



Physical Literacy

Our kids develop their physical literacy on a general timetable and there are optimum times to teach specific movements and sports skills:

Ages 5-8/9

This is the age span for the young athlete to learn their Sports ABCs; Agility, Balance and Coordination, the building blocks of developing movement skills. These fundamentals have to be taught correctly so proper movement is ingrained in the neurological pathways; that foundation will go a long way to preventing sports related injuries as the athlete gets older.

Both hand and foot speed is easily developed during this period. Neglect this essential ingredient prior to puberty and the ability to develop sport specific skills when the child is older becomes more difficult.

With few exceptions, children of this age need to participate in a wide range of sports and activities that let them practice their athletic and movement base. Early specialization for the majority of children leads to early injury and burn out. Activities should include games which demand the ability to track an object in the air or on the ground to start the development of field vision. It's also an age to include any activity which incorporates dribbling; dribbling requires the small, controlled touches that develop fine motor skills.

Instruction at this age is primarily "show," not "tell," since a child is still learning to convert abstract concepts into physical movement.

Formal sports programs for this age group should be predominantly practice with interspersed competition.

Ages 8/9 -12

Our young athletes move on to the Sports Alphabet D,E,F; Develop, Engage Fine Motor Skills, Flexibility Training. This is the age span to develop and refine previously taught fundamental movement skills. It's also a stage of accelerated adaptation for fine motor skills and considered the most important for that foundational sports specific movement skill development.

At the end of this period, when their "growth spurt" begins, coordination and motor skill development are disrupted making it more difficult to develop new movements. Athletic Curriculum uses this period to lay the foundation and the growth spurt period to refine and practice previously learned skills

Flexibility should be a priority at this age. Strength and stamina work is also important but generally more informal than later training and integrated into the total curriculum.

The kids are still primarily concrete thinkers and tend to see things in "black/white" terms so instruction is geared towards that mindset.