

Jump'n Agility Set

Item #11250, 11262, 11266, 11338

What Are the Educational Applications?

Agility is a skill that begins to develop at the very beginning of a child's life. Challenging activities that stimulate and foster this development prepare young people for success as physically active individuals. The agility ladder, used in conjunction with a set of mini hurdles, offers developmentally appropriate opportunities.

How Can I Use This Equipment With My Students?

There are many ways to use the Jump'n Agility Set, utilizing parts or all of the set, limited only by your creativity. However, one of the most versatile applications is the obstacle course.

Although you can combine the set's components with other equipment that you already have, it is suggested that you add equipment slowly due to the challenging nature of both the ladder and the hurdles. Within the framework of the obstacle course, instructors should refer to the manufacturer's instructions for ways that students can travel through the ladder portion of the set. Keep in mind that some of the techniques for traveling are advanced and young children may have difficulty being successful with all of them. Allow children the opportunity to experiment and be comfortable with the equipment.

In addition to obstacle courses there are agility exercises which will be explained later that students find both challenging and fun. With all of the activities, encourage your students to set attainable goals based on their early performances.

Safety

- Set up the equipment in an open area with plenty of space between the activity area and any walls or objects with which the students may collide.
- Allow only one student per cluster of equipment at one time. There is enough equipment in one agility set to make two identical obstacle courses or several agility stations.
- The portable nature of the set means that it is not securely or permanently fastened. Although students guided by proper management and learning cues will not be hurt if they catch their feet/legs on a portion of the ladder or hurdles, a classmate following too closely behind them could be accidentally injured.
- Good agility can reduce the likelihood of ankle injuries. However, it is important for students to perform ankle warm-up exercises in order to decrease the risk of twisting or spraining their ankles.

- Hurdles should be set up so that they can easily tip if struck by a student attempting to pass over them (Figure 1).



Figure 1

How Do I Make Activities Developmentally Appropriate for My Students?

When used in well-managed and supervised lessons, this equipment can serve ages 5 through adult. Though activities utilizing the agility ladder are appropriate for young children, introduction of the hurdles should be done according to an individual child's ability. By age 8 most children will be ready for the mini-hurdles.

Obstacle Courses (Figure 2)

With young children, try to stress the accomplishment of finishing the obstacle course as well as proper technique and careful and deliberate steps and movements. Children who participate in activities/races that stress competition may find it much more difficult to be successful and therefore may become discouraged.

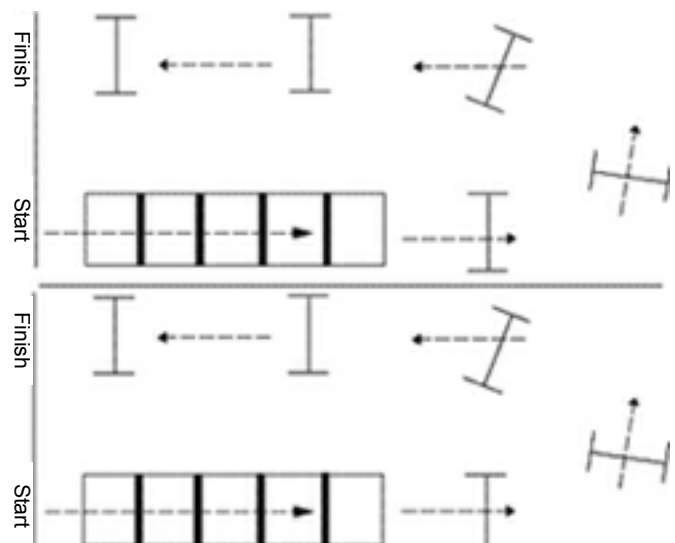


Figure 2

At all developmental levels, participants need to be given time to practice and become familiar with the equipment and the footwork needed to complete an agility course successfully. If the course is simply laid out and competition is immediately stressed, the risk of failure, frustration and/or injury is increased.

Agility Drills

Young children in Grades K-3 can enjoy moving through the agility ladder in a variety of ways. Allow the students opportunities to experiment with various ways of moving. As they become comfortable with the equipment, begin to introduce more specific ways of moving, many of which can be taken and/or adapted from the manufacturer's instruction guide.

In the upper elementary levels, Grades 4-6, students should be encouraged to follow more specific movement cues and the mini-hurdles can be added if they have not yet been introduced. Cues such as "high-knees" and "quick-feet" should be stressed and evaluated by both the instructor and the students themselves. See the section on Teaching Cues.

Agility Drill One

A side-to-side "slalom" jump is a great agility drill which students in the upper elementary grades really enjoy. This can be done in groups of three with one hurdle used for each group.

Have one student turn the hurdle upside-down (Figure 3) and stand next to and parallel with the bar. As this student jumps back-and-forth over the hurdle in a side-to-side fashion, one group member counts the successful repetitions while the other analyzes technique and offers encouragement. If the student performing the jumps touches or lands on the hurdle, her/his turn is done and the group's roles rotate.



Figure 3

Again, students should be given time to practice this skill to avoid frustration and/or injury.

Agility Drill Two

The ladder loop can be set up in two different ways (Figures 4 & 5). The main objective of this drill is to develop fast and accurate footwork. However, as with most of the drills mentioned in this guide, it is not appropriate to

emphasize speed when students are first attempting an activity. Allow them time to get acquainted with the equipment and the performance expectations of the lesson.

Figure 5 illustrates a continuous loop allowing one student to run through the drill for a specified time. Other students can be involved in the activity as timers and as peer teachers. Students designated as peer teachers should focus on the quality of the performance with respect to the teaching cues given by the instructor. It is often helpful for the peer teachers to have check-sheets of cues to look for within a given drill. For examples of cues appropriate for a Jump'n Agility Set checklist, refer to the Jump'n Agility Teaching Cues section.

The setup of a continuous loop does limit the number of students who can participate in the drill. However, it is perfect for a station or grid within the framework of an agility lesson. Be aware that the time limit set on each student's performance should allow for all of the group members to run through the drill before leaving the station. For example, if you are rotating students every 3 minutes and there are three students in a group, each student should run the loop for no more than 30 seconds. This allows time for the students to change roles within the drill.

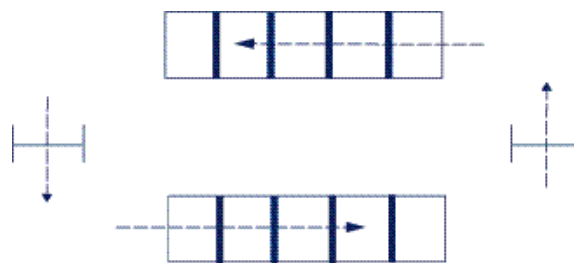


Figure 4

Figure 5 illustrates the same drill done within a half-loop setup. Although the students do not benefit from continuous practice, as with the full loop setup, there are several benefits of this version of the drill.

There is enough equipment in one complete Jump'n Agility Set for two half-loops when using this setup. The drill could be run as if it were a relay race, or a traditional practice drill. Again, for teaching tips and cues, refer to the following section.

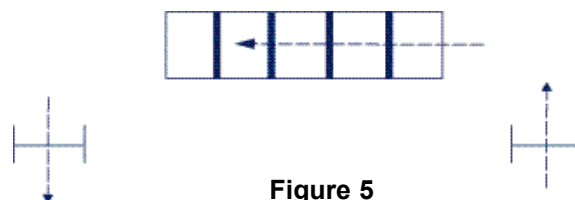


Figure 5

Jump'n Agility Teaching Cues

The following list of teaching cues can serve as a starting point for building checklists and station posters for Jump'n Agility lessons and drills.

- Move on the balls of the feet at all times.
- Snap the knees up to waist level when moving through

the agility ladder.

- Keep the chin high, head parallel with the ground
- Focus steps in the center of each opening in the agility ladder.
- Unless the drill specifies, do not jump when moving through an agility course; rather, use appropriate strides that follow the cues given above. Motion over the hurdles should be a fluid continuation of one's natural stride.

How does this product relate to current educational thinking?

In relation to the National Content Standards for Physical Education, lessons designed for the Jump'n Agility Set help students become physically educated individuals by:

- developing agility proficiency which will transfer into many movement forms,
- developing movement concepts and principles that can apply to the learning of other motor skills, and
- offering students the opportunity to enjoy and appreciate movement that is both challenging and beneficial to their levels of skill-related and health-related fitness.

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