

Athletics and Para Athletics

At Birmingham 2022 there will be 59 medal events, including a fully integrated Para Sport programme with events ranging from ten seconds to two days in duration. Athletics includes the sport of competing in track and field events, including running races and various competitions in jumping and throwing. These sports provide opportunities for the development of the ankles, feet and leg muscles as well as confidence, strength and the development of the 'I can do attitude'

The Long Jump:

Stretching and jumping builds the arms and legs as well as core strength. This is a hard activity for young children as **jumping** takes coordination, strength and most of all, **courage**.

So before a child learns to jump, they need to feel **confident** in movement. Allow plenty of time to practice. Nursery rhymes are great way to introduce this - try **5 Little Monkeys** - using different surfaces and height for children as it's easier than jumping from the floor.

Start with the following instructions:

- bend your knees, lean forward and swing your arms back
- take off with both feet, swinging your arms up into the air to propel yourself forwards
- land safely on both feet, with your knees bent.

Once they have mastered this try jumping further, running and jumping, use chalk to mark how far they can reach, and then try to jump a little bit further.

Make a paper plate spinner for the children to use and challenge each other. Use pictures rather and get them to use a combination of actions.



At no other point will children learn so many physical skills as they do in the first five years of life!

Once the children have mastered jumping why not try hurdles.

Using DIY hurdles, start with tape on the floor, encourage running, jumping, and galloping over the lines, going backwards, jumping sideways etc. Progress to low hurdles using tubs and pool noodles as in the picture.



Running Games

Get everyone together on a starting line and explain that when you hold up a **green traffic light** everyone starts running as fast as they can toward the finish line. When you hold up the **red traffic light**, they all have to stop and standstill. Showing the **amber traffic light** means **slow down!** This is a test of concentration as well as the skill of running.

Try running along a straight line, curved lines, and around objects. Encourage running fast, slow, backward & forwards on a chalk track. Running will help teach children about the importance of perseverance and practice in building stamina. Building the habit of regular exercise early in life, particularly running will be invaluable to long-term physical and mental health.

Seated (Unseated) Throwing

1. Use a beanbag or soft toy to practice throwing into a container. Start with a big container or target very close to the children.
2. You could set up a ramp (piece of cardboard, tray or cushion) off their tray or lap to help them.
3. As the children get more accurate, move the container further away.
4. You could use colours or other descriptions to throw into different containers (e.g. red beanbags into the bucket, green bean bags through the hoop etc)

This activity develops coordination of the arms and torso and fine motor control.

