



Irish Primary PE Association

Cumann Corpoideachais Bunscoile na hÉireann

Co-ordination

Co-ordination is about how well your eyes, hands and feet work together. Co-ordination involves tracking or following a ball and moving your body in time to meet it. Skilful movement is balanced, co-ordinated and well timed. Children develop co-ordination unilaterally, bilaterally and contralaterally. Children should acquire a range of skill in each type of movement (p.36).

Unilateral movement is when one side of the body moves e.g. a high five.

Bilateral movement is when both sides of the body move at the same time e.g. 2 foot jump to 2 foot jump.

Contralateral movement is movement of opposite sides of the body in different ways, e.g. taking the right arm across the body to the left side in a backhand in tennis.

How is co-ordination developed?

Co-ordination is developed over time and with practice in a wide variety of situations. According to Foreman & Bradshaw (2009) children with poor co-ordination look clumsy, lack timing and are non-sequential.

One example of how to assess co-ordination development

Saucers and Domes: Give each child a dome and a number 1 or 2 and ask them to place their dome anywhere in the hall or yard so that all the domes are spread out. The no.1s place their domes downwards like a dome and the no.2s place their dome upwards like a saucer (you should have an even no of each when ready to start). On the teacher's whistle the two groups have to run around the space turning the domes up or down depending on their group, each trying to ensure that they have more saucers or domes than the other group. After a set period of time, the teacher stops the activity and counts the number of domes and saucers and declares a winner.

How do the children pick up the cones? Unilaterally, bilaterally, or contra laterally? The method used will depend on what the child will do next/where he/she plans to move to.

Early stage development will have children focussing on one cone at a time. Bilateral movement is the most efficient (left hand and left foot) and move fast on to the right.

Many fundamental movement skills require co-ordination e.g. throwing and catching, striking, kicking. However when teaching specific skills e.g. kicking a ball, the skill must be broken down (strike a large stationary ball, progress to a small ball, strike at a target...dribble and strike).

Co-ordination Suggestions:

In PE lessons co-ordination activities can be built into **the warm up**. See

<http://www.blueearth.org/resource/coordination/coordination.cfm>

See this link to develop lateral co-ordination in jumping to include in a warm up

<http://www.skillforkids.com/0-3-years/early-skills/foot-eye-coordination/11-3-10-years/72-skills-and-coordination/73-locomotion/334-Jumping-activities.html>

However when teaching specific skills e.g. kicking a ball, the skill must be broken down (strike a large stationary ball, progress to a small ball, strike at a target...dribble and strike).

Striking Skills

- Striking a stationary object
- Hand hit a bouncy ball to your partner. Consider using beach balls as they travel slowly.
- Tie a balloon on a string onto a short tennis bat
- See more balloon co-ordination activities here

<http://www.skillforkids.com/0-3-years/early-skills/foot-eye-coordination/11-3-10-years/72-skills-and-coordination/77-catching-and-interception/115-making-beginner-balloon-activities-a-little-more-challenging.html>

- Feed a large ball to a child to strike

Throwing Skills

- Practice throwing beanbags, progress to large balls and then small balls.
- Use reaction balls with older/skilful children. The unpredictable bounce of these rubber balls forces children to make split-second decisions in order to catch the balls. The random bounce helps train reaction time and hand-eye coordination, so athletes improve overall coordination and depth perception

Reaction Ball 

Dance and Gymnastics

- Have music to warm ups for children to keep time to the music.

Gymnastics and Athletics

- Here is a web link to a short clips showing co-ordination and balancing activities using Wobble boards: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fZKiUdKG2w>

Break Times

- Have loose light soft equipment available in the yard at break times for children to have further time to practice skills if they feel like it e.g. soft tennis balls and bats; sponge large balls;

References

Foreman G. & Bradshaw, A. (2009). An Introduction to the FUNdamentals of Movement.

SportsCoach UK

Jefferson-Buchanan, R. (2009). Fundamental fun 132 activities to develop fundamental movement skills STEPS Professional Development.