

Grade Three

Third grade is a pivotal time in the development of students' movement skills. Third graders who demonstrate and understand the proper form for locomotor and nonlocomotor skills now shift their focus to combining these skills into new movement sequences. Students who cannot perform these skills using the proper technique are provided additional learning and practice opportunities to improve these skills.

Third-grade students are willing to experiment with and explore alternative movements, such as tumbling, creative dance, and formal dance. Practice opportunities provide students with sufficient time to develop the proper form for manipulative skills, such as rolling, throwing, catching, dribbling, kicking, and striking. Fitness activities become increasingly important at this age as early signs of poor posture and decreases in flexibility begin to appear. Learning opportunities for students to participate in moderate to vigorous physical activities for three to four days each week can increase overall health.

Third graders, like second graders, are at the concrete stage of cognitive development. Their attention spans are improving, and they are interested in "why" things occur. These students are fairly good at the use of inductive logic that involves going from a specific experience to a general experience. On the other hand, students at this age have difficulty using deductive logic, which involves using a general idea to determine the outcome of a specific event.

By now students have developed a self-image strong enough to tolerate differences in how others react to them. They have developed a stronger sense of right and wrong, having reached the stage of development for internalization of rules and regulations. They are becoming more self-reliant and can work independently. This is a good time to have students create personal fitness and motor skill goals and monitor their own progress, because they have a strong desire for self-improvement. These students also experience an increased desire for interaction with others and should be provided with opportunities to practice and work toward common goals in pairs and triads.

At a Glance

Standard 1

Students demonstrate the motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.

Third-grade students continue to improve their locomotor skills as they apply the skills to chasing, fleeing, and dodging in tag-type games; dance steps in line,

circle, and folk dances; and jumping a rope turned forward and backwards. They continue to refine their nonlocomotor skills as they use these skills to perform forward rolls, straddle rolls, and tripods. They also apply nonlocomotor skills to balancing activities on ground-level balance beams.

Manipulative practice takes on a greater role in third-grade physical education compared to previous grade levels. Students are honing their throwing, catching, kicking, and striking skills. They practice hand dribbling and foot dribbling while traveling and dodging obstacles.

Standard 2

Students demonstrate knowledge of movement concepts, principles, and strategies that apply to the learning and performance of physical activities.

Standard 2 represents the cognitive knowledge that supports the locomotor, nonlocomotor, and manipulative skills learned in third grade. Often, the physical education lesson is able to address Standards 1 and 2 simultaneously; the teacher explains the information to the students and then has them experience it. For example, Standard 2.7 states, “Compare and contrast folk dances, line dances, and circle dances”; and Standard 1.15 states, “Perform a line dance, a circle dance, and a folk dance with a partner.” After students have had the opportunity to learn and perform all three types of dance, they are given the opportunity to describe the similarities and differences between them.

Third graders can describe the correct technique for manipulative skills in greater detail (e.g., the correct hand position when catching a ball at different levels), building on knowledge attained in kindergarten through second grade. In addition, they can describe technique differences when applying manipulative skills in different situations (e.g., throwing for accuracy, dribbling a ball while changing direction, throwing to a stationary partner, throwing to a moving partner). In preparation for game play in later grades, students learn about altering speed and direction to avoid an opponent.

Standard 3

Students assess and maintain a level of physical fitness to improve health and performance.

Third graders continue to perform moderate to vigorous physical activities three to four days each week for increasing periods of time. They start each exercise period with a warm-up and conclude each exercise period with a cool-down. Muscular strength and endurance continue to be developed. And, students are expected to perform an increasing number of abdominal curl-ups, oblique curl-ups on each side of the body, modified push-ups or traditional push-ups with hands on a bench, forward lunges, side lunges, and triceps push-ups from a chair. In addition, students learn how to properly lift and carry heavy objects so that they do not incur injury. In terms of flexibility, students are expected to hold stretches for hips, shoulders, hamstrings, quadriceps, triceps, biceps, back, and

neck for increasing periods of time, up to 30 seconds (Physical Education for Lifelong Fitness 2005, p. 107). To monitor their progress, third graders continue to measure and record in a log their performance on health-related physical fitness assessments.

Standard 4

Students demonstrate knowledge of physical fitness concepts, principles, and strategies to improve health and performance.

Similar to the relationship between Standards 1 and 2, Standard 4 provides the cognitive information to support the fitness activities described in Standard 3. For Standard 4, students are learning about warm-up and cool-down activities and the importance of readying the body for activity and recovery. In addition, they are learning to identify the body's reaction (e.g., increased heart rate, increased breathing) to physical activity.

Third graders, in preparation for creating a fitness plan in later grade levels, learn the five components of health-related fitness, the principle of progression (workloads must be increased to improve fitness), the names of major muscles, proper lifting techniques to prevent back injuries, and unsafe flexibility exercises that should be avoided. They also learn about the relationship between the heart, lungs, blood, and oxygen during physical activity.

Standard 5

Students demonstrate and utilize knowledge of psychological and sociological concepts, principles, and strategies that apply to the learning and performance of physical activity.

Third graders enjoy assuming responsibility for setting goals, working toward goals, and monitoring progress either alone or with others. As their social interaction skills improve, students learn to use movement cues and positive words of encouragement when working with a partner. They learn the purpose of safety procedures and rules along with the consequences of not following those procedures and rules. This is also a time when students' increasing ability to work with others can be used to help students learn to accept and appreciate differences in themselves and others.

Learning Snapshots

Standard 1

- 1.1 Chase, flee, and move away from others in a constantly changing environment.

The skills of chasing, fleeing, and moving away from others are individual defensive and offensive strategies that students will use at upper-grade levels in

many sports and games. At the third-grade level, students practice these skills and use them in simple tag games. Working in pairs, defensive players chase while offensive players flee. Offensive players use fakes to convince the defense they are going in one direction, but then move in a different direction. Defensive players learn to keep their eyes focused on the offensive player's torso, because most fakes occur with arms and legs. Offensive players change direction and speed constantly to evade the defensive players.

Students practice these skills frequently throughout the school year in pairs and in small groups. It is important when practicing these skills that the teacher set boundaries by placing one cone at each corner of the activity area, so that students know they must remain in a defined area. During closure, students can be asked to describe how changing speed and direction can allow one person to move away from another (Standard 2.1).

1.2 Perform an inverted balance (tripod) by evenly distributing weight on body parts.

A tripod involves placing both hands and head on the ground creating a triangle and then positioning knees on elbows and maintaining a balanced position. The most important aspect of this skill is creating a solid foundation or base of support. When demonstrating and describing the tripod, the teacher reminds students that a tricycle is more stable than a bicycle, and a triangle foundation is more stable than positioning hands and head in a straight line. Students practice the correct hands and head position to ensure that they are creating a triangle. The teacher monitors the students to determine if the students have mastered the correct position. Then, the teacher has students practice balancing their knees on their elbows. This lesson should be performed on mats or on a grass area.

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Standard 2

2.2 Explain and demonstrate the correct hand position when catching a ball above the head, below the waist, near the middle of the body, and away from the body.

The teacher should demonstrate and explain the correct technique for catching a ball above the head, below the waist, near the middle of the body, and away from the body. In the explanation, the teacher should include the following points:

- Watch the ball.
- Move to the ball—if it is away from the body.
- Point fingers up if the ball is at the middle of the body or above the waist.
- Point fingers down if the ball is below the waist.
- Extend the arms.
- Grasp the ball with both hands.
- Give with the ball on contact.

Once the teacher has introduced the skills, the students practice throwing and catching in pairs. The teacher circulates through the class, providing feedback and asking students to explain the correct hand position when the ball is above the head, below the waist, near the midsection of the body, and away from the body. The teacher reteaches the information until the students are able to demonstrate and explain the correct hand position.

Standard 3

3.1 Demonstrate warm-up and cool-down exercises.

A warm-up occurs prior to vigorous physical activity at the beginning of an instructional period, while a cool-down occurs as necessary after vigorous activity at the end of a lesson. Therefore, a teacher should consider the lesson focus and type of physical activity in the lesson before including warm-up and cool-down activities as instructional time might be better spent in learning activities.

A warm-up consists of mild exercises (e.g., brisk walking, knee lifts, or any full-body movement that progressively warms up the muscles) performed to prepare the body for more vigorous exercise. A cool-down includes mild exercises performed after activity to return the body gradually to its resting state. It is also best to perform stretching exercises (also known as flexibility exercises) during the cool-down phase of the lesson. Once they have learned the routine, students demonstrate the warm-up and cool-down exercises by assisting the teacher in leading the warm-up and cool-down phases of lessons.

3.6 Hold for an increasing period of time basic stretches for hips, shoulders, hamstrings, quadriceps, triceps, biceps, back, and neck.

Stretching exercises occur during cool-down for lessons that involve physical activity. All stretching exercises (also known as flexibility exercises) should be performed as static stretches with no bouncing. At the third-grade level, each stretch should be a minimum of ten seconds increasing to not more than 30 seconds by the end of the school year (Physical Education for Lifelong Fitness 2005, p. 107). Safe stretches that can be performed are:

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Arm Stretch

Reach right arm across the chest, parallel to the ground.
Place left hand on right upper arm.
Gently push on right arm toward chest.
Switch arms and repeat.

Shoulder Shrugs

Stand.
Raise right shoulder toward earlobe.

Lower shoulder.
Raise left shoulder toward earlobe.
Lower shoulder.

Reverse Hurdle Stretch

Sit with one leg extended and the other leg bent so that the sole of the foot is alongside the extended knee.
Bend the extended knee slightly.
Reach both hands toward toes of extended leg.
Switch legs and repeat.

Low Back Stretch

Lie on back with both knees bent at a 90-degree angle.
Grab the back of the thigh on the leg with the bent knee with both hands.
Pull thigh toward chest, keeping the knee at a 90-degree angle.
Switch legs and repeat.

Neck Stretch

Stand.
Tuck chin to chest.
Rotate neck so left ear is over left shoulder keeping chin tucked to chest.
Rotate neck so right ear is over right shoulder keeping chin tucked to chest.
*Note: Students should not rotate the head in a circle.

Forward Lunge

Stand and extend one leg forward with knee bent at a 90-degree angle.
Lean forward so weight is over bent leg.
Keep rear leg extended.
Switch legs and repeat.

Standard 4

4.14 Identify flexibility exercises that are not safe for the joints and should be avoided.

There are several flexibility exercises that have traditionally been performed but are dangerous to the performer. (See Appendix 5 for a list of contraindicated exercises and alternatives.) Some of these contraindicated exercises include:

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Deep knee bends
Neck circle (neck roll)
Standing toe touches

Hurdler's stretch

Cherry pickers (standing toe touches performed rapidly)

Windmills (standing toe touches where the right hand touches the left foot and the left hand touches the right foot in rapid succession)

The teacher creates a bulletin board displaying pictures of unsafe exercises with an explanation of why each exercise is dangerous. Then, during physical education, the teacher hands out a set of cards that depict safe and unsafe exercises. Students are asked to identify those that are unsafe and to select a safe exercise to perform.

Standard 5

5.1 Set a personal goal to improve a motor skill and work toward that goal in non-school time.

Third-grade students are working on a variety of skills (e.g., rolling, throwing, catching, kicking, striking, dribbling with a hand, and dribbling with feet). After introducing a skill to the students, the teacher asks them to write a personal goal for improving the skill. Goals should be clear, measurable, and achievable. Students are instructed to practice the skill during nonschool time and to monitor their progress in a log. Throughout the year, the teacher reviews the logs and assesses students' performances to determine if they are meeting their goals or if they need to adjust their goals or practice plans.

Grade Three Physical Education Model Content Standards

Standard 1

Students demonstrate the motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities.

Movement Concepts

- 1.1 Chase, flee, and move away from others in a constantly changing environment.

Body Management

- 1.2 Perform an inverted balance (tripod) by evenly distributing weight on body parts.
- 1.3 Perform a forward roll.
- 1.4 Perform a straddle roll.

Locomotor Movement

- 1.5 Jump continuously a forward-turning rope and a backward-turning rope.

Manipulative Skills

- 1.6 Balance while traveling and manipulating an object on a ground-level balance beam.
- 1.7 Catch, while traveling, an object thrown by a stationary partner.
- 1.8 Roll a ball for accuracy toward a target.
- 1.9 Throw a ball, using the overhand movement pattern with increasing accuracy.
- 1.10 Throw and catch an object with a partner, increasing the distance from the partner and maintaining an accurate throw that can be easily caught.
- 1.11 Kick a ball to a stationary partner, using the inside of the foot.
- 1.12 Strike a ball continuously upward, using a paddle or racket.
- 1.13 Hand-dribble a ball continuously while moving around obstacles.
- 1.14 Foot-dribble a ball continuously while traveling and changing direction.

Rhythmic Skills

- 1.15 Perform a line dance, a circle dance, and a folk dance with a partner.

Standard 2

Students demonstrate knowledge of movement concepts, principles, and strategies that apply to the learning and performance of physical activities.

Movement Concepts

- 2.1 Describe how changing speed and changing direction can allow one person to move away from another.

Manipulative Skills

- 2.2 Explain and demonstrate the correct hand position when catching a ball above the head, below the waist, near the middle of the body, and away from the body.

- 2.3 Explain the difference between throwing to a stationary partner and throwing to a moving partner.
- 2.4 Identify the key elements for increasing accuracy in rolling a ball and throwing a ball.
- 2.5 Identify the differences between dribbling a ball (with the hand and the foot, separately) while moving forward and when changing direction.

Rhythmic Skills

- 2.6 Define the terms *folk dance*, *line dance*, and *circle dance*.
- 2.7 Compare and contrast folk dances, line dances, and circle dances.

Standard 3

Students assess and maintain a level of physical fitness to improve health and performance.

Fitness Concepts

- 3.1 Demonstrate warm-up and cool-down exercises.
- 3.2 Demonstrate how to lift and carry objects correctly.

Aerobic Capacity

- 3.3 Participate three to four days each week, for increasing periods of time, in continuous moderate to vigorous physical activities that require sustained movement of the large-muscle groups to increase breathing and heart rate.

Muscular Strength/Endurance

- 3.4 Perform increasing numbers of each: abdominal curl-ups, oblique curl-ups on each side, modified push-ups or traditional push-ups with hands on a bench, forward lunges, side lunges, and triceps push-ups from a chair.
- 3.5 Climb a vertical pole or rope.

Flexibility

- 3.6 Hold for an increasing period of time basic stretches for hips, shoulders, hamstrings, quadriceps, triceps, biceps, back, and neck.

Body Composition

- 3.7 Sustain continuous movement for increasing periods of time while participating in moderate to vigorous physical activity.

Assessment

- 3.8 Measure and record improvement in individual fitness activities.

Standard 4

Students demonstrate knowledge of physical fitness concepts, principles, and strategies to improve health and performance.

Fitness Concepts

- 4.1 Identify the body's normal reactions to moderate to vigorous physical activity.
- 4.2 List and define the components of physical fitness.

- 4.3 Explain the purpose of warming up before physical activity and cooling down after physical activity.
- 4.4 Recognize that the body will adapt to increased workloads.
- 4.5 Explain that fluid needs are linked to energy expenditure.
- 4.6 Discuss the need for oxygen and fuel to be available during ongoing muscle contraction so that heat and waste products are removed.

Aerobic Capacity

- 4.7 Describe the relationship between the heart, lungs, muscles, blood, and oxygen during physical activity.
- 4.8 Describe and record the changes in heart rate before, during, and after physical activity.

Muscular Strength/Endurance

- 4.9 Explain that a stronger heart muscle can pump more blood with each beat.
- 4.10 Identify which muscles are used in performing muscular endurance activities.
- 4.11 Name and locate the major muscles of the body.
- 4.12 Describe and demonstrate how to relieve a muscle cramp.
- 4.13 Describe the role of muscle strength and proper lifting in the prevention of back injuries.

Flexibility

- 4.14 Identify flexibility exercises that are not safe for the joints and should be avoided.
- 4.15 Explain why a particular stretch is appropriate preparation for a particular physical activity.

Body Composition

- 4.16 Differentiate the body's ability to consume calories and burn fat during periods of inactivity and during long periods of moderate physical activity.

Standard 5

Students demonstrate and utilize knowledge of psychological and sociological concepts, principles, and strategies that apply to the learning and performance of physical activity.

Self-Responsibility

- 5.1 Set a personal goal to improve a motor skill and work toward that goal in nonschool time.
- 5.2 Collect data and record progress toward mastery of a motor skill.
- 5.3 List the benefits of following and the risks of not following safety procedures and rules associated with physical activity.

Social Interaction

- 5.4 Use appropriate cues for movement and positive words of encouragement while coaching others in physical activities.
- 5.5 Demonstrate respect for individual differences in physical abilities.

Group Dynamics

- 5.6 Work in pairs or small groups to achieve an agreed-upon goal.

