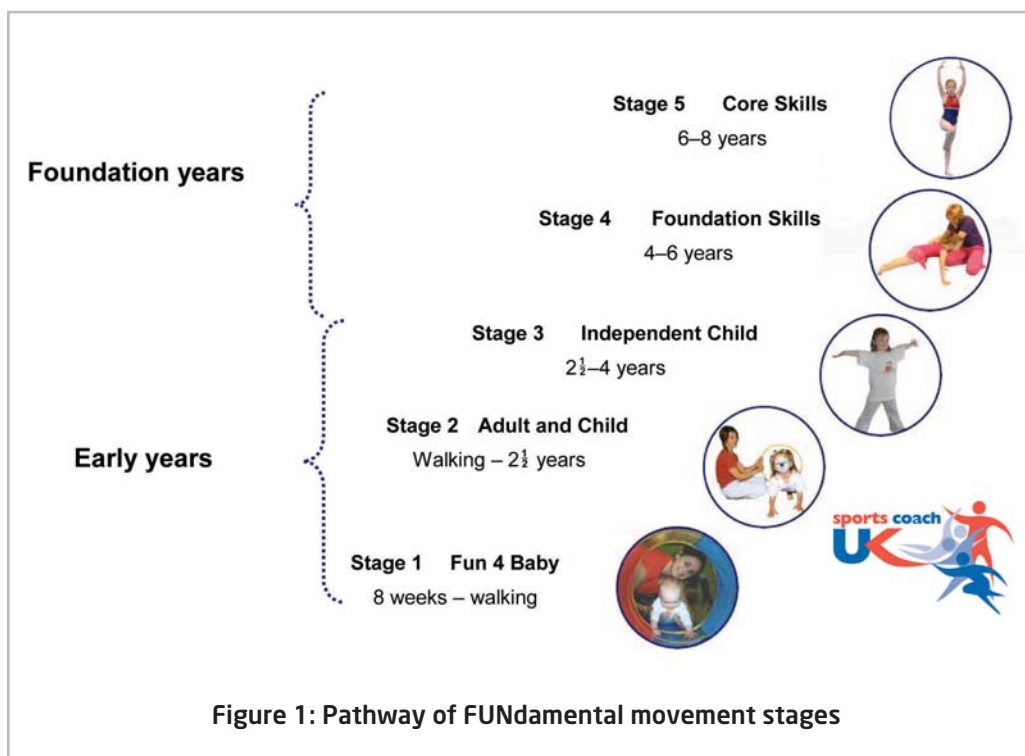


Coaching for FUNdamentals:

Improving children's physical literacy through FUNdamentals of Movement and fundamental movement skills





Introduction

The FUNdamentals stage in the long-term athlete development (LTAD) model (see the *Coaching for Long-term Athlete Development Quick Guide*) primarily focuses on children between six and nine years of age. The activity and guidance that young participants experience during this phase often shapes their perceptions of sport, enjoyment of it and desire to be involved at this time and in the future. Some participants may want nothing more from physical recreation than an opportunity to socialise and stay healthy. Other individuals may gain real benefits and satisfaction from competing at club level, while some performers have a real desire to progress and achieve sporting success at the highest levels. Whichever path the individual takes, the benefits of a good grounding in FUNdamentals cannot be overestimated.

The critical, fundamental phase is often overlooked by coaches, teachers and parents, who focus on competition and winning rather than the acquisition of basic skills and fitness.

Balyi, 2001

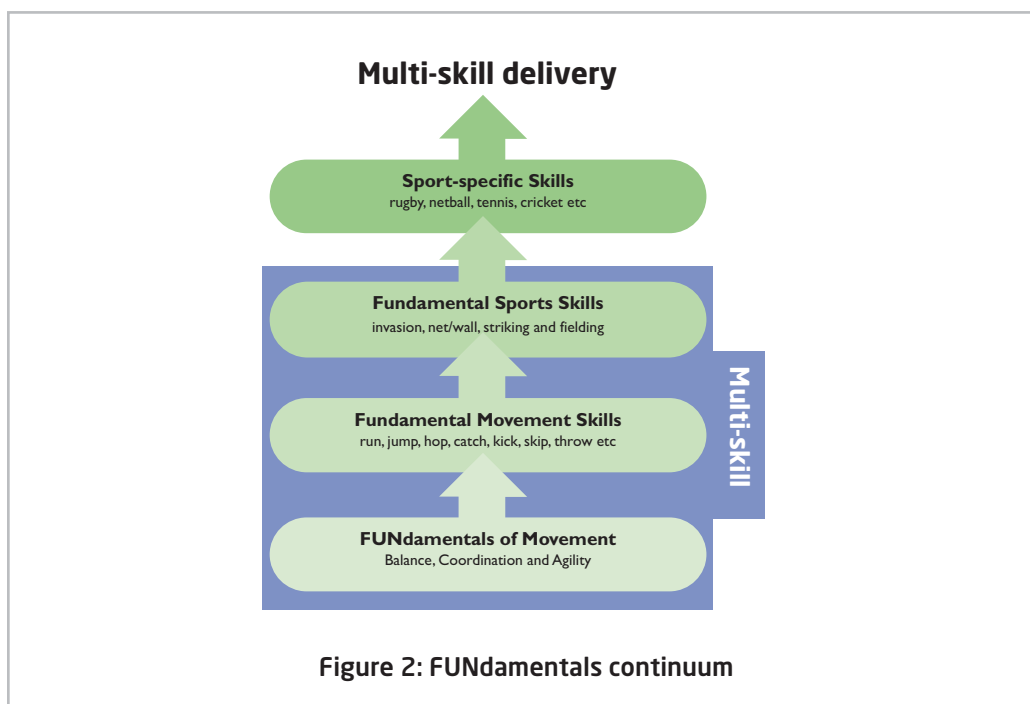
What's the difference between FUNdamentals of Movement, fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills?

FUNdamentals of Movement (FoM) focus on the introduction and development of Agility, Balance and Coordination as the building blocks for future complex skills.

Fundamental movement skills (FMS) combine FoM to develop more complex actions, such as running, jumping, travelling, throwing, catching, striking and fielding skills.

Fundamental sport skills (FSS) include game-based concepts such as invasion, net and wall, and striking and fielding skills.

FOM + FMS + FSS = Physical Literacy



Why FUNdamentals?

It is evident that a child's development is the key focus even at the initial FUNdamentals stage of the LTAD model. The FUNdamentals stage provides an opportunity to teach and develop the basic skills and movement patterns required to participate in any form of sport, play or physical activity.

It is of vital importance that we address the issues of physical inactivity and imbalanced lifestyles, which are very quickly coming to dominate our society. The FUNdamentals stage is a key phase in which we can hopefully engage young people on a lifelong pathway of sport, play and physical activity.

Key principles of FUNdamentals - ABCs

The FUNdamentals are the building blocks to develop more complex movement skills in the future. They are the foundation skills without which our physical literacy will be severely compromised.

Balance

Balance is the ability of a body to remain reasonably steady and stable. This is achieved when the centre of gravity (the bulk of your body weight) is kept inside the base of support (your stance).

Getting the Balance right

Use activities that allow children to:

- get a feel for their centre of gravity: simple balances; from high to low; making up letters with their body
- play with their base of support: from wide to narrow; vertical to horizontal; dynamic balances (chicken/bear/crab walk)
- lose and regain balance: pull and push drills; single-point balance and catch; standing on small surfaces.

Coordination

Coordination is the skilful and balanced movement of various body parts to produce an action and generate force. It can be internal (touching your nose, throwing a cricket ball) or external (hitting a tennis ball).

Coordination, Coordination!

Use activities that allow children to:

- experience movement of their body parts in different sequences and levels/planes: mirrors; rainbow (touch a specific colour cone on cue)
- get a feel for what has to happen to generate maximum power: throwing/kicking/striking/pushing different things (ball, foam rocket, shuttlecock, against each other etc)
- experiment with how to generate more or less power: throwing/kicking/striking different things to achieve different distances and aiming accurately (beanbag target throwing, goal target shooting).

Agility

Agility is the ability of the body to change direction and stop/start quickly and accurately while maintaining balance.

I like to move it, move it!

Use activities that allow children to:

- start and stop quickly and effectively: rats and rabbits; Grandma's footsteps
- experience changing direction efficiently unopposed: agility course; relay races; ladder drills
- experience changing direction efficiently against opposition: cat and mice; stuck in the mud; capture the flag.

Other factors and generic skills (see the *Coaching the Whole Child* Quick Guide) are important at this stage, such as:

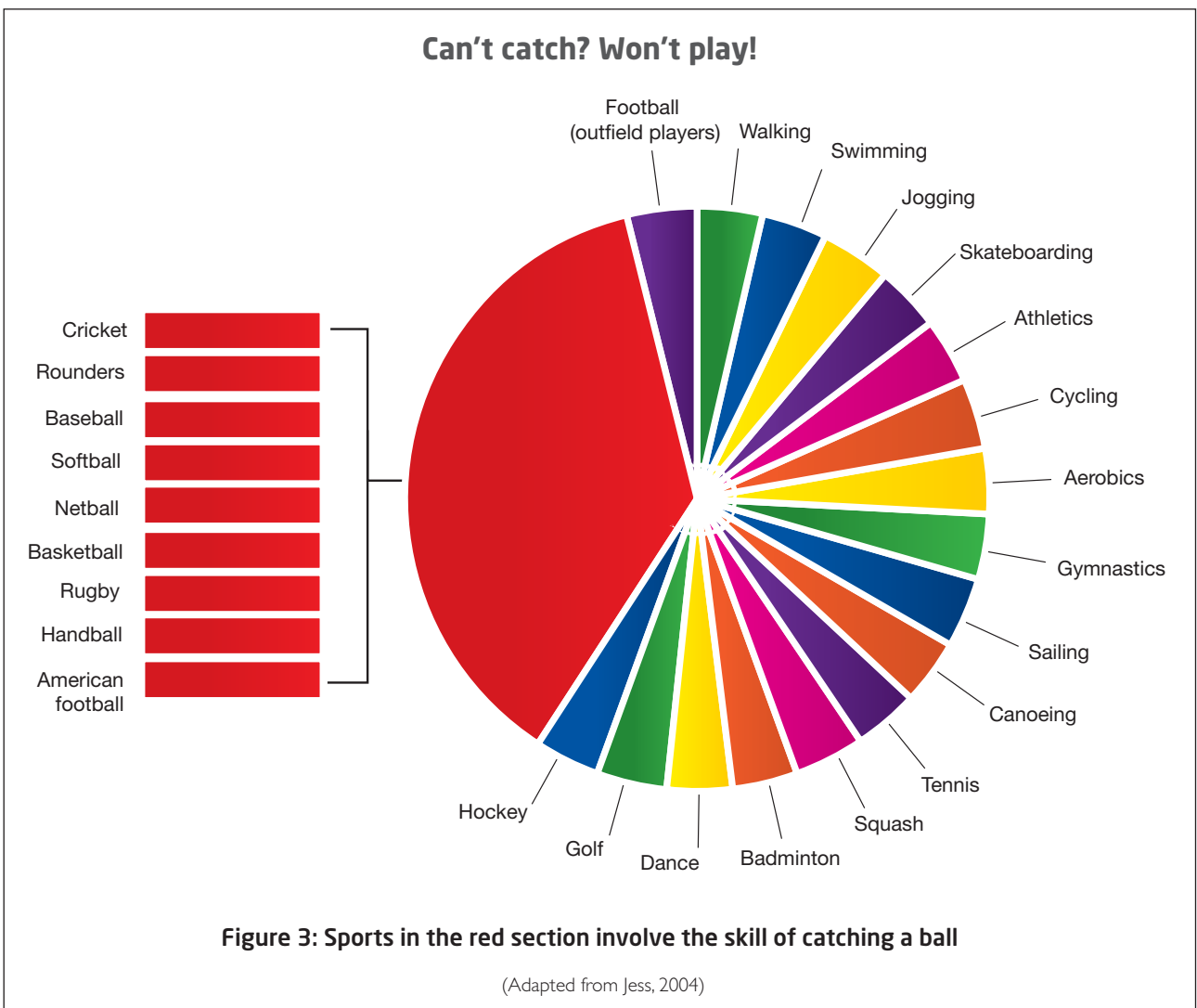
- fun
- social behaviour
- ethics
- teamwork
- strategy/tactics
- problem solving
- trajectories
- speed of movement or objects
- communication.

Physical literacy - the cornerstone of sports participation in early life and a guarantee of lifelong involvement

Generally, physical literacy describes children's ability in the full range of FoM and FMS that are the building blocks for the acquisition and development of more specific sport and life skills. In the context of LTAD, physical literacy also implies mastery of FSS.

An example of the importance of FUNdamentals:

Catching is thought of as a simple FMS, but what happens to those children who can't catch?



Next steps: A call to action

Which parts of your sessions are in tune with the things you have read about in this Quick Guide? Which aren't?

Why do we **all** need to develop FUNdamentals?

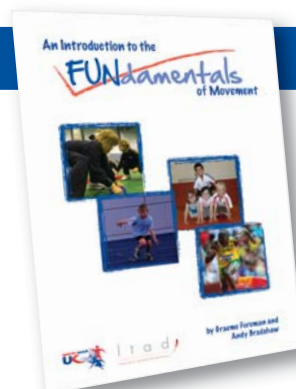
What are you going to do in your next session to integrate some FUNdamentals into the main coaching session?

Could you:

- deliver a session with a strong emphasis on Balance and Coordination skills
- ensure that all your activities are fun and enjoyable
- create new, small games to work on Agility?

Want to know more?

- Go to Coachwise 1st4sport (www.1st4sport.com) and buy *An Introduction to FUNdamentals of Movement* or the FUNdamentals DVD series.
- Book yourself on to one of the three-hour workshops. Contact the sports coach UK Workshop Booking Centre on 0845-601 3054 or visit www.sportscoachuk.org for more information.



References

- Balyi, I. (2001) 'Sport system building and long-term athlete development in British Columbia'. Canada: Sportsmed BC.
- Foreman, G. and Bradshaw, A. (2009) *An Introduction to the FUNdamentals of Movement*. Leeds: Coachwise Business Solutions/The National Coaching Foundation. ISBN: 978-1-905540-70-9.
- Jess, M. (2004) *Basic Moves National Training Programme*. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh.