

ACTIVE START PROGRAM CONSIDERATIONS

Considerations for School-Based Programs

Students should be participating in program with students in their learning cohort. Please follow protocols and procedures as laid out by your school districts on what may or may not be allowed in PE/gym classes.

Considerations for Community-Based Youth Program Leaders

Preparing for Return to Youth Programs

- Connect with families to ensure there will be one adult per child to help with safety protocols. Encourage that this be the same parent for every session.
- Review your session plans. Modify or edit activities to maintain physical distancing and plan for activities without or limited equipment.
 - o See ideas on activities below.
- Given the extended time at home and away from school, therapies, and peers, some children may have gone backwards in their skill development or behaviors. Regression is a very common reaction to stress and should not cause alarm to coaches or parents.

Face Masks

If the program is indoors, we require that face masks be worn by all adults present at Young Athletes activities (coaches, parents, caregivers, etc.). Children may do so as well at the parents' discretion.

First Session Back

- Use tape, chalk, floor markers, hula hoops, cones, or other Young Athletes equipment to help create a physical space for each individual child (contact hcheung@specialolympics.bc.ca if you require additional equipment).
 - o Floor markers are regularly used in Young Athletes to help show children where they should stand. Using them to promote physical distancing will be familiar to many children.
 - o Make sure the space is big enough to allow children to move around during activities while still maintaining physical distance from others.
- Use signs or visuals to remind parents/caregivers to keep themselves and their child 3 metres apart from others and to frequently wash/sanitize their hands.
- Encourage children to wave, smile, or use sign language to say hello instead of using hugs or high-fives to greet each other during Young Athletes activities.

Physical Distancing

These Young Athletes games and activities can help children understand physical distancing and redirect children when they get too close to one another.

- Within each child's designated space, place a hoop or bucket approximately 10 feet (3 metres) away from the child and have them practice their underhand and overhand throwing with a ball or bean bag.
- Use the game "Red Light, Green Light" to stop children when they are getting too close to someone else.

- Red Light, Green Light is typically played with children lined up at one end of a field or court. When the coach says, “green light,” children can start walking or running towards the other end of the field. When the coach says, “red light,” the children must stop quickly. The coach alternates between “green light” and “red light” until all children are at the other end, changing up speed, duration and type of movement.
- Yelling “stop” can be scary or upsetting to children, which can cause unnecessary fear or stimulate an emergency. Using “red light” instead can keep things fun, while redirecting children away from others
- It is important to practice this activity often, so children know how to respond when they hear “red light.”

Equipment

There is to be no shared equipment. Programs can either divide the current equipment between participants so each participant has their own individual set during that session, or they can ask parents to bring common household items that can be used as program equipment.

- All equipment should be sanitized before and after each session. Select equipment that can be easily wiped down. For example, a rubber or flyweight ball will be easier to clean than cloth beanbags or balls.

Young Athletes Activities

- To support children with familiarity and repetition, use a similar structure to your Young Athletes activities before COVID-19: Warm up (10 minutes), Individual skill development (20 minutes), Cool down and closing song (10 minutes).
- Stretching, songs and warm-up activities can all be done as a group while maintaining physical distance.
- Focus on activities that allow for social interaction without direct contact.
 - For example, have children take turns being the leader in Follow the Leader. Focus on stationary activities and stretches that keep children in their own space but allow them to interact with others.
- Instead of group games, focus on individual skills. To decrease the amount of equipment needed for each session, consider focusing on one skill area during each Young Athletes session.
 - For example, focus your Young Athletes session on kicking skills and spend 5 minutes each on four activities: stationary ball kick, penalty kick, cone dribble and one-one-one. Activities can progress in difficulty to continue development.
- Program Leaders should station themselves in a location where all children can see as they demonstrate activities, such as in the centre of the circle.

No Equipment Activities For Active Start	Limited Equipment Activities for Active Start	Limited Equipment Activities (assistance needed)
Children Songs	Walk Tall	Scarf Games
I Spy	Run and Carry	Rolling and Trapping
Animals Games	Balance Beam	Goalie Drill

Follow the Leader	Jumping High	Big Ball and High Ball Catch
Heavy Feet, Light Feet	Stepping and Jumping	Bounce Catch
Leaping Lizards	Bowling	One-Handed and Two-Handed Underhand Toss
Galloping	Handball	One-Handed and Two-Handed Overhand Toss
Skipping	Stationary Ball Kick	Ball tap
	Dribbling	Punting

Health and Hygiene Education

- Ensure supervision when children are using hand sanitizer to monitor safe, effective use.
- Use different Young Athletes games and activities to help children understand preventative actions they can take to stay healthy, like washing their hands or coughing into their elbow. Using games and activities to reinforce health messaging is an important tool to ensure the messages come across in a positive and fun light. Sometimes talking about COVID-19 can cause children to be afraid of the virus, going outside their home and more. Play can reinforce positive messages without instilling fear or worry.
 - o Use songs during warm up and cool down. For example, the song below, “Wash, Wash, Wash Your Hands,” is sung to the tune of “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Children can mimic the movements of washing their hands, eating, sleeping and playing. “Wash, wash, wash your hands, Wash the dirt away, Before you eat, before you sleep and after outdoor play.”

Virtual Programs

For more information on how to run programs virtually, please contact Helen Cheung, Sport Manager hcheung@specialolympics.bc.ca.