

LAPS

Little Athletics
Program for Schools



Australian Little Athletics

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Introduction

As the primary provider of modified track and field activities for children under the age of 15 years, Australian Little Athletics is pleased to present this comprehensive teaching resource.

This resource aims to be the definitive reference for teaching athletics in Australian primary schools. It aims to be practical and user-friendly, containing simple information outlining age-appropriate working technique models, teaching progressions, lesson plans, games, assessment ideas, and competition guidelines.

The resource is divided into six sections:

SECTION 1: THE EVENTS

A resource to provide teachers with a brief and basic overview of each event relevant to the primary school system.

SECTION 2: THE LESSON PLANS

A collection of twenty-seven ready-to-implement lesson plans for teachers.

SECTION 3: GREAT IDEAS FOR GROUP GAMES

A collection of games for conducting warm up activities and event skill training.

SECTION 4: ASSESSMENT SECTION

A resource of ideas about how to assess children who are participating in an athletics unit.

SECTION 5: COMPETITIONS

A guide for organising and conducting athletics competitions.

SECTION 6: APPENDICES

A collection of useful information relating to athletics.



THE EVENTS

A resource to provide teachers with a brief overview of each event relevant to the primary school system.



Australian Little Athletics

The Events

**A resource providing
teachers with a brief and basic overview
of each event relevant to the primary school system**

This resource has been created by Darren Wensor on behalf of Australian Little Athletics.

Graphic design by Nicole Duffey.

Photos of skill sequences courtesy of Phillipe Penel.

This resource is not intended to be a definitive analysis about conducting warm up activities and events skill training and professional advice should be taken before any course of action is pursued. The authors and publishers are not responsible for the results of any action on the basis of information in this publication nor for any error or omission in or from it.

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This section aims to provide teachers with a brief and basic overview of each event relevant to the primary school system.

Athletics is often seen by many as a very technical sport to teach. The following pages attempt to demystify the sport by providing the "bare bones" facts and the most important information that a teacher needs to successfully teach an athletics unit in a class situation with confidence and authority. Use the section as an introduction to the sport or as quick revision prior to taking a class outside. The following information is dealt with for each event:



THE WORKING MODEL:

What is the simplest movement pattern that will allow a child to complete an event within the rules and with some success?

The working models featured aim to create an understanding of the key features of a target technique suitable for the primary school aged child. The working model for each event presented in the following pages deals with suggested basic teaching points to be used when instructing children in primary schools. This is not to be confused with a technical model, often featured in books and videos, which is far more specific and more suitable to performers at higher levels.

An intricate technical knowledge of each event is not needed to successfully teach athletics skills to young people. Familiarization with the working model provides the teacher with enough information to sufficiently introduce events to young athletes.



Common Faults

COMMON FAULTS:

What are the common errors that beginners will invariably exhibit when they are in the early stages of learning how to perform athletics skills?

The information contained under this heading on the following pages aims to assist teachers with the detection and correction of the most common faults that young people demonstrate.

Most of the faults that young people exhibit are predictable and generally opposite to the features of a good working model. Understanding common faults makes it easier to understand the target technique.



BASIC RULES:

What are the basic rules that teachers need to know so that they can properly teach the events?

Under this heading, the rules most basic to the correct execution of the skills and participation in the event are listed. Only the "Priority A" rules for teachers are listed here. More specific rules that officials at formal competitions are required to know are dealt with in a later section.



Shuttle Relay

The shuttle relay provides children with a fun and simple introduction to relay running in a straight line.



The basic features of shuttle relay running are:



profile view

All runners use a normal running action. The baton is held at the bottom end.

The incoming runner holds the baton vertically with an extended arm when nearing the receiver.

The recipient receives the baton with their arms extended at chest level (not at face level, to avoid injury) and with hands held together in a "butterfly" position.

The incoming runner approaches slightly to the side of the outgoing runner to avoid interference/collisions.



front view

Shuttle Relay



YOUNG ATHLETES OFTEN:

- Hold the middle section of baton.
- Run the whole way with the baton extended (common with very young athletes).
- Attempt to receive the baton with one hand, or with hands apart.
- As an incoming runner, run directly at the recipient, blocking their way.



- Outgoing runners cannot leave their mark until they have received the baton.

Circular Relays 4x100m

Circular relays generally involve teams of four exchanging a baton within marked zones, while racing around a circular track.



A downward pass, during which the incoming runner places the baton firmly down into the recipient's upturned hand, is the preferred baton exchange method.

The basic relay baton exchange requires:



Ideally, both runners at maximum speed during the baton exchange.

The incoming runner to place the baton, in a downwards motion, firmly into the outgoing runner's hand.

The outgoing runner to keep their arm extended, hand flat and steady, palm up, vision forward.

Which hand? - Ideally, a runner should not swap the baton from hand to hand whilst running. The first runner should carry the baton in their right hand; the second runner takes and carries the baton in their left hand; the third runner takes and carries the baton in their right hand; and the fourth runner takes and carries the baton in their left hand.

Check marks - As the incoming runner reaches a predetermined check mark, the receiving runner takes off, with his or her hand extended behind. The incoming runner passes the baton down into the hand of the receiver. Check marks should be placed to allow the baton exchange to take place within the changeover zone while both runners are at a maximum speed.

Circular Relays 4x100m



YOUNG ATHLETES OFTEN:

- Slow or stop to pass the baton.
- As an incoming runner, fail to firmly place the baton in the outgoing runner's hand.
- As an outgoing runner, look behind, snatch at the baton, not keep their hand steady.



- The 4 x 100m relay is run entirely within lanes.
- The baton must be exchanged within a twenty-metre changeover zone.
- Some competitions allow the outgoing runner to use a 10 metre acceleration zone before the changeover zone. The outgoing runner may start in and accelerate within this area, but the baton exchange may not take place until the changeover zone is reached.