

FOCUS►

LEAPING

Grades 2, 3

Leaping is the last of the locomotor skills for young children to master. Therefore, it is introduced in grade 2, and performance in a mature pattern is a Grade-Level Outcome for grade 3.

Materials and Equipment

Jump ropes, one per student

Introduction

Thus far in our study of locomotor movements, you have traveled with hopping, jumping, galloping, sliding, running, and skipping. Today, we will add the last of our locomotors—leaping. What do you think of when I say, “Leaping”? (Possible responses include leap frog, ballet dancers, basketball players, acrobatics, and maybe over a creek or mud puddle.)

Introduce leaping as a locomotor skill, a form of jumping—taking off on one foot and landing on the other foot. Demonstrate the skill of leaping, emphasizing the flight phase of leaping: extension of the legs, extension and lift of the arms, and forward motion of the body while in the air. Leaping is an extension of a run or jog.

Critical Elements for Leaping

- Takeoff is on one foot, and landing is on opposite foot.
- Legs extend for height and distance.
- Arms extend and lift for airborne time.
- Knee bends to absorb force on landing.

LEARNING EXPERIENCE: TRAVEL BY LEAPING

Have the students travel throughout general space with a combination of running and leaping: run, run, run, leap; run, run, run, leap; emphasizing taking off on one foot, landing on the other foot, and continuing with the run.

- Have students practice the running and leaping movement pattern, emphasizing the extension of the legs in flight for distance while airborne, as in leaping over puddles in the rain.
- Some puddles are small; some are large. Students should vary the distance of the leap.
- Allow sufficient practice time for students to establish their own rhythms for running and leaping, such as how many steps to take before the leap and which foot to use for the takeoff.

Challenge yourself to extend your arms and legs and lift your body for increased hang time as if suspended in midair when you leap. Pretend that you are Peter Pan flying for just one second. Extend your arms sideways and legs forward and backward.

Grade 3

- Have students position jump ropes in a straight line in their personal space, then practice leaping over their ropes in personal space.
- Challenge students to travel through general space, leaping over the scattered ropes.

Safety Check: Alert students to check for open space before leaping.

Assessment

- Conduct informal observation of students in grade 2, because this is for practice only.
- Observe critical elements for students in grade 3.

Closure

- What locomotor skill did you practice today?
- What makes the leap more difficult than other locomotor skills?
- Describe a time in dance, gymnastics, or sports when you have seen the performer leaping.

Reflection

Grade 2

- Are the students able to take off on one foot and land on the other foot in a leaping action?
- Does the leaping action move them horizontally through the air rather than vertically?

Grade 3

- Are the students demonstrating the critical elements of a mature pattern for the leaping action?
- Are they using extension to stay airborne with extensions and using a strong push-off of the body for flight?