

EARLY YEARS LESSON PLAN: SPACE



Physical adaptations

- Use a wide area of play so the activities are more accessible for wheelchair users.
- Adapt the movements to the needs of the children to create a 'best fit' activity.
- Vary the size of the sponge ball, smaller balls may be easier get into a palm, larger balls easier to hit.
- Create self-propelling wheelchair equivalents to the movements (e.g. Moon Walk- slow careful momentum; Rocket Launch-quick push and cruise).
- Use grip tape to build up the handle of the net to make it easier to hold.
- Use slightly deflated ball that will roll more slowly and be easier to grasp with one hand.
- Use telescopic nets so the length of the stem can be altered (longer more challenging, shorter easier to control).
- Offer different sizes and shapes of tennis racket alongside the Leopard pads so pupils can choose one that suits them.

Sensory processing adaptations

- Give the children chance to move around the area of play and process the layout.

Visual and hearing adaptations

- Use throw-down markers or cones with tape between them for the area boundary as a tactile reference.
- Describe the area of play and give children time to process that information.
- Use large bright cones as 'planets' that contrast with the colour of the walls and floor.
- Provide full length mirrors to give additional feedback on body position when getting into the 'astronaut ready' position.
- Use hand-under-hand support, with consent, to teach tapping technique to children who may not access visual information.

Cognition and learning adaptations

- Remind children what the different calls, in the warm-up, mean.
- Use more concrete language if children struggle to follow the Space Themed commands.
- Children with intellectual disabilities may also have coordination and fine manipulation difficulties, allow for extra practise and processing time.

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EQUIPMENT

- Balls
- Cones
- Catching nets
- Spots
- Traffic cones or hitting tees
- Hoops
- Rackets or hitting hands

WARM UP: MOVE LIKE SAFARI ANIMALS

SET THE SCENE

"Today we are going on an adventure to space, you are in astronaut training!"

HOW TO PLAY

- Place planets (cones) around the outside of the space.
- Tell children they are in astronaut training and need to stay inside the space station – walk around the outside of the space together.
- Children move around space with different actions. Demonstrate each action, starting with just three actions and build up if the children are ready:
 - Moon walk – slow motion walk with balance and control.
 - Rocket launch – fast jumps on the spot landing with bent knees.
 - Asteroid dodge – side-step quickly watching where going.
 - Zero gravity – stand on one foot using arms to balance.
 - Moon rover – walk on all fours, keeping centre of gravity low, and stomping.

TEACHING POINTS

- Watch where you are going.
- Avoid others.
- Listen to the calls.

BRAIN FOCUS ACTIVITIES



SKILL UP

- Add a ball. Children carry a ball and perform actions keeping it held secure with two hands (apart from moon rover).

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BODY & BALL: METEOR CATCH

SET THE SCENE

"Now we're going to roll the meteors."

HOW TO PLAY

- Teach children the 'astronaut ready' position:
 - Wide shoes
 - Knees bent
 - Hands out front
 - Face forward
- Children practice getting into the "astronaut ready" position.
- Children work in pairs with one ball per pair and stand approximately 1 metre apart.
- One child rolls the meteor (ball) underarm to their partner. Their partner stops the ball with their hand or with a catching net and rolls the ball back to their partner.
- Repeat several times and swap roles.
- Progress to throwing the ball underarm. It can bounce as many times as needed before catching it.

TEACHING POINTS

- Swing the arm to send the ball.
- Point palm towards the target.
- Watch the ball.
- Cup hands underneath to catch.
- Children may find it useful to say "bounce, catch" to help with timing of receiving the ball.



SKILL UP

- Use an overarm throw to send the ball.
- Reduce the number of bounces to catch the ball.

RACKET & BALL: MOON TAP

SET THE SCENE

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“Let’s try and shoot the meteor to the moon.”

HOW TO PLAY

- Space traffic cones in a line, enough for one per child, and place hoops (moons) in a row approximately 2 metres from the traffic cones.
- Each child has a racket and stands next to a traffic cone.
- Children stand side on and hold the ball against the racket and swing both arms forwards towards the moons aiming to get the ball to land in the moon.

TEACHING POINTS

- Hold the racket and ball to the side.
- Swing the arms low to high.
- Point the palm and strings to the target.

BRAIN FOCUS ACTIVITIES



SKILL UP

- Place the ball on the traffic cone and tap the ball towards the moon.
- Drop the ball and tap the ball towards the moon.

GAME: ALIEN RALLY

SET THE SCENE

“Let’s have a meteor rally.”

HOW TO PLAY

- Working in pairs, children start standing on a spot opposite their partner approximately 2 metres apart.
- One child is the hitter and starts with a racket and ball, and the other child has a hitting hand.
- The hitter bounces the ball and taps it to their partner.
- The catcher catches the ball either with their hands or net, then rolls the ball back to their partner.
- Try to make 3 catches.
- Swap roles.

TEACHING POINTS

- Get ready Swing the arm slowly low to high to tap the ball.
- Point palm towards the target.
- Watch the ball.
- Move to the ball.
- Children may find it useful to say “bounce, hit” and “bounce, catch” to help with timing.
- Work together as a team.

BRAIN FOCUS ACTIVITIES



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SKILL UP

- Progress to both children having rackets. They can either roll the ball along the floor to each other sending it straight back, or allow the children to catch / stop the ball before tapping it back to their partner.

COOL DOWN

Set the scene “We are going to float into space.”

- Lie on the floor and concentrate on breathing:
 - “Inhale... fill your space suit.”
 - “Exhale... float slowly.”
- 3–5 slow breaths.
- Big astronaut stretch (arms & legs wide) then hug the knees in.
- Sit tall in astronaut pose.