



Australian Government

Australian Sports Commission

ACTIVE AFTER-SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

playing for life

Circus

COMPANION BOOK



Acknowledgments

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Disclaimer

The Playing for Life companion books have been designed for use with students aged 4–12. Each book assumes that each student is healthy and has no medical condition, disability, illness, impairment or other reason that may impact, limit or restrict their involvement in sport or other physical activity. A student should not be allowed to participate in an activity if any medical, physical or other factor indicates that they are not suited to that activity. Where there are any queries or concerns about such matters, the consent of the student's parent or guardian should be obtained before allowing participation. While care has been taken in the preparation of these books, the publisher and authors do not accept any liability arising from the use of the books including, without limitation, from any activities described in the books.

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For general enquiries:

Tel: (02) 6214 1111

Fax: (02) 6251 2680

Email: asc@ausport.gov.au

Web site: www.ausport.gov.au

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About this book



The Playing for Life companion books have been developed to complement the Active After-school Communities (AASC) Playing for Life resource kit. They are primarily designed for members of the local community who will be delivering programs to participating primary school-aged children.

More specifically, they are designed to help people with minimal experience in the sport to deliver activities in line with the Playing for Life philosophy. This places an emphasis on providing safe, fun, engaging activities that ensure maximum participation from all children, regardless of their level of ability.

Playing for Life – what is it?

The Playing for Life philosophy adopts a ‘game sense’ approach to physical activity.

- » **THE GAME IS THE FOCUS** — Players develop skills through fun, game-like activities (by ‘playing the game’) rather than through traditional skills and drills.
- » **COACH IS A FACILITATOR** — Coaches play more of a facilitator role than a director’s role. Rather than instructing players how to perform a particular skill, coaches provide key coaching points for performing the skill then set the players a challenge that they must solve through activity. For example, they might ask:
 - » How many different jumps can you perform in 30 seconds?
 - » Where will you stand to field the ball?
 - » How can you work together to stop the opponents scoring?
 - » How can you include everyone?

This engages players in the activity at a level that suits their own ability, and players learn through self-discovery rather than coach direction.

- » **DISCRETE COACHING** — Coach instructions and demonstrations are kept to a minimum. Allow play to continue and support players to develop their skills on the side in an unobtrusive way during the course of the activity. This maximises player participation and allows players to receive one-on-one coach support where required.
- » **ROLE MODELS** — Use player role models during the activities to demonstrate and emphasise good technique or strategies. Be aware of cultural considerations when adopting this strategy.

Remember!

The activity sets
the challenge

The game asks the
questions, and

The players' response
is the answer

» ASK THE PLAYERS —

The use of player questioning is a valuable strategy to engage the players themselves in changing the activity to increase participation and to make the activity more or less challenging.

- » **CHANGE IT** — Simple variations to activities are introduced to make the activities easier or harder in order to accommodate all player ability levels and backgrounds. Use the CHANGE IT acronym to assist you in modifying the activities, and remember to 'Ask the players':

C

Coaching style e.g. deciding when to direct activities and when to ask the players. Knowing when to provide discrete coaching and when to 'just let the kids play'

H

How you score or win e.g. introduce zones for batting or target games

A

Area (playing area) e.g. make the playing area smaller or larger; alter distances to targets or between players

N

Number of players e.g. consider different team sizes to keep all players active. Have several games of 2 v 2 or, if focusing on defence skills, change to 3 v 2 or 2 v 1 etc

G

Game rules e.g. allow 2 bounces before catching or stopping a ball, or introduce a no-go zone

E

Equipment e.g. use a larger or softer ball; rackets instead of bats; bins or markers for targets

I

Inclusion e.g. modify the game to maximise the involvement of all players. Ask the players how to change the game

T

Time e.g. reduce or extend the time to perform actions; change the number of passes within a time limit; vary the length of time a player can hold the ball

It is more important to follow the concept of **CHANGE IT** than to remember what each letter represents.

If it is not working.... CHANGE IT!!

How do I know when to **CHANGE IT**?

The first step is to play the game and observe player involvement and responses.

When observing the game being played, and player involvement and responses, ask yourself the following questions:

- » Is the game safe?
- » Are all players having fun?
- » Are all players engaged in the game?
- » Is the game working?
- » Do all players understand the game?
- » Is the objective of the game being achieved?
- » Are all the players being included?
- » Is participation being maximised?
- » Is the game appropriate to the ability level of each player?
- » Are all players being challenged?

If the answer to any of the above questions is No, then **CHANGE IT**.

The diagram on the following page provides a step-by-step guide about when and how to apply the **CHANGE IT** principles.



When and how to apply the CHANGE IT principles



OBSERVATION

Play the game

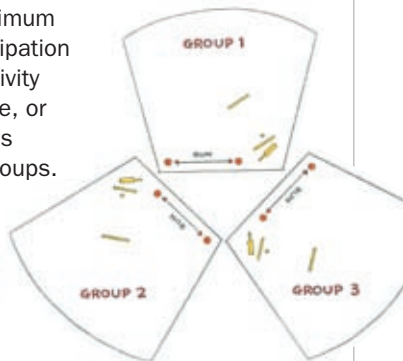
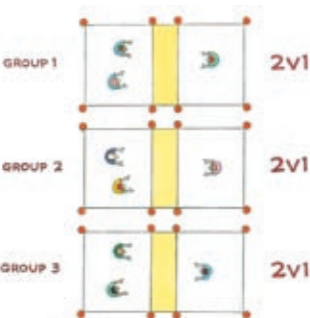
Observe player involvement and responses:

- Is the purpose being achieved?
- Are all players engaged?
- Are players coping with the skills required?
- Is it safe?
- Are players enjoying the game?

PLAY THE GAME AGAIN · OBSERVE RESPONSES · MAKE FURTHER VARIATIONS AS NECESSARY

Tips for delivery

- » Do not limit yourself to the structure of the lesson plans provided. Be creative and add your own flair as you become more confident as a deliverer.
- » Use the Easier and Harder variations to modify the games to suit the ability levels of the players. Remember to use your own CHANGE IT variations and 'Ask the players'.
- » Use the Tips section to provide discrete coaching where needed to develop players' skill levels.
- » As the lessons progress, the games evolve to become more complex and similar to the sport itself. However, remember to match the game with the ability of the players and modify it as necessary.
- » On the other hand, if the players grasp the games quickly, you may find you complete them in a shorter timeframe than estimated. In these circumstances, introduce games that the children enjoyed from previous lessons, to fill in time.
- » Remember some games may not work with one group, whereas they could work really well with another. Don't be afraid to CHANGE IT to suit the needs of your group or even replace the game completely.
- » Keep group sizes to a minimum to ensure maximum participation of all children. Run the activity with several groups at once, or set up stations with various activities and rotate the groups.





CIRCUS SKILLS

Introduction to circus skills



What is circus skills?

- » Circus skills uses the essence of circus, that is, fun, playfulness, skills and teamwork, to help participants embrace being active, cooperative and creative.
- » It is about harnessing the excitement that most people feel when they have been to a circus.
- » It is designed to provide non-circus folk with the opportunity to introduce circus skills to young children in a fun, engaging way.
- » Circus skills draws on human skills such as balancing, manipulation, dexterity and our need to be children, to pretend and to play games that challenge our minds and bodies while having fun.
- » Circus at any level also requires participants to be great team players.
- » It helps participants develop their skills and appreciation of communication, cooperation and care of self and others.

Objectives of Playing for Life circus skills

Playing for Life circus skills is an eight-week taste of the best of circus, at the end of which children can feel confident enough to perform their very own circus show. They will have learned, with your help, a range of skills that are used in circuses, including juggling, balancing, skipping and hula hooping.

As a community coach, you do not need to be able to juggle or build human pyramids to successfully deliver Playing for Life circus skills. The only requirement is that you use the lesson plans and activity cards provided and bring a sense of fun and exploration to your group.

Each of the eight lesson plans in the Playing for Life circus skills program repeat a series of games that encourage performance and movement. Each of these games can be used to create the final circus show in lesson 8.

For example, the 'Ringmaster' and 'Walk in line hup la' games create a distinctive movement and sound for each circus performer which can be re-created during the final show. Games such as 'Walk in line hup la' or 'Clown bow' are great ways for the group to learn about bowing, curtain calls and how to finish their act with pride and panache. These two games also encourage focus and teamwork.

The final lesson (the 8th lesson plan) is the children's opportunity to use all of their new skills and games to create their very own circus show. We would suggest splitting them into smaller groups so there are no more than 8–10 players in each performance group. We would also suggest that you use your knowledge of the children to determine who is in which group. You know which combinations will work best so that groups are cooperative and inclusive.

You will need some structure around rehearsals and performances, making sure every group is given equal time to perform, and the format for the final performance should be agreed at the outset.

TIP 1: At the conclusion of week 1, mention that everyone will be split into smaller groups to perform their very own mini circus show in week 8. Specify the time for each show, according to the number of players in the overall group and the size of the small groups that are chosen. Explain that any of the activities that are performed during the Playing for Life circus skills lessons can be included in the show and these are the only rules. Shows must have:

- » at least three acts, two of which must include two or more people
- » a definite beginning (perhaps a ringmaster/ mistress introducing the show), and
- » a definite ending (such as a group bow).

TIP 2: ‘Ringmaster says’ and ‘Walk in line hup la’ are performed as the Start Out activities for most lessons because these are games that introduce the concept of performance and can provide activities that can be used in the final (circus show) lesson.

The rest is really up to the children. You may wish to allow dress up, face paints or props and materials they can make their stage area with. This aspect will allow them to use their imagination and, most importantly, there really are no bad performances! As long as they are fun and everyone takes part.

Tips for delivering circus skills

Following are some specific tips for delivering Playing for Life circus skills:

- » Most of the equipment referred to in this book is likely to already be within your resources — encourage the players to improvise with everyday objects. You and the children can make some items (such as balancing poles and juggling balls) or you can easily purchase them from local household stores or specialist circus stores.
- » Circus is an accessible activity for all and the equipment required is only limited by your imagination. Improvise with everyday items, for example, balancing poles can be interchanged for brooms, baseball caps or shoes. When improvising with household objects, pay close attention to the weight and size of the object and make sure it is not too heavy or dangerous for the child.
- » Peacock feathers are inexpensive (approximately \$1 each) and can be ordered online or bought at a number of different shops. They need to be stored in a tube (e.g. a poster roll) as they are easily damaged if not stored properly.
- » Individual skipping ropes that are used in this book should be medium (3.5m) and/or long (5m).

Golden rules of safety

While they are fun, circus skills are also potentially dangerous and safety must come first. When conducting Playing for Life circus skills, always observe the following safety rules:

- » Check there is enough space between players and groups, away from walls or other obstacles, and always use a surface appropriate for the activities. For example, when performing balancing activities, be sure you use floor mats.
- » Have a deliverer, teacher, coach or adult watching at all times.
- » Make sure players warm up and cool down properly (using Start Out and Finish Up activities). This should help prevent any injuries or aches and pains from the activities.
- » Check that the activities and equipment are suitable for the children's level of fitness and skill. If anyone feels uncomfortable or unsure about a stunt, don't force them to do it.
- » Make sure players are focused on what they are doing. If someone can't stop laughing, take a break.
- » Don't do the activity mini pyramids if the group is unfocused.
- » Always provide instructions for the safe use of the equipment and all safety precautions and procedures that must be adhered to before conducting any activity.
- » Children should wear stretchy, comfortable clothes (not jeans), runners or bare feet and have their hair tied back if it is long. Ask children to remove watches or jewellery and store them in a safe place (or, even better, tell them to leave them at home!).

Introduction to basic circus terms, equipment and skills

Terms

- » **'HUP LA!'** — a commonly used term in circus performances. It is most often shouted by performers to signify a special trick or the end of an act. It is often used with a bow.

- » **RINGMASTER** — often the most important and most visible performer in the circus. He or she usually introduces the various acts. Most ringmasters become an integral part of the performance, singing and dancing along with the other entertainers. The traditional opening line of many circuses is the phrase 'Ladies, and gentlemen, children of all ages...'

Equipment

- » **BALANCING OBJECTS** — any object can be balanced, but to give beginners a sense of achievement, it is best to start with long, thin, light objects such as peacock feathers and balancing poles made out of newspaper. Players can progress onto more difficult items such as broom handles, shoes, baseball caps and hula hoops.



- » **BALANCING POLES** — use everyday items (e.g. broomsticks or rulers) or buy resources such as pieces of doweling, metre sticks, plate spinning sticks or peacock feathers. You can make balancing poles in class if you have time. Roll up a piece of newspaper into a long tight tube and hold it together with sticky tape at the top, middle and bottom. Experiment with different ways of rolling the paper, e.g. cones, long, short, thick or thin. Each player will have a slightly different 'pole', which allows the class to see which poles balance better.

- » **HULA HOOPS** — plastic, hollow rings that come in a range of sizes.



- » **JUGGLING BALLS, BEANBAGS, SCARVES AND RINGS** — different sized, shaped and textured objects used to teach juggling and hand-eye coordination. While you can purchase this equipment from specialist circus stores, some equipment can be improvised and this is encouraged. For example, soft steering wheel covers are great alternatives to juggling rings, and plastic bags make excellent alternatives to juggling scarves.

- » **PEACOCK FEATHERS** — large, colourful feathers, which may be fake or real. They are used to introduce balance activities. They have a high centre of mass and are slow-moving, which makes them easy for players to balance.



- » **SKIPPING ROPES** — long thin ropes generally made out of plastic, with handles on each end.



- » **SPINNING PLATES AND STICKS** — the best spinning plates for school use are plastic, have a lip on the bottom surface, and a dimple in the middle. The lip enables the plate to hang on the stick, while the dimple ensures it will spin with stability on a stick or finger.



Skills

- » **ACROBALANCE** — includes all of the acrobatic balancing conducted in the circus. It comprises partner acrobatics, counter balances and group pyramids.



- » **BALANCING OBJECTS** — a key circus skill where objects are held in a state of equilibrium without gripping. Players start off by learning to balance slow-moving objects, such as peacock feathers, balloons on sticks, or rolled up newspaper tubes. Then they progress to more difficult feats, including balancing different objects on various body parts (e.g. a peacock feather balanced on a knee or elbow or a baseball cap on the chin).



- » **HULA HOOPS** — can be twirled around parts of the body or rolled along the ground. With practice, some people can twirl several hula hoops at once using the trunk or separate body parts.



- » **JUGGLING** — all forms of artful or skillful manipulation of one or more objects. In its basic form, it is throwing in a rhythm, one object from one hand (or person) to another.



- » **JUGGLE PASSING** — a form of juggling where objects are exchanged (thrown) between two or more jugglers.



» **CROSS PASSING OR CROSS JUGGLING** — a pass that travels from one side to the other. For example, if two jugglers stand facing each other, a cross pass is where an object is thrown by one juggler's right hand and caught by their partner's right hand.

» **SIAMESE JUGGLING** — a form of juggling where two people stand side-by-side (as if joined at the hip) and juggle using one arm each (usually the outside arms).

» **SPIDER THROW** — a type of throw used when juggling. Holding the scarf with the palm facing downward and fingers dangling like a spider, the scarf is thrown from hip height across the body. The scarf is released when the arm is fully extended and is caught with the opposite hand at hip height, keeping the spider hand position.



» **CASCADE THROW** — a type of throw used when juggling. Hold hands palm up at hip height and throw the ball underarm from one hand to the other making an upside-down 'V' shape through the air, with the tip of the 'V' at approximately forehead height. Each subsequent ball is released when the previous one reaches the peak of the 'V'.



» **PLATE SPINNING** — a manipulation and balancing art where a person spins plates, bowls and other flat objects on poles or body parts. Plate spinning is a popular, fairly easy and fun skill to learn. Plates can also be used as a balancing or movement object alone, with no spinning required.



» **SKIPPING** — an activity where one or more participants jump over a spinning rope so that it passes under their feet and over their heads.



What you need from the kit...



START OUT

WILDCARD

START OUT WC 03B Look out for others!

COOPERATIVE PLAY

START OUT CP 03 Run the circle

START OUT CP 05 Kai

INVASION GAMES

START OUT INV 03 Pairs passing

MOVEMENT GAMES

START OUT MV 03A Team Alphabet

START OUT MV 04C Skip to my lou

START OUT MV 05B Ringmaster says

START OUT MV 06A Walk in line hup la

START OUT MV 06B Catch me!

START OUT MV 07C Hoop stretch

START OUT MV 08A How high?

GET INTO IT

MOVEMENT GAMES

GET INTO IT MV 01 Racing relay

GET INTO IT MV 05 Let's dance!

GET INTO IT MV 06A Teddy bear, teddy bear

GET INTO IT MV 06B 3 hands, 2 feet

GET INTO IT MV 07 Walk right through

GET INTO IT MV 08 Mini pyramids

GET INTO IT MV 09B Hoop races

GET INTO IT MV 10 Trust trains

GET INTO IT MV 11A Clown bow

GET INTO IT MV 11B Balancing act

GET INTO IT MV 12 Criss cross

GET INTO IT MV 13 Spinning plates

GET INTO IT MV 14A Squeeze step

GET INTO IT MV 14B Juggle applause

FINISH UP

FINISH UP

FINISH UP 01 Put it away!
Great work!

FINISH UP 03 What did you like?
Stay tuned...

FINISH UP 05 Group balance



Remove or print each of the above cards from the Playing for Life resource kit and add to the ring-bound holder provided.



This companion book cross-references these cards throughout the 8-week lesson plan.

Overview of lessons

LESSON	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
OBJECTIVE	Circus scarf juggling	Ball juggling	Skipping	Balancing objects	Hula hoop activities to music	Balancing people	Plates	Circus show – the grand finale	
START OUT	Kai Start Out CP 05 Ringmaster says Start Out MV 05B	Kai Start Out CP 05 Ringmaster says Start Out MV 05B	Ringmaster says Start Out MV 05B Walk in line hup la Start Out MV 06A	Ringmaster says Start Out MV 05B Hoop stretch Start Out MV 07C	Ringmaster says Start Out MV 05B Walk in line hup la Start Out MV 06A	Ringmaster says Start Out MV 05B Walk in line hup la Start Out MV 06A	Ringmaster says Start Out MV 05B Walk in line hup la Start Out MV 06A	Ringmaster says Start Out MV 05B Walk in line hup la Start Out MV 06A	
GET INTO IT	Criss cross Get Into It MV 12 How high? Start Out MV 08A Juggle applause Get Into It MV 14B Run the circle Start Out CP 03	Criss cross Get Into It MV 12 Racing relay Get Into It MV 01 How high? Start Out MV 08A Juggle applause Get Into It MV 14B Run the circle Start Out CP03	Trust trains Get Into It MV 10 Skip to my lou Start Out MV 04C Walk right through Get Into It MV 07 Teddy bear, teddy bear Get Into It MV 06A	Look out for others! Start Out WC 03B Balancing act Get Into It MV 11B Racing relay Get Into It MV 01	Hoop races Get Into It MV 09B Coach says Start Out MV 01A Let's dance Get Into It MV 05	Catch me! Start Out MV 06B Look out for others! Start Out WC 03B 3 hands, 2 feet Get Into It MV06B Mini pyramids Get Into It MV 08 Team alphabet Start Out MV 03A	Catch me! Start Out MV 06B Look out for others! Start Out WC 03B 3 hands, 2 feet Get Into It MV06B Mini pyramids Get Into It MV 08 Team alphabet Start Out MV 03A	Pairs passing Start Out INV 03 Spinning plates Get Into It MV 13	Dress rehearsals (No card) The grand finale - circus show performance (No card)
FINISH UP	Clown bow Get Into It MV 11A	Clown bow Get Into It MV 11A	Squeeze step Get Into It MV 14A	Walk in line hup la Start Out MV 06A	Hoop stretch Start Out MV 07C	Group balance Finish Up 05	Put it away! Finish Up 01 Great work! Finish Up 01	What did you like? Finish Up 03 Stay tuned... Finish Up 03	

How to use this book

- 1 Read the introductory pages to make sure you have an understanding of the Playing for Life philosophy and a basic understanding of the sport, including terms and skills, safety considerations and equipment requirements.
 - 2 Read through each lesson plan to make sure you understand the objectives and requirements for each lesson.
 - 3 Collect and review the required Playing for Life activity cards referred to in each of the lessons.
 - 4 Add the loose-leaf activity cards to the ring-bound holder (shown). A companion book can sit alongside the activity cards — just slide the cover into the holder.
-
- 5 Before conducting each lesson, organise an appropriate and safe playing area and the necessary equipment (based on the number, ability levels and backgrounds of the players and the available area and equipment). A full equipment kit for this companion book has been prepared and is available through the AASC preferred supplier. To order, visit our web site at www.ausport.gov.au/aasc.
 - 6 Deliver the lesson, using the indicated Playing for Life activity cards and the instructions provided in the book. Remember to vary the activities, where required, to cater for the needs of different players. If the activity is not working, remember to CHANGE IT.
 - 7 Review the lesson immediately afterwards so you can identify what worked well/what didn't, what level the players are at, and what you need to remember for next time. The outcome of this review will influence what you include in the next lesson and how you deliver it.

While this book is primarily designed to help people with minimal experience in the sport to deliver activities in line with the Playing for Life philosophy, we do encourage you to consider attending a coaching course to improve your knowledge and skills. Information about the relevant coaching courses can be found in the 'Where to from here' section of the book.

Lesson 1

OBJECTIVE	Circus scarf juggling
TIME	60 minutes
AREA	Size appropriate for player numbers, ability and mobility
EQUIPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Marker cones to define the playing areas» 1 small beach ball or soft sponge ball per group of 4» 2 juggling scarves or plastic bags per player

Card summary

- » **Start Out CP 03**
- » **Start Out CP 05**
- » **Start Out MV 05B**
- » **Start Out MV 08A**
- » **Get Into It MV 11A**
- » **Get Into It MV 12**
- » **Get Into It MV 14B**



Remember, if the game isn't working **CHANGE IT**

1

Kai

START OUT CP 05
5 MINUTES

Players stand in a circle and hit a ball up in the air with the palm of their hands. (Play in teams of 4 or more.)

SKILL FOCUS *Develops hand-eye coordination, concentration and teamwork*

Refer to the activity card...



Harder

- » Players sit in a circle and try and keep the ball up.
- » Players play in pairs with 1 ball.
- » Players can only hit the ball with one hand.
- » Increase the number of balls.

ASK THE PLAYERS » How can you get more hits as a team?
» What is the best way to hit the ball to keep it up?

Ringmaster says

START OUT MV 05B
10 MINUTES

To get a feel for the circus environment, you call out one of 5 basic circus-related calls. Each call has a location, movement and sound that the players must perform.

SKILL FOCUS *Energiser that improves listening/concentration, coordination and introduces circus activities and the circus show*

Refer to the activity card...



Criss cross

GET INTO IT MV 12
10 MINUTES

Players hold a juggling object in each hand. You say the words 'Criss cross' and, upon each word, the players must throw one juggling object and then the other.

SKILL FOCUS *Introduces juggling and improves hand-eye coordination and teamwork/cooperation*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Juggling should be performed using scarves or plastic bags and the spider throw and catch method.



Easier

- » Players start with one juggling item at a time.

Harder

- » Play in pairs.



- TIPS**
- » Encourage players to throw slow and high, extending the throwing arm fully before releasing the scarf.
 - » The aim is to practise throwing the scarves in time with the rhyme, as this gives a sense of rhythm that will help players throw and catch correctly and in time.

- ASK THE PLAYERS**
- » How high can you throw the scarf?
 - » What's the best way to throw the scarf high?
 - » What do you need to do to catch the scarf?

How high?

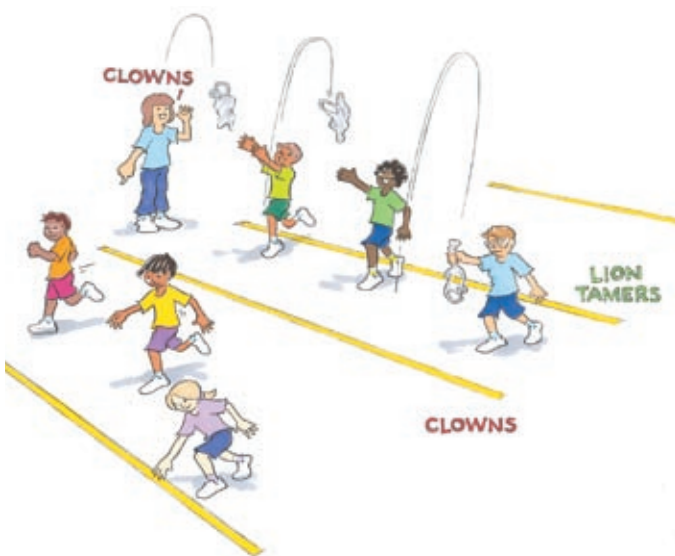
START OUT MV 08A
10 MINUTES

Players line up in two equal lines facing one another. One line throws their juggling object as high as possible and then runs to a designated line behind them. Each person's partner tries to catch the object before their partner reaches the line. (Play in pairs).

SKILL FOCUS *Improves hand-eye coordination, juggling technique and teamwork/cooperation*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Players throw either a scarf or a plastic bag using the spider throw and catch method.



Juggle applause

GET INTO IT MV 14B
5 MINUTES

Players line up in 2 equal lines facing one another. One line throws their juggling object as high as possible and then catches it. Each person's partner in the opposite line claps as many times as possible between the throw and the catch. (Play with two teams of 4–10.)

SKILL FOCUS *Improves hand–eye coordination, juggling technique and teamwork/cooperation*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Players throw either a scarf or a plastic bag using the spider throw and catch method.



- TIPS**
- » Encourage players to throw slow and high, extending the throwing arm fully before releasing the juggling object.

Run the circle

START OUT CP 03
15 MINUTES

Players form a circle with two scarves. Using the spider throw, scarves are thrown from player to player. The aim is for one scarf to catch up to the other. (Play with 6 or more.)

SKILL FOCUS *Improves hand-eye coordination, juggling technique and teamwork/cooperation*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *3–4 juggling scarves or plastic bags per group*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Players form a circle, standing close together, almost shoulder to shoulder.
- » Using the spider throw, scarves are thrown from player to player.
- » Players should throw with their right hand across their body to the player on the left, who catches it with their right hand, or vice versa for the other direction.



Harder

- » Increase the number of scarves to 3 or 4.
- » Have the two scarves travelling in opposite directions. The aim is to have both scarves arrive back with the starting person.

- TIPS**
- » Players will be more successful when they work together and throw well to their partner i.e. slow and high.
 - » Refer to the introduction for instructions on how to perform the 'spider throw'.

- ASK THE PLAYERS**
- » How many scarves can you throw in a group?
 - » How many actions can you perform between throwing one scarf and catching the next one? e.g. turn a full circle, touch the ground.

Clown bow

GET INTO IT MV 11A
5 MINUTES

Players stand in a line with a juggling object each. Each player throws their juggling object up in the air and then moves to the left to catch the next juggling object. The person on the end has to run to the other end and catch that juggling object before it drops to the ground. (Play in groups of 5.)

SKILL FOCUS *Improves hand–eye coordination, juggling, agility and teamwork/cooperation.*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Players throw either a scarf or a plastic bag using the spider throw and catch method.



- TIPS**
- » All players must work together to get their team-mate to the end so that the juggling object can be caught. They do this by throwing them as high as possible.
 - » Clap out a slow rhythm to help the players step, throw and catch in time.

Lesson 2

OBJECTIVE	Ball juggling
TIME	60 minutes
AREA	Size appropriate for player numbers, ability and mobility
EQUIPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Marker cones to define the playing areas » 2 scarves or plastic bags per player » 2 juggling balls, small soft balls or bean bags per player » 1 small beach ball or soft sponge ball per group of 4

Card summary

- » **Start Out CP 03**
- » **Start Out CP 05**
- » **Start Out MV 05B**
- » **Start Out MV 08A**
- » **Get Into It MV 01**
- » **Get Into It MV 11A**
- » **Get Into It MV 12**
- » **Get Into It MV 14B**



2

Remember, if the game isn't working **CHANGE IT**

Kai

START OUT CP 05
5 MINUTES

Players stand in a circle and hit a ball up in the air with the palm of their hands. (Play in teams of 4 or more.)

SKILL FOCUS *Develops hand-eye coordination, concentration and teamwork*

Refer to the activity card...



Harder

- » Players sit in a circle and try and keep the ball up.
- » Players play in pairs with 1 ball.
- » Players can only hit the ball with one hand.
- » Increase the number of balls.

ASK THE PLAYERS » How can you get more hits as a team?
» What is the best way to hit the ball to keep it up?

Ringmaster says

START OUT MV 05B
5 MINUTES

To get a feel for the circus environment, you call out one of 5 basic circus-related calls. Each call has a location, movement and sound that the players must perform.

SKILL FOCUS *Energiser that encourages listening, concentration and coordination, and introduces circus activities and the circus show*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *2 scarves or plastic bags per player*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Each player carries around 2 scarves or plastic bags.
- » Add a 6th call of juggling, and agree as a group how this action will be performed.
- » Call this action intermittently with the main calls.



- TIPS**
- » For this lesson, players use the techniques they learnt in week 1 to perform the juggling activity when it is called.
 - » Be creative and add many other 'pretend' circus movements of your own, as this will make sure the focus is on fun, performance and play acting.

Criss cross

GET INTO IT MV 12
10 MINUTES

Players hold a juggling object in each hand. You say the words 'Criss cross' and, upon each word, the players must throw one juggling object and then the other.

SKILL FOCUS *Introduces juggling and improves hand-eye coordination and teamwork/cooperation*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Juggling should be performed using juggling balls or bean bags and the cascade throw and catch method.



Easier

- » Players use only one ball or bean bag.

Harder

- » Play in pairs.
- » Vary the movement with the throws (e.g. throwing under the leg or throwing and spinning around).
- » Introduce a 3rd ball.



- TIPS**
- » Encourage players to hold their hands at hip height.
 - » Refer to the introduction for instructions on how to perform the 'cascade' throw.
 - » Encourage long, slow throws. Throwing technique is more important than catching technique.
 - » The aim is to practise throwing the balls in time with the rhyme, giving a sense of rhythm that will help players throw and catch correctly.

- ASK THE PLAYERS** » How many throws can you do before dropping a ball?

Racing relay

GET INTO IT MV 01
10 MINUTES

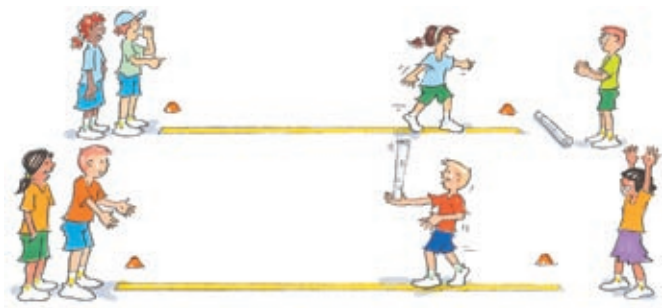
Players race each other in a relay, performing various movement patterns. (Play in teams of 4 or 5.)

SKILL FOCUS *Improves throwing, hand-eye coordination and concentration*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *2 or 3 scarves per team
2 or 3 juggling balls or bean bags per team*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Use circus-related activities in the relay race such as:
 - pretend to walk a tightrope
 - run with a juggling ball between the knees
 - run/walk while balancing a juggling ball in the palm of your hand
 - run to the end and juggle the ball without dropping it, or run to the end and introduce the next team member, ringmaster style e.g. 'Ladies and gentlemen, introducing... Jesse'.



Easier

- » The group selects 4 or 5 actions, which must be performed once in the race. The team decides which team member performs which action and in which order they are performed.

ASK THE PLAYERS » What circus-related activities can we perform in the relay race?

How high?

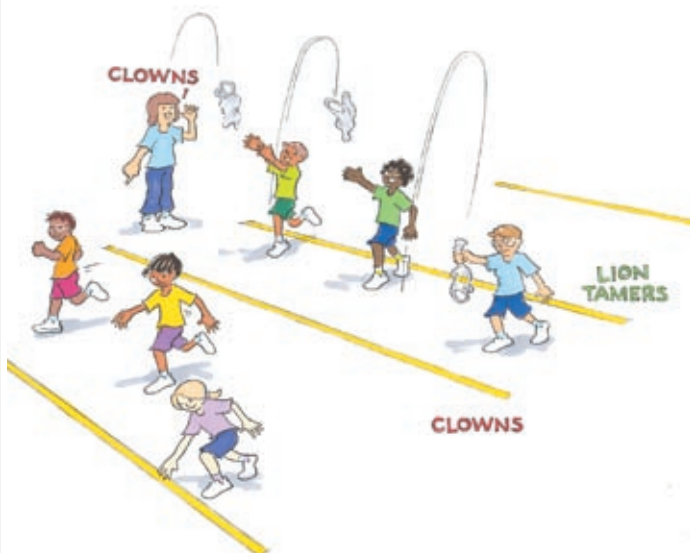
START OUT MV 08A
10 MINUTES

Players line up in two equal lines facing one another. One line throws their juggling objects as high as possible and then runs to a designated line behind them. Each player's partner tries to catch the object before their partner reaches the line. (Play in pairs).

SKILL FOCUS *Improves juggling technique, hand-eye coordination and teamwork/cooperation*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Players throw a juggling ball or bean bag using the cascade throw and catch method.



- TIPS** » Encourage players to throw slow and high, extending the throwing arm fully before releasing the ball.

- ASK THE PLAYERS** » How can you give yourself the most time to reach the line? (e.g. throw the ball high)

Juggle applause

GET INTO IT MV 14B
5 MINUTES

Players line up in 2 equal lines facing one another. One line throws their juggling object as high as possible and then catches it. Each player's partner in the opposite line claps as many times as possible between the throw and the catch. (Play with two teams of 4–10.)

SKILL FOCUS *Improves juggling technique, hand–eye coordination and teamwork/cooperation*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Players throw a juggling ball or bean bag using the cascade throw and catch method.



Run the circle

START OUT CP 03
10 MINUTES

Players form a circle with two balls. Using the 'cascade throw', balls are thrown from player to player. The aim is for one ball to catch up to the other. (Play with 6 or more.)

SKILL FOCUS *Improves juggling technique, hand-eye coordination and teamwork/cooperation*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *3 or 4 juggling balls or bean bags per group*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Players form a circle, standing close together, almost shoulder to shoulder.
- » Using the cascade throw, balls are thrown from player to player.



Harder

- » Increase the number of balls to 3 or 4.
- » Have the two balls travelling in opposite directions. The aim is to have both balls arrive back with the starting person.
- » Skip a person when throwing the ball so it goes to every second person rather than every person. This only works if there is an odd number in the group.

- TIPS**
- » Refer to the introduction for instructions on how to perform the 'cascade throw'.
 - » Players will be more successful when they work together and throw well to their partner i.e. slow and high.

- ASK THE PLAYERS**
- » What's the best way to throw the balls high?
 - » How many balls can you throw in a group?
 - » How many actions can you perform between throwing one ball and catching the next one?

- SAFETY** » Don't leave balls lying on the floor.

Clown bow

GET INTO IT MV 11A
5 MINUTES

Players stand in a line with a juggling object each. Each player throws their juggling object up in the air and then moves to the left to catch the next juggling object. The person on the end has to run to the other end and catch that juggling object before it drops to the ground. (Play in groups of 5.)

SKILL FOCUS *Introduces juggling and improves agility, hand-eye coordination and teamwork/cooperation*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Players throw a juggling ball or a bean bag using the cascade throw and catch method.



- TIPS**
- » This activity can become an act in the final show.
 - » All players must work together to get their team-mate to the end so the ball can be caught. They do this by throwing their balls as high as possible.
 - » Clap out a slow rhythm to help the children step, throw and catch in time.

Lesson 3

OBJECTIVE	Skipping
TIME	60 minutes
AREA	Size appropriate for player numbers, ability and mobility
EQUIPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Marker cones to define the playing areas » 2 scarves, plastic bags, juggling balls or bean bags per player » 1 individual skipping rope per player » 1 long (5 metre) rope » Optional: 1 medium (3.5 metre) rope per group of 3

Card summary

- » **Start Out MV 04C**
- » **Start Out MV 05B**
- » **Start Out MV 06A**
- » **Get Into It MV 06A**
- » **Get Into It MV 07**
- » **Get Into It MV 10**
- » **Get Into It MV 14A**



3

Remember, if the game isn't working **CHANGE IT**

Ringmaster says

START OUT MV 05B
5 MINUTES

To get a feel for the circus environment, you call out one of 5 basic circus-related calls. Each call has a location, movement and sound that the players must perform.

SKILL FOCUS *Energiser that encourages listening, concentration and coordination, and introduces circus activities and the circus show*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *2 scarves, plastic bags, juggling balls or bean bags per player*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Each player carries around 2 juggling objects of their choice.
- » Add a 6th call of juggling and agree as a group how this action will be performed.
- » Call this action intermittently with the main calls.



- TIPS**
- » For this lesson, players use the techniques they learnt in weeks 1 and 2 to perform the juggling activity.
 - » Be creative and add many other 'pretend' circus movements of your own, to keep the focus on fun, performance and play acting.

Walk in line hup la

START OUT MV 06A
5 MINUTES

The whole group stands in a line all facing forward and holding hands. On a verbal or non-verbal (e.g. hand squeeze) signal from the group leader, the group step forward to an imaginary line together and stretch their arms upwards, yelling 'HUP LA!'

SKILL FOCUS *Improves teamwork, cooperative play and coordination, and can contribute ideas for the final performance*

Refer to the activity card...



Trust trains

GET INTO IT MV 10
10 MINUTES

A movement-based, non-verbal game of Chinese whispers. Players are in short lines (trains) with each player holding the shoulders of the player in front of them. Everyone except the driver has their eyes shut. The aim is for the driver to move the train around the room without bumping into other trains. (Play in groups of 4 or 5.)

SKILL FOCUS *Improves verbal and non-verbal communication and coordination, and encourages trustworthiness and teamwork*

Refer to the activity card...



- TIPS**
- » Make sure verbal communication is loud and clear.
 - » Make sure non-verbal communication mechanisms are clearly understood before you start.

Skip to my lou

START OUT MV 04C
10 MINUTES

Players challenge themselves to skip within a time limit.

SKILL FOCUS *Improves coordination, timing, jumping and landing*

Refer to the activity card...



TIPS

- » Turn the rope at an even speed to make skipping easier.
- » Start with the rope behind the heels and swing it over the head.
- » When the rope hits the ground in front of the toes, jump just high enough to skip over it.

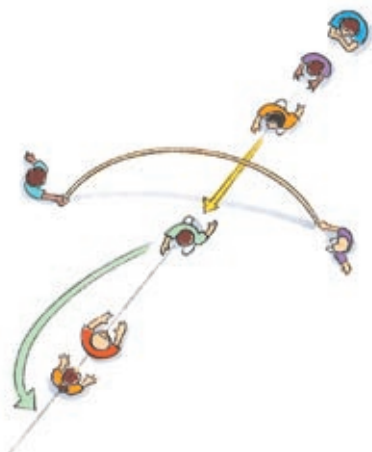
Walk right through

GET INTO IT MV 07
10 MINUTES

Two people turn the skipping rope, while the other players walk right through. (Play with 4–6).

SKILL FOCUS *Focuses on coordination, agility, timing and teamwork*

Refer to the activity card...



TIPS » Turn the rope at an even speed to make skipping easier.

Teddy bear, teddy bear

GET INTO IT MV 06A
10 MINUTES

Players chant a rhyme while performing skills and skipping at the same time.

SKILL FOCUS *Focuses on coordination, agility, timing and teamwork*

Refer to the activity card...

Squeeze step

GET INTO IT MV 14A
10 MINUTES

A movement-based, non-verbal game of Chinese whispers. Players are in groups of 3 standing side-by-side, holding hands. Using hand squeezes and forwards/backwards/sideways movements of joined hands, the leader shows how many steps — and in what direction — the group should take. Once all players in the group have the message, they move in unison.

SKILL FOCUS *Improves verbal and non-verbal communication, coordination and teamwork*

Refer to the activity card...



Lesson 4

OBJECTIVE	Balancing objects
TIME	60 minutes
AREA	Size appropriate for player numbers, ability and mobility
EQUIPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Marker cones to define playing areas » Balancing poles made out of newspaper and sticky tape, rolled in different ways and shapes » 1 or 2 everyday balancing objects per player (e.g. shoes, plastic chairs, baseball caps, broom handles, wooden spoons, water bottles) » 2 scarves, plastic bags, juggling balls or bean bags per player or an individual skipping rope per player » 1 piece of chalk or hoop per player » 1 peacock feather or balloon and stick per player

Card summary

- » **Start Out WC 03B**
- » **Start Out MV 05B**
- » **Start Out MV 06A**
- » **Start Out MV 07C**
- » **Get Into It MV 01**
- » **Get Into It MV 11B**

Remember, if the game isn't working **CHANGE IT**



Ringmaster says

START OUT MV 05B
5 MINUTES

To get a feel for the circus environment, you call out one of 5 basic circus-related calls. Each call has a location, movement and sound that the players must perform.

SKILL FOCUS *Energiser that encourages listening, concentration and coordination, and introduces circus activities and the circus show*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *2 scarves, plastic bags, juggling balls or bean bags per player or an individual skipping rope per player*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Each player carries around 2 juggling objects of their choice, or a skipping rope.
- » Add a 6th call of juggling and/or skipping and agree as a group how this action(s) will be performed.
- » Call this action intermittently with the main calls.



- TIPS**
- » For this lesson, players use the juggling or skipping techniques they learnt in previous weeks.
 - » Be creative with your calls and add your own.

Hoop stretch

START OUT MV 07C
5 MINUTES

Players explore balancing with different body positions while stretching from inside a hoop.

SKILL FOCUS *Warm up activity that aids stretching and balancing*

Refer to the activity card...



TIPS » Emphasise the need to experiment with organising the body in different balanced positions.

Look out for others!

START OUT WC 03B
15 MINUTES

Players run in random directions in a defined area.
Players are made aware that the activity is focused on learning to play safely in the presence of others.

SKILL FOCUS *Improves spatial awareness, balancing objects and peripheral vision*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *1 peacock feather or balloon and stick per player*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Players balance a peacock feather in the palm of their hand while walking around the room.
- » If someone comes into their space (i.e. within a metre of them) they make a beep noise.
- » Ask players to count up the beeps they make in 30 seconds.
- » Players aim to get the lowest number of beeps.



Easier

- » Players don't balance an object. They move around the area with their arms outstretched, beeping when someone comes into their space.

Harder

- » Players move around the room by skipping, running or jumping.
- » Try balancing the object on a different part of the body e.g. the back of the hand, the elbow or the arm.

TIPS » Remind players to watch the top of the peacock feather when balancing. This makes it easier to balance.

- ASK THE PLAYERS**
- » How many beeps did you make in a given time?
 - » As a group, how can you reduce the number of beeps?
 - » What do you need to do to keep the feather balanced?

Balancing act

GET INTO IT MV 11B
15 MINUTES

Players try balancing different objects to see which shapes are easiest to balance.

SKILL FOCUS *Improves spatial awareness and skill in balancing objects*

Refer to the activity card...



- TIPS**
- » Encourage players to suggest different challenges using the balancing poles.
 - » Have extra ready-made newspaper balancing poles on hand to use in case of mishaps.

Racing relay

GET INTO IT MV 01
15 MINUTES

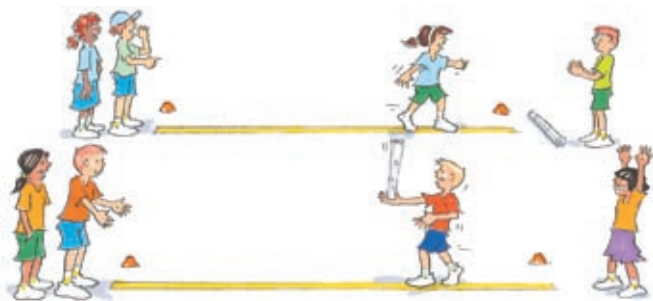
Players race each other in a relay, performing various movement patterns. (Play in teams of 4 or 5.)

SKILL FOCUS *Improves throwing, hand–eye coordination and concentration*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *Balancing poles made out of newspaper and sticky tape, rolled in different ways and shapes
1 or 2 balancing objects per player*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Incorporate balancing acts into the relay race, for example: run/walk while balancing a juggling ball in the palm of your hand, or balance an object on your shoulder while side-stepping.
- » Encourage teams to come up with the funniest balancing act.



Harder:

- » Set up scenarios for the relays e.g. ‘You are a waiter with a stack of dishes that you must balance all the way to the kitchen’.

- TIPS**
- » You or the players can make up relay actions.
 - » Scenarios bring an element of performance to the activity.

- ASK THE PLAYERS**
- » What balancing acts can you incorporate in the relay race?
 - » Which team has the funniest performance?

Walk in line hup la

START OUT MV 06A
5 MINUTES

The whole group stands in a line all facing forward and holding hands. On a verbal or non-verbal (e.g. hand squeeze) signal from the group leader, the group step forward to an imaginary line together and stretch their arms upwards, yelling 'HUP LA!'.

SKILL FOCUS *Encourages teamwork, cooperative play and coordination, and contributes ideas for the final performance.*

Refer to the activity card...



TIPS » This is an action that will be incorporated into an audience performance, so remember to keep it fun!

Lesson 5

OBJECTIVE Hula hoop activities to music

TIME 60 minutes

AREA Size appropriate for player numbers, ability and mobility

- EQUIPMENT**
- » Marker cones to define playing areas
 - » 1 or 2 hula hoops per player
 - » 1 piece of chalk or a skipping rope per player
 - » 2 scarves, plastic bags, juggling balls or bean bags per player
 - » Music player and music

Card summary

- » **Start Out MV 01A**
- » **Start Out MV 05B**
- » **Start Out MV 06A**
- » **Start Out MV 07C**
- » **Get Into It MV 05**
- » **Get Into It MV 09B**



5

Remember, if the game isn't working **CHANGE IT**

Ringmaster says

START OUT MV 05B
5 MINUTES

To get a feel for the circus environment, you call out one of 5 basic circus-related calls. Each call has a location, movement and sound that the players must perform.

SKILL FOCUS *Energiser that encourages listening, concentration and coordination, and introduces circus activities and the circus show*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *2 scarves, plastic bags, juggling balls or bean bags per player or an individual skipping rope per player*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Each player carries around 2 juggling objects of their choice or a skipping rope.
- » Add additional calls for juggling, skipping and/or walking the tight rope.
- » Call this action(s) intermittently with the main calls.



TIPS » For this lesson, players use the skills they learnt in previous weeks.

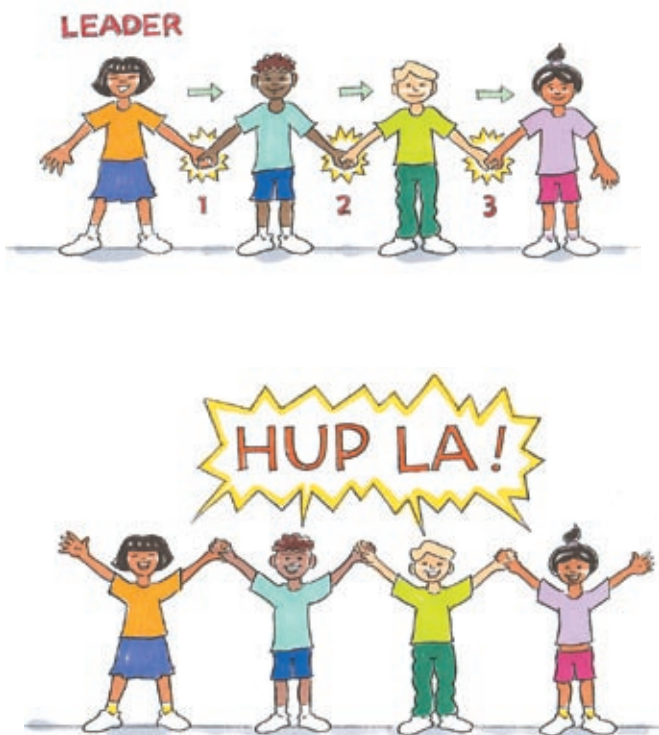
Walk in line hup la

START OUT MV 06A
5 MINUTES

The whole group stands in a line all facing forward and holding hands. On a verbal or non-verbal (e.g. hand squeeze) signal from the group leader, the group step forward to an imaginary line together and stretch their arms upwards, yelling 'HUP LA!'

SKILL FOCUS *Encourages teamwork, cooperative play and coordination, and contributes ideas for the final performance*

Refer to the activity card...



TIPS » This is an action that will be incorporated into an audience performance, so remember to keep it fun!

Hoop races

GET INTO IT MV 09B
10 MINUTES

Players in groups race each other by passing a hoop up and down their line while making 'up and down' noises. (Play in groups of 6.)

SKILL FOCUS *Encourages teamwork and cooperative play*

Refer to the activity card...



TIPS » Improve with different ideas using the hula hoops in similar races.

Coach says

START OUT MV 01A
10 MINUTES

Using the rules of 'Simon says', you (as ringmaster) call out commands for players to perform various fundamental motor skills and movement patterns.

SKILL FOCUS *Improves coordination and balance*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *1 or 2 hula hoops per player*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Calls are to include different moves that can be performed with the hoop e.g. neck rolls, arm rolls, hip rolls, leg rolls, finger rolls, rolling along the ground.
- » A combination of locomotion movements should also be used.



Harder

- » Use 2 or more hoops per player.

ASK THE PLAYERS

- » How can you keep the hoop spinning longer?
- » Which part of the body is it easier to spin the hoop on?

SAFETY

- » Check there is enough space between players to allow for the swinging hoops.

Let's dance!

GET INTO IT MV 05
25 MINUTES

Players work together to devise, briefly practise and then perform a short routine that is made up of movements that may be done together or individually.

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT 1 or 2 hula hoops per player

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Groups must include circus activities/skills in their routine, with at least 1 hula hoop skill.



ASK THE PLAYERS » How can you make sure everyone is included?

Hoop stretch

START OUT MV 07C
5 MINUTES

Players explore balancing with different body positions while stretching from inside a hoop.

SKILL FOCUS Warm up activity that improves stretching and balancing

Refer to the activity card...



TIPS » Emphasise the need to experiment with organising the body in different balanced positions.

Lesson 6

OBJECTIVE	Balancing people
TIME	60 minutes
AREA	Size appropriate for player numbers, ability and mobility
EQUIPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Marker cones to define playing areas » 2 scarves, plastic bags, juggling balls or bean bags per player or; » 1 peacock feather or other balancing object per player or; » 1 individual skipping rope per player or; » 1 hula hoop per player » 1 gym/scatter mat per pair or a soft grassed area » 1 long rope (5 metres) that is joined in a circle with ends tied very securely.

Card summary

- » **Start Out WC 03B**
- » **Start Out MV 03A**
- » **Start Out MV 05B**
- » **Start Out MV 06A**
- » **Start Out MV 06B**
- » **Get Into It MV 06B**
- » **Get Into It MV 08**
- » **Finish Up 05**

Remember, if the game isn't working **CHANGE IT**



Ringmaster says

START OUT MV 05B
5 MINUTES

To get a feel for the circus environment, you call out one of 5 basic circus-related calls. Each call has a location, movement and sound that the players must perform.

SKILL FOCUS *Energiser that encourages listening, concentration and coordination, and introduces circus activities and the circus show*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *2 scarves, plastic bags, juggling balls or bean bags per player or 1 peacock feather or other balancing object per player or 1 individual skipping rope per player or 1 hula hoop per player*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Each player carries around a circus object of their choice e.g. scarves, plastic bags, juggling balls, bean bags, peacock feathers, skipping ropes, hula hoops.
- » Add a 6th call of juggling, balancing, and/or walking the tightrope.
- » Call this action intermittently with the main calls.



Walk in line hup la

START OUT MV 06A
5 MINUTES

The whole group stands in a line all facing forward and holding hands. On a verbal or non-verbal (e.g. hand squeeze) signal from the group leader, the group step forward to an imaginary line together and stretch their arms upwards, yelling 'HUP LA!'

SKILL FOCUS *Encourages teamwork and coordination, and contributes ideas for the final performance*

Refer to the activity card...



Catch me!

START OUT MV 06B
10 MINUTES

The whole group walks around the room. A nominated player stops, puts their hand in the air and yells out 'Catch me!'. The player then goes into a stiff body position and the group holds them, supports them down to the ground, then helps them up. (Play in groups of 8–10.)

SKILL FOCUS *Teaches a strong body position and how to balance people*

Refer to the activity card...



Look out for others!

START OUT WC 03B
5 MINUTES

Players run in random directions in a defined area.
Players are made aware that the activity is focused on learning to play safely in the presence of others.

SKILL FOCUS *Energiser that introduces counter balances*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Call out combinations which can include any of the following: feet, bottom, shoulders, knees, hands, backs, elbows.
- » For example, if you call out 'Four hands!', 4 players come together and make sure they have 4 hands touching.

**4 HANDS****3 FEET****3 ELBOWS****4 BACKS**

Harder

- » Increase the number of body parts you call e.g. 3 people, 2 feet and 4 hands on the ground.

TIPS » There is no balancing in this activity – players simply bring the body parts together. Counter balances will be performed in the next activity.

ASK THE PLAYERS » How many different combinations can you get for one call?

SAFETY » Do not use the head as an option.

3 hands, 2 feet

GET INTO IT MV 06B
5 MINUTES

Pairs hold hands and run randomly around the room and, on your call, perform a specified balance. (Play with 6 or more.)

SKILL FOCUS *Practises pairs counter balances, coordination and teamwork*

Refer to the activity card...



TIPS » Tight body positions make a good counter balance.

Mini pyramids

GET INTO IT MV 08
15 MINUTES

In groups of 4, players build a mini pyramid. One player is on top of two others, and one player is a spotter. Once they are in position, players in the pyramid put their heads up to the audience and yell 'HO!'.

SKILL FOCUS *Practises balancing people*

Refer to the activity card...



TIPS

- » This is a weight-bearing activity. Before you start, double check players can bear their own weight. If they can't, Start Out MV 07A *Nose and toes tag* is an appropriate alternative activity.
- » Put stickers on the base players to show where the player on top should put their hands and knees.

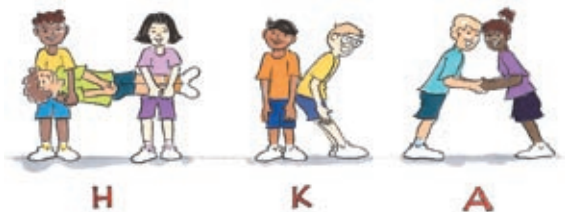
Team alphabet

START OUT MV 03A
10 MINUTES

Players move randomly around the floor until a letter of the alphabet is called and they form groups in the shape of the letter. (Play with 8–30.)

SKILL FOCUS *Improves counter balances and teamwork*

Refer to the activity card...



Group balance

FINISH UP 05
5 MINUTES

Using a long rope which is joined in a circle, players lean back while holding onto it as counter balance.
(Play in groups of 6–12.)

SKILL FOCUS *Cool down activity that improves balance and teamwork*

Refer to the activity card...



Lesson 7

OBJECTIVE	Plates
TIME	60 minutes
AREA	Size appropriate for player numbers, ability and mobility
EQUIPMENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">» Marker cones to define playing areas» 1 set of spinning plates and sticks per player» 2 scarves, plastic bags, juggling balls or bean bags per player or;» 1 peacock feather or other balancing object per player or;» 1 individual skipping rope per player or;» 1 hula hoop per player

Card summary

- » **Start Out INV 03**
- » **Start Out MV 05B**
- » **Start Out MV 06A**
- » **Get Into It MV 13**
- » **Finish Up 01**

7

Remember, if the game isn't working **CHANGE IT**

Ringmaster says

START OUT MV 05B
5 MINUTES

To get a feel for the circus environment, you call out one of 5 basic circus-related calls. Each call has a location, movement and sound that the players must perform.

SKILL FOCUS *Energiser that encourages listening, concentration and coordination, and introduces circus activities and the circus show*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *2 scarves, plastic bags, juggling balls or bean bags per player or 1 peacock feather or other balancing object per player or 1 individual skipping rope per player or 1 hula hoop per player*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Each player carries around a circus object of their choice e.g. scarves, plastic bags, small light balls, bean bags, peacock feathers, skipping ropes, hula hoops.
- » Add your own calls using any of the skills learnt in earlier lessons.



Walk in line hup la

START OUT MV 06A
5 MINUTES

The whole group stands in a line all facing forward and holding hands. On a verbal or non-verbal (e.g. hand squeeze) signal from the group leader, the group step forward to an imaginary line together and stretch their arms upwards, yelling 'HUP LA!'

SKILL FOCUS *Improves teamwork and coordination and contributes ideas for the final performance*

Refer to the activity card...



Pairs passing

START OUT INV 03
10 MINUTES

Players form pairs. On your signal, players pass plates to each other for 30 seconds. At the end of the 30 seconds, the player without the plate moves to form a new pair. Passing starts again.

SKILL FOCUS *Increases familiarity with throwing and catching plates*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *1 spinning plate per player*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Using plastic plates, vary the type of throw e.g. high, low, rolling.
- » Between throws, ask players to do different types of activities e.g. turn around, clap, touch the floor.



Easier

- » Players start by throwing the plate to themselves and catching it.

Harder

- » In pairs, each player spins their plate on the floor and then swaps places with their partner to spin theirs. The aim is to keep both plates spinning.

ASK THE PLAYERS » How many consecutive throws and catches can you do in a set time?

- SAFETY**
- » Check there is enough space between groups and players, and that players are away from obstacles and walls.
 - » Players must be aware of where the plate is when they turn around or when their partner is throwing it.

Spinning plates

GET INTO IT MV 13
30 MINUTES

Players use a stick and a spinning plate to perform a variety of activities individually, in pairs or in small groups.

SKILL FOCUS *Improves balancing skills*

Refer to the activity card...



TIPS » Vary the time spent on each activity according to the skill and ability of the players.

Put it away!

FINISH UP 01
5 MINUTES

Gather up the equipment and store it properly.

Refer to the activity card...



Great work!

FINISH UP 01
5 MINUTES

Pat on the back feedback and encouragement.

Refer to the activity card...



Lesson 8

OBJECTIVE Circus show – the grand finale

TIME 60 minutes

AREA Size appropriate for player numbers, ability and mobility

EQUIPMENT

- » Marker cones to define the playing areas
- » Any equipment that has been used during the earlier lessons including:
 - » 1 set of spinning plates and sticks per player
 - » 2 scarves, plastic bags, juggling balls or bean bags per player
 - » 1 large light ball (e.g. an inflatable beach ball or similar) per group
 - » 1 peacock feather or other balancing object per player
 - » 1 individual skipping rope per player
 - » 1 hula hoop per player

Card summary

- » **Start Out MV 05B**
- » **Start Out MV 06A**
- » **Finish Up 03**

Activities also include 'Dress rehearsals' and 'Grand finale – mini circus performances', for which no card is provided.

Remember, if the game isn't working **CHANGE IT**



Ringmaster says

START OUT MV 05B
5 MINUTES

To get a feel for the circus environment, you call out one of 5 basic circus-related calls. Each call has a location, movement and sound that the players must perform.

SKILL FOCUS *Energiser that encourages listening, concentration and coordination, and introduces circus activities and the circus show*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *2 scarves, plastic bags, juggling balls or bean bags per player or 1 large light ball (e.g. an inflatable beach ball or similar) per player or 1 peacock feather or other balancing object per player or 1 individual skipping rope per player or 1 hula hoop per player*

Use the activity card, PLUS...

- » Each player carries around a circus object of their choice e.g. scarves, plastic bags, small light balls, bean bags, peacock feathers, skipping ropes, hula hoops.
- » Add your own calls drawing on skills/activities from previous lessons.
- » Call this action intermittently with the main calls.



Walk in line hup la

START OUT MV 06A
5 MINUTES

The whole group stands in a line all facing forward and holding hands. On a verbal or non-verbal (e.g. hand squeeze) signal from the group leader, the group step forward to an imaginary line together and stretch their arms upwards, yelling 'HUP LA!'

SKILL FOCUS *Improves coordination and teamwork and contributes ideas for the final performance*

Refer to the activity card...



Dress rehearsals

NO CARD
20 MINUTES

Players prepare and rehearse for the final circus show.
(Play in groups of 6–10.)

SKILL FOCUS *Rehearsal for small group circus show.*

AREA *Size appropriate for player numbers, ability and mobility*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *All equipment that has been used in lessons 1–7 should be available to use*

What to do...

- » Players are split into groups of around 5–10 and asked to prepare a mini circus show to perform for the rest of the group.
- » The circus show must include a minimum of three acts, two of which must include two or more people. It must have a definite beginning (perhaps a ringmaster/mistress introducing the show) and a definite ending (e.g. a group bow).



- TIPS**
- » If groups have been identified in earlier lessons and have already designed/rehearsed their show, this section of the lesson can be shortened.
 - » The circus show might include dressing up or adding face paint if available.

- ASK THE PLAYERS**
- » How is everyone going to be included in the show?
 - » How are you going to decide who will be the ringmaster/mistress?

- SAFETY**
- » Refer to the general circus safety guidelines in the 'Introduction'.

Grand finale – mini circus performances

NO CARD
25 MINUTES

Groups perform their circus shows which include a minimum of three acts, two of which must include two or more people. There must be a definite beginning (perhaps a ringmaster/mistress introducing the show) and a definite ending (e.g. a group bow). (Play in groups of 6–10.)

SKILL FOCUS *Circus show performance*

AREA *Size appropriate for player numbers, ability and mobility*

ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT *All equipment that has been used in lessons 1–7 should be available to use*



TIPS » The performance can be given in front of class-mates or a wider audience e.g. parents or other classes.

SAFETY » Refer to the general circus safety guidelines in the 'Introduction'.

What did you like?

FINISH UP 03
2 MINUTES

Gather up the equipment and store it properly.

Refer to the activity card...



Stay tuned...

FINISH UP 03
3 MINUTES

Short announcements and handouts – where to from here?

Refer to the activity card...



Where to from here?

At the end of Playing for Life circus skills, if you or the players are inspired to get more involved in circus skills, there are a range of further opportunities you can access.

National Institute of Circus Arts (NICA) short courses

www.nica.com.au/short_courses

Weekly classes cater for beginner to advanced levels and range from general circus classes to specific courses in tumbling, trapeze, hula hoops or juggling. For the more serious circus buffs, NICA offers accelerated training programs. NICA's ever popular holiday programs cater for kids, teens and adults, and are run in both Prahran and Ringwood in Melbourne. (Note: the Ringwood holiday program is for 7 to 12 year olds.)

Circus workshops within the community and schools

communitycircus@nica.com.au

NICA outreach workshops are structured and designed to fit with what is appropriate for your school community. They can be a combination of drama-style games, trust exercises, warm up stretches and circus skills. NICA can offer a two-hour workshop, a term program, a program that leads into a show, or a program that can add new and interesting skills to a show that the school is already planning. Within the framework of community/social circus workshops, the emphasis is on developing life skills (self-esteem, trust, group work) through the acquisition of circus skills. Please feel free to contact NICA by sending an email to info@nica.com.au or phoning **(03) 9214 6975** to discuss what would work for your school or after-school program.

Australian circus and physical theatre association (ACAPTA)

www.acapta.net

This site includes links to Australian circus and physical theatre organisations, youth theatre, training and funding sources, as well as the results of a national safety code study and profiles on practitioners and circus workers.

Youth circus organisations

Young people can participate in circus skills training in a variety of ways. There are youth circus organisations in every state and territory and some regional centres, offering skills, training and performance activities.

These organisations are listed on the ACAPTA website at **www.acapta.net/10_youth/Index.htm**

Coaching and officiating

NICA runs a number of 'training for trainers' courses throughout the year in Melbourne. 'Train the trainer on tour' is a program that takes social circus training for trainers to groups around the country.

NICA also supports a number of Indigenous youth circus projects and can tailor projects for specific communities.

The ACAPTA website details a large number of circus organisations across the country. Some of these organisations specialise in working with disability groups, some run education-based programs and others are owned and run by Indigenous communities.