance.
- Children can also improve these skills by moving whilst balancing a bean bag on different parts of their body or through dance and yoga.

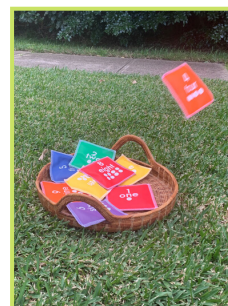


Tips for Locomotor Skills:

- Each movement can be broken down into smaller steps. If you are introducing a new skill it is OK to practice just one or two steps before attempting the whole movement e.g. standing on one leg for hopping, or swinging your arms for jumping.
- Position objects for children to jump/hop/skip over or to e.g. cones, dots, soft toys, string, chalk line
- Pretend to be animals and incorporate the movements into a story.
- Use as transitions e.g. side-sliding to the bathroom before morning tea
- Put a sticker on the foot that should move first.

Tips for Manipulative Skills:

- All of these skills involve the use of an object such as a ball or bat, however you can still practice without equipment e.g. running through individual steps such as pulling the arm back and forward to 'throw', or swinging the arms pretending to use a bat.
- Use soft balls of different sizes and deflate them a little - this makes them easier to catch, and will reduce the risk of injuries.
- Always have something to aim at so that equipment doesn't fly everywhere.
- Run the activity in a small groups so that it is easier to control and so that everyone gets the chance to practice the skill a few times.
- Have a place to put equipment when explaining the activity (so that children don't get distracted) e.g. a basket or instruct children to hold the ball between their feet.



Worimi Artist Lara Went - 'The heart of a child'



Incorporating FMS into your service

Start with small changes to incorporate FMS into your service daily:

- Set up both your outdoor and indoor environments to encourage FMS experiences e.g. have chalk lines or shapes drawn on concrete, or masking tape lines on the floor for spontaneous FMS games.
- Incorporate FMS into transition and group time as well as music and movement time.
- Utilise children's interests e.g. underarm rolling for bowling down superhero toys.
- Focus on one FMS skill per week and practice it every day, so that every child gets exposed to it, no matter which day they attend.
- Rotate responsibility for running FMS each day or week, so that all educators build confidence and can cover for each other when someone is on leave.
- Remember, even if you practice only two or three skills a month you will easily cover them all in a year!

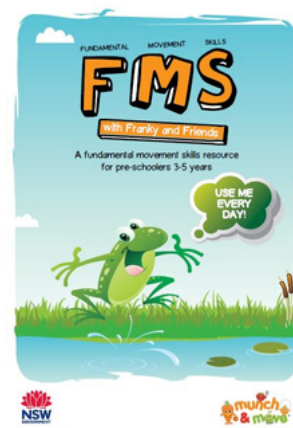
*More ideas and information on physical activity and FMS can be found in the *Munch and Move Resource Manual* - Birth to Five Years pages 81 - 104.

FMS Resources

The Good for Kids Team have plenty of resources with FMS game ideas and instructions.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1QafW0XgrR8>



This resource was developed and designed by the Health Promotion Services, Western Sydney Local Health District



Please contact us if you would like any of our resources sent to your service.



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