



Ski Utah 4th Grade Ski & Snowboard Program Helpful Hints for Teaching Fitness

The ideas below incorporate current concepts for teaching fitness to school children. They are presented to help teachers navigate the “Sample Fitness Program” or create their own classroom fitness program, tailored specifically to their students. See “Sample Fitness Program” and “Guide for Creating Ski and Ride Fitness.”

Vigorous Aerobic Activity

- Give students 5-10 min. of time to get up to speed.
- Try to include activities and aerobic games that will increase HR for at least 20 min.
- Young children will still benefit from “hard” intermittent activity if continued for 20+ min. In fact, they often do better with an interval method of training. Start 4th-6th graders with running intervals of no more than 40 yards. Recover. Repeat. Begin with 4-5 intervals.
- If you don’t have a 20-30 min. block every day, then try splitting activities up into shorter 10 min. blocks. It still helps.
- Aerobic games, circuits, treasure hunts, scavenger hunts, obstacle courses, challenge activities, and even basic orienteering are all ways to make aerobic fitness activities fun for students.
- Go multi-sport! Mix it up with cycling, skateboarding, rollerblading, scooters, running, walking all in one session. Make sure kids have correct protective gear. Never cycle, skate, blade or scooter etc. without a helmet.
- Go multi-discipline and incorporate strength and agility w/aerobic activity. Agility and coordination activities are, by nature, interval based.
- Looking for more help? Try these websites:
 - <http://www.nyrrf.org>. New York Road Runners: Youth Coaching Resources
 - <http://www.kidsrunning.com>. Great site for running games for all ages\

Strength

- Both the *Guide for Creating Ski and Ride Fitness* and the *Balance, Strength & Agility Exercise List* in the support materials have several strength exercises applicable for grades 4-6.
- Use playground equipment to create strength activities for upper and lower body.
- Lacking time? Pick an exercise that requires very little space and do 1-2 sets of 10 repetitions as a quick break from desk activities. For example: as soon as you finish this math problem, hop up and do 10 single leg squats.

- Focus on technique and slow speeds for these exercises. When students do them really quickly, they do not get the full benefit from performing the exercise and in fact may gain very little.
- Be progressive. Start small and gradually increase the load by adding repetitions, and then by making the exercise harder i.e. go to single leg or single arm. Add reps again!
- Doing one or two exercises well is better than doing a “bunch” of exercises poorly.

Balance, Agility & Coordination

- Review the *Balance, Strength & Agility Exercise List* in the support materials.
- Remember, many of these exercises can also produce some cardiovascular fitness, depending on the ability level of your students and how you organize the session.
- Use less intense exercises as part of warm-up.
- Balance, a key skill for skiing and snowboarding, is very easy to practice in the classroom. One-legged stork stands, eyes open at first and then w/eyes closed, can be done while standing in the aisle next to a desk.
- Don't forget to practice some of the ski and snowboard specific exercises once you have established basic balance and coordination early in the unit. Spend the last two weeks reviewing the ski and snowboard specific exercises.

Prepping children for their ski day adds to the excitement and boosts student's motivation and confidence to try something new. The field trip will be much more successful with just a little groundwork prior to the actual event.

For more information, coaching or ideas please email Jo Garuccio, Ski Utah 4th Grade Program Director, at jo@agegroupsports.com.