

Lesson plan: Balancing

Gymnastic activities - unit 1

Learning outcomes

Children will balance by taking the weight on different parts of their bodies. Children will understand that balance is a moment of stillness. Children will learn to balance on the floor and transfer the skill when using apparatus.

Resources needed

Low apparatus including benches, (also upturned), stools, low angled ladders, planks between stools, mats, - enough for five or six groups.

Lesson summary**Warm up**

Ask children to sit in a space and remind them that each gymnastics lesson will start with a warm up. Choose a child to say why it is important to warm up their bodies and another to explain how the body changes during exercise. Discuss why it is important to exercise.

Play 'Simon Says' using movements from the previous lesson. Simon says 'use your hands and feet to move slowly around the room. Use your hands and feet to move sideways across the room, backwards, forwards. Use your hands and feet to move quickly around the room'. Simon says 'jump and make a stretched shape in the air' etc.

Floor Work

Ask children to sit in a space and explain that in today's lesson they will be balancing in different ways. Discuss what we mean by balancing then give children a few minutes to practice balancing in different ways. Interact with children while they are doing this, discussing what parts of their bodies they are using and suggesting ways to improve their movements. Look for examples of different balances. Discuss the importance of safety.

Stop the children and ask some children to demonstrate their balances. The rest of the class should describe the part of the body on which they are balancing and the shape they are making. Is the balance a stretched or a curled one? Discuss the different parts of the body that could be used. Can anyone think of a different part that has not been used already? Give children chance to practice some of the balances they have seen made by other children. Balancing on backs, tummies, sides, bottoms, shoulders etc. Encourage them to think about the shape they are making in the balance. Emphasise that balance is a position of stillness. Tell children that a balance can be on a large or a small part of the body. Challenge them to find balances on smaller body parts if they have not already done so. Can you balance on two hands and one foot? One hand and one foot etc. Can they balance when the body is near to the floor or stretched away from the floor?

Low Apparatus

Remind children about the agreed rules for putting out apparatus safely then divide them into groups to put the apparatus out. Ask children to sit quietly when they have completed the task given and to watch and check that other children have put out

apparatus correctly. Have enough apparatus for five or six different groups. Ask each group to sit by a different set of apparatus then explain that you want children to explore ways of moving over, under, around and along the apparatus including at least one balance in their movement. Give children a few minutes to do this then choose some children to demonstrate what they have done. The rest of the class should describe what they are doing and the body parts they are using.

Ask children to walk to their next set of apparatus, a group at a time, and to stand until everyone has changed. Tell children that this time you want them to include both quick and slow movements when they use the apparatus but they must remain quite still when they make their balance. Encourage them to consider if they use a quick or a slow movement to come out of their balance. Interact with the different groups asking children to describe what they are doing.

Tell children to change the apparatus groups again. This time encourage them to change from large stretched shapes to small curled shapes within the same balance. Challenge them to perform two different balances that follow on from one another. Give children opportunities to practice these skills on other groups of apparatus if time permits.

Remind children of the rules for putting the large apparatus away safely then ask children to do so. When they have finished ask them to find a space on the floor and lie down.

Cool Down

Ask children to balance on two feet while they make a stretched shape then to slowly curl the body up small

Extension activities

Children could make up a short sequence of movements that include two balances.

ICT opportunities

Children could use a digital camera to take photographs of different shapes and use of hands and feet.

Assessment cues

Can children balance on different parts of their bodies?
Can they balance on the apparatus as well as the floor?
Do they understand that there should be a time of stillness while they perform the balance?