

Kindergarten

Kindergarten students are embarking on a journey of formal physical education and a lifetime of movement. Some students come to kindergarten using the proper form for locomotor and nonlocomotor movements, while most are still learning these skills. Hand–eye coordination is showing steady improvement, but reaction time is still slow. These students enjoy moving to music, so rhythmic activity is an ideal lesson focus for practicing locomotor and nonlocomotor skills. Kindergarten students are experiencing moderate but steady growth in height, weight, and muscular strength and endurance. However, according to data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children younger than five years across all ethnic groups have had significant increases in the prevalence of being at risk of overweight and overweight (Mei et al. 1998; Ogden et al. 1997; American Academy of Pediatrics 2003).

Kindergarten students are at the preoperational stage of cognitive development. They do not yet understand concrete logic or abstract thinking. They are, however, curious and eager to learn new skills. Some kindergarten students are kinesthetic learners who use their bodies to understand the world. The qualities of color, shape, texture, and space are important concepts for kindergarten students that should be taught in different subject areas. The concept of circle, for example, can be learned by writing, drawing, and through physical education activities that use circles.

Kindergarten students are “me” oriented. They prefer to play alone or in parallel play. Students are eager to feel independent and experience a sense of accomplishment. At the same time, they need clear expectations and help with understanding rules. It is important for teachers to focus on what the students can do rather than what they cannot do. In this way, kindergarten teachers set the stage for a lifetime of joyful movement.

In kindergarten language arts programs, students learn to match consonant and short-vowel sounds to appropriate letters so that in later years they can read complex narratives and essays. Similarly, in kindergarten physical education, students learn locomotor and nonlocomotor movements and how to manipulate objects so that in later years they can create and demonstrate movement sequences, dance steps, tumbling routines, specialized sport skills, and offensive and defensive strategies. The fundamental movement skills learned in kindergarten form the basis for all movement experiences and are used during a lifetime of physical activity.

At a Glance

Standard 1

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

Kindergarten students learn about and interpret their environment by moving through space, often to a rhythmic beat. This movement includes moving side-to-side, forward-and-back, and upward-and-down using a variety of pathways (e.g., curved, straight, zigzag), and in relation to objects (e.g., over, under). Students practice locomotor movements, including walking, running, hopping, skipping, jumping, leaping, galloping, and sliding, to move in general space at both fast and slow speeds. Students also practice nonlocomotor movements (movements around their own axis), including bending, curling, stretching, swaying, swinging, turning, and twisting to move in personal space. Kindergarten students are also beginning to manipulate (e.g., strike, toss, kick, bounce) a wide variety of objects, including lightweight balls, beanbags, and balloons.

Standard 2

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

This standard represents the cognitive knowledge that supports the locomotor, nonlocomotor, and manipulative skills learned in kindergarten. 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 in kindergarten, Standard 2.5 states, "Identify the locomotor skills of walk, jog, run, hop, jump, slide, and gallop"; and Standard 1.16 states, "Perform locomotor and nonlocomotor movements to a steady beat." The teacher first reviews the names of the locomotor skills, and then students perform them to a steady beat.

For Standard 2, students are developing a movement vocabulary. Besides the names of the locomotor skills (e.g., hop, jump, slide), they learn the names of relationships (e.g., over, under, behind), space (e.g., general, personal, up, down), body parts (e.g., shoulder, neck, back), and balance (e.g., base of support). They are also beginning to describe the correct technique for fundamental manipulative skills (e.g., finger position during the follow-through phase of bouncing a ball).

Standard 3

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

The kindergarten child's energy level and readiness to move contribute to a willingness to participate in enjoyable physical activities. The goal is for students to perform moderate to vigorous activities three to four days each week for increasing periods of time. Muscular strength and endurance are developed during kindergarten through activities performed on playground equipment, such as horizontal ladders, horizontal bars, and climbing apparatus. Although

kindergarten students typically do not lack flexibility, this is an appropriate time to have students demonstrate appropriate stretching exercises for the shoulders, legs, arms, and back while stressing the importance of slow static movements.

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 experienced in Standard 3. Specifically, students learn about physical activities that are enjoyable and challenging, the names for internal parts of the body (e.g., bones, organs), how muscles are used for climbing and moving bones, and the need to stretch muscles to keep them healthy. They also learn that the heart is a muscle, and it works with the lungs to send oxygen to the other muscles throughout the body. In conjunction with health education, the role of nutrition (including the importance of water) in providing energy for physical activity is learned by kindergarten students.

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.

Kindergarten students enjoy moving, so they are willing participants in many physical activities. It is important, however, for the teacher to help students associate the positive feelings derived from movement with the physical activity experience so that movement becomes an enjoyable lifelong habit. Kindergarten students tend to be solo learners; so the teaching and practicing of sharing are necessary. This practice can also include sharing the roles of leader and followers during locomotor practice. Again, the teacher helps students to associate sharing with enhanced feelings of joy and fun so that the skill is internalized.

Learning Snapshots

Standard 1

1.1 Travel within a large group, without bumping into others or falling, while using locomotor skills.

Instruction on this standard comes after students have learned the locomotor skills (e.g. walk, run, hop, skip, jump, leap, gallop, slide), general space, and personal space. The teacher sets up four cones to define the boundaries for the general space in which this activity will occur. Posters of each locomotor movement decorate the walls to reinforce movement vocabulary and to remind students of the eight locomotor skills. During the activity, the teacher calls out and demonstrates a locomotor skill and students respond by performing the skill.

Safety is very important when one is traveling in a confined space. The teacher emphasizes that students should focus their attention on the activity, so that they do not bump into other students.

- 1.8 Demonstrate the relationship of *under, over, behind, next to, through, right, left, up, down, forward, backward, and in front of* by using the body and an object.

The teacher writes each of the relationship words on 8 by 5-inch cards: *under, over, behind, next to, through, right, left, up, down, forward, back, and in front of*. Several posters illustrating the various relationships decorate the walls. Each student is handed an object, such as a beanbag. The teacher calls out one of the relationships appropriate to the object used and holds up the word. Each student demonstrates the relationship using the object. During closure, the students are assigned to work in pairs. The teacher again calls out one of the relationships and holds up the word. This time, the students discuss what the word means and which word is its opposite (Standard 2.1). For example, the teacher holds up the word “over” and students state that the body would be above the object and that the opposite word would be “under.” After this lesson, the teacher reinforces the terms by using them in practical daily situations. For example, the teacher can ask students to stand next to another student or put the ball under the bench.

- 1.16 Perform locomotor and nonlocomotor movements to a steady beat.

There are four locomotor skills that can be performed to a steady or even beat: walking, running, jumping, and hopping. All nonlocomotor movements can be performed to a steady or even beat, including turning, twisting, bending, and curling. The teacher starts the lesson with a review of the correct technique, demonstrating each skill. The teacher either plays music that has a steady beat or creates a steady beat by striking a drum or other musical instrument while asking the students to clap with the beat. Then, the teacher asks all the students to perform nonlocomotor and locomotor movements to a steady beat as the name of the movement is called out.

Standard 2

- 2.4 Explain base of support.

“Base of support” refers to the body parts in contact with the ground and the distance between them during any given activity. This concept is best learned over time. During the initial lesson, the teacher defines “base of support” and provides several examples (e.g., the base of support for a bicycle is its two wheels and the distance between them; the base of support for a person standing is her or his two feet and the distance between them). The students are then instructed to find an open space on mats or the grass. The teacher calls out directions: “Show me how you can balance on two body parts,” “show me how you can balance on four body parts,” “show me how you balance at a high level,” and “show me how you balance at a low level.” The teacher asks students to

stand with feet close together and then with feet apart. Finally, the teacher asks, "In which position did you have a more stable base of support?" During follow-up lessons, the teacher continually refers to the student's base of support when discussing the body parts in contact with the ground.

Standard 3

3.5 Stretch shoulders, legs, arms, and back without bouncing.

Lesson closure is the appropriate time for students to perform stretching exercises. Students need to learn safe stretching exercises and the importance of performing static stretches without bouncing. Four safe stretches that can be performed are¹:

[insert graphic]

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 a knee bent at a 90-degree angle.

Grab the back of the thigh of the bent leg with both hands.

Pull thigh toward chest, keeping the knee at a 90-degree angle.

Switch legs and repeat.

The purpose of this activity is to instruct students on the correct stretching technique. A static stretch is a slow sustained stretch that is held for 10 to 30

¹ Because there are few safe stretches, the same stretches are listed for kindergarten and grade one students. These stretches are appropriate for young students.

seconds. The student “stretches the muscle-tendon unit to the point where mild discomfort is felt and then backs off slightly, holding the stretch at a point just prior to discomfort. This is generally considered a safe stretch . . . especially at the elementary level, this type of stretching is preferred” (Physical Education for Lifelong Fitness 2005, p. 107). Posters should be used to provide students with a visual representation of the correct technique. During the stretching exercises, students can also be asked to touch the muscle that is being stretched and chorally repeat the name aloud to support learning Standard 4.9.

Standard 4

- 4.6 Identify the location of the lungs and explain the role of the lungs in the collection of oxygen.

The teacher starts the lesson with an explanation that the lungs move oxygen in and air out of the body. The teacher then instructs students to place their hands on their chests and to take a deep breath to determine the location of their lungs. During an aerobic exercise or physical activity, the teacher again asks students to place their hands on their chests in the area of their lungs. The students are then questioned about the differences in their breathing before and during exercise. The students answer that they were breathing more frequently when they were exercising to get more oxygen into their bodies.

Standard 5

- 5.3 Demonstrate the characteristics of sharing in a physical activity.

Students must first understand the characteristics of sharing to demonstrate sharing during physical activities. The teacher starts the lesson by creating a chart for sharing. The left side of the chart is labeled “Sounds Like” and the right side of the chart is labeled “Looks Like.” The teacher asks the students to brainstorm what sharing sounds like. The teacher writes or draws the responses in the left-hand column. The teacher then asks the students to brainstorm what sharing looks like. The teacher writes or draws the responses in the right-hand column. Then, the teacher reviews the students’ responses making sure they are correct. The teacher asks students to demonstrate the characteristics of sharing listed on the chart during the motor skill practice part of the lesson. While the students are practicing locomotor and nonlocomotor movements, the teacher provides feedback to the students on their demonstrations of sharing.

Kindergarten 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 Travel within a large group, without bumping into others or falling, while using locomotor skills.
- 1.2 Travel forward and sideways while changing direction quickly in response to a signal.
- 1.3 Demonstrate contrasts between slow and fast speeds while using locomotor skills.
- 1.4 Create shapes at high, medium, and low levels by using hands, arms, torso, feet, and legs in a variety of combinations.

Body Management

- 1.5 Create shapes by using nonlocomotor movements.
- 1.6 Balance on one, two, three, four, and five body parts.
- 1.7 Balance while walking forward and sideways on a narrow, elevated surface.
- 1.8 Demonstrate the relationship of *under, over, behind, next to, through, right, left, up, down, forward, backward, and in front of* by using the body and an object.

Locomotor Movement

- 1.9 Perform a continuous log roll.
- 1.10 Travel in straight, curved, and zigzag pathways.
- 1.11 Jump over a stationary rope several times in succession, using forward-and-back and side-to-side movement patterns.

Manipulative Skills

- 1.12 Strike a stationary ball or balloon with the hands, arms, and feet.
- 1.13 Toss a ball to oneself, using the underhand throw pattern, and catch it before it bounces twice.
- 1.14 Kick a stationary object, using a simple kicking pattern.
- 1.15 Bounce a ball continuously, using two hands.

Rhythmic Skills

- 1.16 Perform locomotor and nonlocomotor movements to a steady beat.
- 1.17 Clap in time to a simple, rhythmic beat.

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 Explain the difference between under and over, behind and in front of, next to and through, up and down, forward and backward, and sideways.

- 2.2 Identify and independently use personal space, general space, and boundaries and discuss why they are important.

Body Management

- 2.3 Identify and describe parts of the body: the head, shoulders, neck, back, chest, waist, hips, arms, elbows, wrists, hands, fingers, legs, knees, ankles, feet, and toes.
- 2.4 Explain base of support.

Locomotor Movement

- 2.5 Identify the locomotor skills of walk, jog, run, hop, jump, slide, and gallop.

Manipulative Skills

- 2.6 Explain the role of the eyes when striking objects with the hands, arms, and feet.
- 2.7 Identify the point of contact for kicking a ball in a straight line.
- 2.8 Describe the position of the fingers in the follow-through phase of bouncing a ball continuously.

Standard 3

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

Fitness Concepts

- 3.1 Participate in physical activities that are enjoyable and challenging.

Aerobic Capacity

- 3.2 Participate three to four days each week in moderate to vigorous physical activities that increase breathing and heart rate.

Muscular Strength/Endurance

- 3.3 Hang from overhead bars for increasing periods of time.
- 3.4 Climb a ladder, jungle gym, or apparatus.

Flexibility

- 3.5 Stretch shoulders, legs, arms, and back without bouncing.

Body Composition

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

Assessment

- 3.7 Identify indicators of increased capacity to participate in vigorous physical activity.

Standard 4

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

Fitness Concepts

- 4.1 Identify physical activities that are enjoyable and challenging.
- 4.2 Describe the role of water as an essential nutrient for the body.
- 4.3 Explain that nutritious food provides energy for physical activity.

Aerobic Capacity

- 4.4 Identify the location of the heart and explain that it is a muscle.
- 4.5 Explain that physical activity increases the heart rate.
- 4.6 Identify the location of the lungs and explain the role of the lungs in the collection of oxygen.

Muscular Strength/Endurance

- 4.7 Explain that strong muscles help the body to climb, hang, push, and pull.
- 4.8 Describe the role of muscles in moving the bones.

Flexibility

- 4.9 Identify the body part involved when stretching.

Body Composition

- 4.10 Explain that the body is composed of bones, organs, fat, and other tissues.

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 Identify the feelings that result from participation in physical activity.
- 5.2 Participate willingly in physical activities.

Social Interaction

- 5.3 Demonstrate the characteristics of sharing in a physical activity.
- 5.4 Describe how positive social interaction can make physical activity with others more fun.

Group Dynamics

- 5.5 Participate as a leader and a follower during physical activities.

