

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 Phillippe 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.



Sprinting

Traditionally, it is considered that the sprinting events are those running races that are held over a distance of up to and including 400m. It is worth remembering, however, that a 400m race to many children is a distance, not a sprint event.



A basic sprint action requires:



The head to be kept level; vision to the front.

The trunk and shoulders to be held square to the front.

The head and trunk to be held upright.

The hips to be held under the body.

Movement of feet and limbs in a straight path.

The arms pivoting about the shoulder joint and remaining bent at the elbow at approximately 90 degrees.

The knees lifted high.

The recovery leg to be bent to at least 90 degrees.

Landing on the front part (or ball) of the foot.

Light, quick movements of feet, legs and arms.

A generally coordinated, rhythmical action.

Sprinting



Common Faults

YOUNG ATHLETES OFTEN:

- Move their head excessively.
- Have a poor running posture (Leaning back/forward; head down/back).
- Allow their hips to fall backwards, resulting in a "sitting" position.
- Rotate/twist their torso from side to side when they run.
- Swing their arms across their body.
- Straighten their arms on the backwards swing.
- Run with a low knee lift (do no "pick their feet up").
- Plant their feet inwards or outwards.
- Run with a heel plant or flat-footed.
- Use a heavy foot plant.



- When in a sprint race, competitors must run in their own lane.
- The winner of a race is the athlete whose torso crosses the finish line first.