

# SKATING HANDBOOK

How to teach basic skating skills  
to beginners children



**SKATE**



*Skate for Kids And Teachers all over the Europe*



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## **Skating teaching level 0.**

*Training diary for the first year of start-up.*

This practice guide aims to follow one year (10 months) of skating teaching, and it was written following, lesson by lesson, one year of field work.

The idea is to provide a practice path to follow for those coaches who are going to work with young children, trying to point out from time to time the main problems encountered and the possible solutions.

The coach's attitude in this recreational activity shall be of "social" nature rather than sportive. In other words you shall consider children as subjects to whom provide help for their correct growth, seeing in them the future players does not benefit and leads to stress at an early stage undesired traits at this age.

The objectives of the course are the achievement of reasonable skills (a fine coordination) in the main skating steps:

1. forward skating
  - a. push step;
  - b. chain step;
  - c. squat skating;
  - d. one foot skating;
  - e. crossovers;
  - f. eagle;
  - g. edge change;
  
2. backward skating
  - a. chain step;
  - b. edge change;
  
3. braking
  - a. snowplow;
  - b. christiania;

Not every skating techniques will be reached with the same ability but they shall be at least outlined (rough coordination); normally the eagle and the crossovers will be less strengthened.

The backward crossovers and the push step.

We expect to deal with children aged between 4 and 8 years, some of them will already have used the rollerblades. When the differences are too clear it is necessary to create at least two homogeneous groups depending on their abilities so that they can share the same training hours but obviously two different coaches are needed.

The number of the coaches required depends also on the total number of children as well as on the inhomogeneity, it is difficult that one single person can deal with groups of more than 10/12 children. In this phase it is important to pay close attention not to get hurt, accidents – minor ones too - often discourage children and parents.

The 10 months course is composed of 2 weekly lessons, each of about an hour and half.

The course include in the appendix:

- List of the proprioceptive exercises to use;
- List of the games to propose to the children;
- A valuation method of the skills achieved of the skating steps above-mentioned. In order to make the reached quality possible to evaluate over the years and obtain standardized references, it is necessary to record carefully the attendances and the absences of every lesson;

only the children who will have attended at least the 80% of the lessons will be considered, otherwise there will be an incoherence in the data statistics.

## Lesson 1

Time management of the first lesson depends on the problems met during the conduct, it is good to proceed with caution when difficulties are spread among children. In this lesson you can normally manage to make children stand up and keep their static balance for several seconds.

Place a line of skittles separated from each other by a distance of one metre on one side of the roller skating rink.

### **Children don't wear rollerblades;**

Children find this arrangement of the rink and have to get immediately used to:

- hear the whistle of the coach and gather sitting close to him (the coach sitting too)
- listen to the instructor's explanations telling them what will happen during the training
- under the command of the instructor, go placing in the line of the skittles sitting in the **middle** of two skittles

Make a general valuation of every single child to highlight gross motor deficiencies:

- make them walk forward and notice gait problems: arms-legs coordination, step irregularity;
- make them walk backward and notice the ability to do it without falling and keeping the alignment;
- one child at a time: make him roll forward and backward lying down on the ground, evaluate the difficulty experienced;
- identify the side (if they are left or right-handed): make them do a short push with a final jump, the landing leg is the opposite of the side they use;

In cases of gross and evident motor deficiency (parents usually know the problem and mention it) it is necessary a specific work which starts from the simple movements of flexion/extension of the limbs, sense of the rhythm etc., but it is good to consult somebody who knows the problem.



1. Make them take the correct position in the middle of the skittles and call them often and check their position making them move when they can't do it, make them take their shoes off and place them **behind** their backs (always clarify the spatial concepts such as behind, in front of, on the side etc..).

2. Proprioceptive exercises: this series of exercises **will be repeated at the beginning of every lesson over the year**, children tend to laugh and joke during these exercises, so it is important to establish the order from the very beginning, gently but strongly, in order to

get them used to be concentrated because rollerblades require it, otherwise there is no safety. A series of these exercises is listed in the appendix, 4 or 5 at time may be used changing from lesson to lesson. Devote to these exercises about 20 minutes every time.

3. Sitting with the legs and arms extended forward, they are taught, making it see, the correct movement to stand up without touching the floor with the hands: sitting-->on the knees-->one foot on the ground close to the knee-->the other foot on the other ground keeping the squat position-->stand up slowly keeping the arms forward.

4. From the stand up position you come back sitting down doing the same movements above-mentioned but backward.

5. Repeat the two movements several times until they get natural, as children sit down they tend to throw themselves on the ground, correct them. This exercise will be useful to stand up with the rollerblades, it is important that it will be done correctly.

6. Send the children to take their own rollerblades and make them come back in the position between the skittles, explain to the parents that they will be able to take action only later;

7. Explain to children how to put their rollerblades on: undo the laces, broaden the shoe, lift the tongue, clutch the shoe from both of the sides and put the foot inside. There will be need for the instructor's help for the young children or the less able to do that;

8. With the rollerblades on, parents can take action to do the laces. Pay attention that children with their rollerblades on do not try to stand up on their own. This procedure will be the same for all the year;



9. This part of the session could lead to some risks, so get their attention and silence, remark that they shall do just what they are told. Make them repeat the movement from sitting down to on the knees and again sitting down several times until they don't get used to the weight and the bulkiness of the rollerblades.





10. Then pass to the one foot on the ground position and again on the knees, repeat again, pay attention that the foot is close to the knee and straight forward.

11. Go on with the two skates on the ground, this is the first time that children find themselves completely on wheels. A lot of children instinctively tend to stand due to the difficulty of squatting on the skates, correct them immediately before they could fall. The squat position needs the arms

properly extended forward. Make them keeping the position for several seconds at each repetition of the exercise.



12. Do the last move towards the standing position, keep the arms forward, make the children stand **slowly** with a pause at half-height, finally hold them standing for several seconds in order to feel the balance, then make them sit again doing the same passages backward. Repeat the exercise as many times as possible depending on the tiredness.

13. As first static exercise it is asked to children to move the centre of gravity rhythmically from one foot to the other: this is a simple movement with the torso going right and left; it is possible to guide the movement by lifting the opposite foot, paying attention that they make it by bending the knee. Probably young children (4-5 years) will find difficulty, the elder should be capable of that.

14. All the sessions must end with a game, in the first 4 sessions children take off their rollerblades and you shall arrange a game described in the appendix. This is the moment of a more relaxed attitude and with less rules although it is necessary to keep the safety in a group of children who, at this point, are free and run wild; the respect of the rules of a known game is sufficient.

15. The final whistle must gather all the children around the instructor who greet them with a little final rite (creating a circle and shouting, or other things according to your fantasy), this states, at the end of the lesson, the belonging to a group.

### **Lesson 5, 6, 7**

Propose again the same exercises listed in lessons 2, 3, 4.

The only change is the introduction of the final game: up to now it has been done without roller blades, now they can do it with them on or also in a mixed solution by taking them off for the children who are in difficulty.

### **Lesson 8, 9, 10**

Go on with the same exercises of the previous lessons but introducing a new element: Chain step, during the proprioceptive exercises make children try the internal and external feet support alternating the passage from a position to another, verifying that the knees have the correct flexion.

In order to better explain the pressures to exercise it is necessary that every child perceive, by touching with his own hands, the inner and outer line of the plant of the foot to make them feel the pressure.

The key of this step is essentially based on the lines, the steering of the wheels makes the points open and close; if the exemplification is done correctly the learning time of the chain step is shorter and so it is for the backward skating.

With the roller blades on show how to do the step and make them try correcting physically the passage from open to close points with the help of the hands. The acquisition of this movement is preparatory to the snowplow stop and backward skating.

### **Lesson 11, 12**

From now on we can notice distinctly the differences of skating among skilled children and the ones in difficulty. It is necessary to value carefully the type of difficulty experienced by children, such as the lack of coordination and sense of rhythm, in other cases the lack of force of the legs of overweighted-average children or motor "shyness": little tendency to risk. The evaluation should be done based on the age, it is clear that very young children (under 5-6 years of age) have less developed motor skills and require more time.

In the particular case of little coordination it is necessary to practice without roller blades on, paying attention to the articular mobility, limbs coordination, the acquisition of the ability to follow a rhythm.

One of the most common flaw is the difficulty to flex the knees because children often flex



their torso forward, the following exercises are useful to gain awareness of the articulation of the knees.

The following exercises may be useful if done following the rhythm of the whistle:

- hold the barre with the hands and keep the torso straight:
  - squats on the legs;
  - lift one foot at time (alternating the feet) making the knee correctly fold and teach not to do sudden movements, insisting on the correct control of the limb;
  - jump from the squat position pushing with both legs;
- sitting with outstretched legs forward:
  - alternated leg flexing by always making feel the knee folding;
  - take a tennis ball and throw it in the air or make it bounce, add difficulty doing the exercise with just one hand;
- standing up:
  - make them jump, short jumps too, coordinating the leg flexing with the movement of the arms which accompanies the jump;
  - jump on one foot at time, using both feet;

**This work without roller blades gives results if repeated for a long period; an alternative to the whistle rhythm might be the use of a metronome which also introduces the sense of the sight as well as of the ear, you might also increase the participation and the difficulty by asking the child (if already able) to count the movements done.**

Another important thing about the theme of the knees articulation:

Among the steps learned until now, skating in squat position shall be introduced. A lot of children have difficulty to do a perfect squat position, they tend to fold the torso forward and keep the knees semi-flexed, it is necessary to force them to this position, first when they rest and then while they are moving. Skating in this way obliges to a big movement of the barycentre toward the roller blade on the floor and the use of the hip flexor muscles on the tronco and iliopsoas.

The first elements dedicated to the long paying attention shall now be introduced:

1. Draw a big rectangle with the skittles of the same colour except on one side, or part of that, which will have skittles of a different colour. Explain to the children that they have to skate regularly on the sides of the same colour but when they arrive at the side with the different colour they shall do a task which may be: skating on the side doing the chain step, then squat position, finally on just one foot; pay attention that the task is respected.
2. Repeat the exercise skating in the opposite direction.
3. Little wheel cart: in pairs a child keeps the squat position and the other pushes him, the positions alternate several times.
4. If the chain step begins to pop up, make it try also backward: they won't probably be able to do it but meanwhile they will "taste" the movement, the exercise shall be repeated regularly in the following lessons.
5. Sign with 4 skittles two straight paths not too much long (less than half rink in this way they won't be too demanding for the less skilled children), split the children in two homogeneous teams depending on the ability. Organise a relay race, using a

light ball as a baton which every child has to give to the hand of the next one. The winning team obtains an extension of the track so that both teams will win.

Go on by concluding the session with games and the final greeting.

### **Lessons 13, 14**

From this lesson repeat every time the exercises without the skates described in the previous paragraph for the children with big difficulty.

In this lesson you may make a demonstration with the agonists: it is useful to give the children a precise reference of what they shall learn. The agonists may do the basic exercises and then organise a short match of 10/15 minutes to show what hockey is. This activity has also a galvanising effect due to the game equipment: helmet, stick and protections and the charm of the ball and the goal.

The demonstration ends with a photo picturing all: children and agonists, repeat each point of the previous paragraph introducing further stimuli dedicated to the long termed attention:

1. During the tracks introduce the sound stimuli, 1, 2 or 3 rapid whistles associated to different tasks to do. For example 1 whistle means to stop in the snowplow position and go, 2 whistles mean to stop in the snowplow position then go in the opposite sense, 3 whistles mean to stop in the snowplow position and go backwards etc...
2. Ask the children to skate in the rink a certain number of times and then stop.
3. Children who stand still do a little jump on the place with their feet aligned, rhythm commanded by the coach.

Refinement of the steps learned:

1. Chain step: insist on this fundamental;
2. Make children try the step for the backward skating;
3. Make them try the snowplow stop and place for each child a skittle of reference in front of which they have to stop;

Tight turn:

1. The ability should be sufficient to make try this position. Use a skittle of reference for each child and ask them to do the turn around that as tighter as possible. Pay attention to the position of the torso and of the shoulders which should be towards the intern of the turn while the roller blades stay parallel on the floor. The exercise shall be done on the right and on the left.
2. Place the children in tow and stay at the top and make them skate at the right speed the curved trajectories with frequent changes of right/left side,

The catching game previously proposed is a good exercise for the tight turns.

## **Lessons 15, 16**

Repeat all the points of the lessons 13, 14

Before the games, introduce the first team lesson.

You can use any number of children for team, just place them in a reasonable way to cover their own part of the rink.

Use a rectangle for the game littler than half the rink (especially with few children) in order that there are no more than 2 meters between each child.

Mark the goal with two skittles of different colour, make the children wear the vests in order to distinguish the belonging of both teams.

Once disposed the children make them notice several times their disposition asking them to remember it, work with one team at time:

1. At the whistle all the children of the first team skate in a casual way through all the rink, at the next whistle they run to take back their position as faster as possible. Repeat more times and then go on with the other team.
2. Use a light ball, in this first proposal work with just one child who attacks and all the adversary team who defends.
3. The rules are simple: take the ball in the goal trying to avoid the players, they can't touch, the children who defend are ready with their arms open, and each child in his own zone, move on the side to follow the trajectory of the striker trying to obstacle his passage.

The aim of this activity is simple:

- start giving elements of order in the space inside a group;
- control of the exuberance (respect the rule of not touching);
- introduce the elements of: time of attack and defence, zones of the rink, fellow players and adversaries (use of the vests), rules to respect;

The activity is perceived as playful and the attention is kept still; the children less able will be in difficulty so the coach shall give some help (disturbing the defenders, inserting some particular rules for them etc...).

## **Lessons 17, 18**

Same points of the two previous lessons, there are so many irons in the fire and while introducing new elements, which are also more difficult, it is needed to go on working well on the basis of the skating which are still precarious.

In the game with the teams set up, you can introduce another complication to alternate with the use of one attacking player: the use of two players.

As the whistle blow, a player advances towards the goal and the other, moving to disorient the adversaries, tries to pass him the ball. The action won't often be achieved especially because of the difficulty of catching a volley ball, but the collaboration starts both in the defence and attack phase.

Approaching the Christmas Holidays it is good to organise a little recital, so start preparing the children to the track which will be proposed. It is required that even the less able could finish the track so you may simplify for them some passages. The track, generally, will include all the steps learned:

- forward: push step, chain step, stop, squat skating, one foot skating;
- backward: only if it is appropriate the chain step.

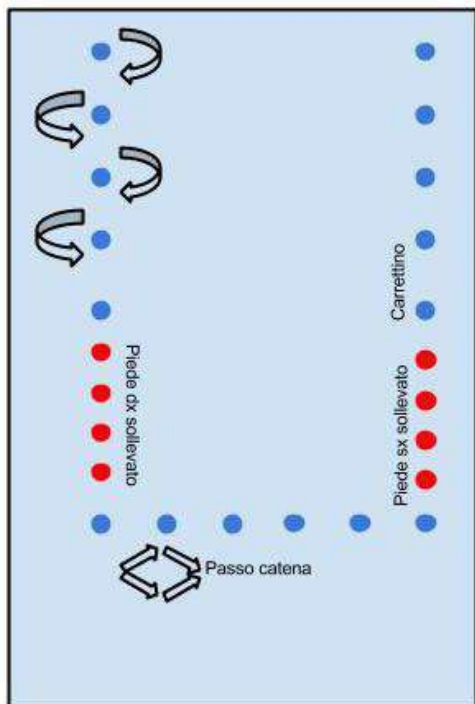
By making the various activities, let them hold an object in their hands (a tennis ball) to better define the use of arms-hands as elements with their own task instead of simple balancers. Next, the little ball will be useful for some individual and partner exercises.

In the final games too it is useful to have a lot of little balls, simply throw them with force in the air and ask the children to take them back, it produces a great movement in all the rink which entertains the children.

**At this point of the year it is necessary to ask the parents of the children who continue to open a little insurance policy dedicated to the recreational activity.**

It has not been done before to avoid an expense of money for the families of the children who don't want to continue. Naturally, this is a questionable choice, it is clear that open an insurance at the beginning of the course would be safer for the society and the instructor.

## Lessons 19, 20



This two lessons shall take place near the Christmas Holidays, so they are used generally to prepare the recital closing the first period of lessons.

Anyway we continue with the proprioceptive exercises which function also as warm-up, then we draw the track that the children will do, alternating the colour of the skittles every time that the step needs to be changed, an example:

side 1

- blue spaced skittles: slalom
- red skittles: right foot lifted up

side 2

- blue skittles: chain step

side 3

- red skittles: left foot lifted up

- blue skittles: little wheel cart

side 4: push step

Repeat this track twice (1 time for the young children: 4-5 years old).

For the most skilled children add a third round backward skating after stopping in the snowplow position.

This example, with the given indications, allows every child, even if inhomogeneous in abilities, to complete a track and be proud of that.

To make sure that everybody does the exercise correctly is not to be taken for granted if there are many children and they distract easily and when it's their turn they don't know what to do. Make them try various times all together and then one at time as if it was the recital, correct all the faults in this phase.

Final session games.

### Lesson 21 – recital

Lesson dedicated to the recital closing the first period of training (little more than two months). Start with the proprioceptive exercises which also function as warm-up, prepare the track like in the two previous lessons, make the children sit in order recommending them not to make noise and to observe the fellow players who do the exercise.

Singularly make the children do the track with the already given indications: the children less able do just one round, the more able two rounds and a track skating backward, the children with extreme difficulty in executing a step (ex. Chain step) will be helped in that part.

At the end everybody will have done its own task and before letting them go, after the Christmas greetings children should note their progresses made in a little period of time. Coming back from the Christmas holidays the number of the participants should be steady but it is probable that there will be new inscriptions when they return after the Epiphany, you shall organise to manage the new entries.

### **Lessons 22, 23**

The period of nearly 6 months starts, which will lead us at the end of June at the conclusion of the skating grade 0 course.

From the point of view of the introduction of the new steps at the moment it is not needed to put other irons in the fire, proceed to the strengthen of the learned exercises, making the difficulty grow:

1. correction of the movements in the performances;
2. improvement of the attention and maintenance of concentration time ;
3. commitment of arms-hands free from the maintenance of the balance;
4. gain of the capacity of valuation of the movement in passing the ball;
5. disposition in the rink and times of attack and defence;

The proprioceptive exercises continue opening the session functioning also as warm-up. It should be noticed, after nearly two months and a half, an improvement in the execution and a good discipline in following the indications; the sound of the whistle should become a signal which activates a conditioned reflex too, if it is not so it is required to take back the indications of the first lessons and reach these objectives otherwise you will find a high difficulty in disposing the children in the court in a complex and orderly manner. In the phase of the lesson without the roller blades, add also the forward squat walk; it is a bit tiring so make short tracks (+- 15 metres) alternated by normal skating.

1 – Movements correction. The improvement of the balance allows now to ask the execution of the steps in a more proper and correct way, pay attention that the indications will be followed not only in the moment of the exercise, but also in all the other moments of

the session, game included, call continuously the children once they start to distance from the correct performance.

2 – Improvement of attention. It shall be obtained thanks to the tracks which may become more complicated, it shall be used, as well as the skittles, standing with some sticks to oblige the children to squat in the passage, some pieces of rope or other material laid on the ground, to jump, add different types of whistle to indicate: change direction, stop etc...

This “obliges” the children to stay focused so that they can face obstacles and use the ear during the the exercise which shall last for some minutes.

3 – Commitment of the arms. As already indicated, the use of a little ball or a ball to hold between both hands is sufficient for this objective.

4 – Gain of the ability of evaluation of the movement. The first exercise consists of making a child pass **under** an obstacle (stand with a crossbar) asking him to throw the little ball **over** the crossbar in order to be able to take it back right after the obstacle. The exercise includes various difficulties: arms coordination followed by leg flexing (the arms move up, the legs take the body down) force control, sight control of the trajectory, grip of the little ball. Normally, at the begin, children are not able to do a correct execution, it is necessary to insist over time before moving on to exercises in pairs.

5 – Placement in the rink. The exercise is already described in its elementary form, when the positions are reached, we can proceed with the placement of all the four players of one team in the two situations: attack and defence. A rhombus might be created in the attack and for the defence a classic quadrilateral. Important: this exercise doesn't wish to introduce some game strategies, it has the only task to make children recognise two different situations and two different positions in the rink and give them the idea of collaboration in the game. The recognition of the game situation and the prompt repositioning in the rink will become instinctive over time and will be modelled from the strategy, ask the children to pass each other the ball, also when they stop, it accustoms them to look their fellow players and adversaries. Don't forget that: space, movement, speed are not elements consolidated at the age of 5/6 years.

### **Lessons 24, 25**

Given what described in the previous paragraph about the general themes to follow, from the technical point of view of skating we will focus on the consolidation of the following steps:

1. forward skating (stand and squat);
2. one foot skating;
3. forward chain step;
4. backward chain step;
5. snowplow;

1 – forward skating: most of the children can skate at a good speed but some flaws often emerge such as: too stretched out legs and rigid knees. Prepare the tracks to follow doing slalom between the skittles, this moderates the speed and allows to better take care of the

movement. Start insisting on the squat skating, it is a movement which asks articular mobility, balance and a little bit of strength and it benefits the agility.

2 – one foot skating: in the evolved skating, most of the time is spent on only one foot, so it is essential that this position is consolidated otherwise there will be an extreme difficulty in learning new complex steps such as the eagle and cross steps. Try to give confidence with this position through various passages:

- while you're still keep the one foot position (alternating the feet) for few seconds, the proprioceptive exercises should have sufficiently prepared to this position;
- do straight traits on one foot (alternating the feet). The traits are spaced by skittles to which you have to stay as nearer as possible, this is useful to control the direction too;
- dispose a line of skittles initially very distant from each other, ask the children to do the slalom on one foot, the exercise is quite difficult, the distance between the skittles will be regulated consequently;
- it is necessary to make an evaluation on the real ability of the children of doing this skating, if the difficulties stay high it will be useful to dedicate a part of the lesson to exercise with just one roller blade (first the primary foot and then the other). This exercise forces the children to look for their balance on the foot with the roller blade on. It's a tiring exercise for the leg with the roller blade so it doesn't have to last more than 5 or 6 minutes per foot;

3 – forward chain step: dispose a double skittles line, the children do the exercise by widen and tighten the legs in correspondence of the pairs, it helps to give the rhythm and avoid the disorderly skating;

4 – backward chain step: at the moment it is sufficient to do the free skating without tracks, the movement should become natural, pay attention to the extreme divaricated legs;

5 – snowplow: the importance of this exercise is clear, the children lack of this control of the movement and tend to stop and throw themselves on the ground, initially throwing on the ground is useful, it gives self-confidence and teaches to fall, but after some time it becomes a vice so this step must become solid. Use the skittles to signal the line to not overcome, make them try the step at a low speed various times, the children should feel the roller blade drifting very slowly, the step is preparatory to the christiania.

#### The match

At this point the final match substitutes the other games and the children wait impatiently for it. Keep proposing it to them in a very didactic way: the position in the rink to remember, the situations of attack and defence. After the first times, where children are vacant and do not know what to do, the instinct begins to prevail and most of them tries spontaneously to make a goal. It is important now to pay attention on the balance between spontaneity and order in the rink: in this phase the call to order happens during the front changes: lost ball everybody in defence position. In the attack phase leave space even if it may emerge confusion. There an amount of things limiting the ability to attack: uncertain skating, complicated ball grip, inability to stop etc... so leave them play without interrupting them too many times with advices, also because this is the final part of the training and they shall go home tired and happy.



### **Lessons 26, 27, 28, 29**

The proprioceptive exercises opening every lesson, may be lightly modified if and only if the simpler positions are learned: the arrest position on one foot might be skipped, the open-eyed jumps too and continue with the close-eyed jumps which will be surely still problematic.

Remember the 5 themes proposed in the previous lesson which will be the red thread until June. The technician's fantasy in proposing the exercises should obtain the improvement of these 5 skating gaits while the arms might cease to function as sticks of balance.

A fast method to do many exercises with just one disposition of skittles consists of drawing a big rectangle alternating the colour of the skittles on the sides, this permits to:

- skate the perimeter changing the step at every change of the colour;
- skate the perimeter making a tennis ball bounce;
- slalom with two feet and one foot;
- push step and snowplow, positioning the children in line on one side and using the opposite side as line of arrive;
- backward skating with the same disposition;

#### **The match**

The use of the colourful vests during the match gives a feeling of team belonging to the children, maybe in this way you subtract something from the attention they should pay to recognise themselves without the colours on, but especially with little children it helps avoiding confusion.

In this situation most of them start counting the goals to know who wins and who loses, the coach shall soft this tendency by laughing and when he speaks at the beginning or at the end of the session he explains what really matters and which comparisons they shall do: not between one and the others but between what each of them was able to do a month earlier and now. It is important to remark that quite always, the good actions, are the ones in which the ball thrown by a fellow player is received a volley instead of falling on the ground and forming the typical swarm of children trying to catch it.

A detail to notice and to take care during the match are the simplest rules of disposition in the court which generally are taken for granted: many children don't know, for example, how to restart the play after a goal, it is necessary during these hockey simulations thank to the simplified handball, that the similar aspects in each team sport with physical contact between the athletes shall be explained.

### **Lessons 30, 31**

We are still on the improvement of the quality of skating.

The backward chain step is, for most of the children, the most difficult skating among the ones proposed up to now. The reasons are various: the difficulty in maintaining flexed knees, the inversion (in respect to the same forward skating) of the direction of the strength which has to be applied with the legs, the difficulty of changing the position of the feet (points inside, points outside), too hard drifts of the roller blades especially for the lightweight children, the difficulty in combining fluidly all these movements. It could be useful in this cases to make the children feel the gait clutching their feet from the front (the child grasps the shoulders of the instructor) and force the correct movements while

pushing (which requires to the instructor a good elasticity). This practical example often helps to solve the motor scheme rebus which the child is not able to organise on his own. Naturally, the repetition is the one which, through rough and then refined coordination, consolidates the scheme; once noticed the performance of the correct sequence, even if uncertain, it's important to insist immediately so that it will be repeated many times in order to leave a trace for the next lesson.

We have already indicated how to dissociate the position and the use of the arms from the skating movements, for the future use of the stick and the ball, but it necessary to consider the objective that all the movements of skating will be at the service of the play so they must pass from the refined coordination phase (fluid and automatic movements) to the variable availableness (movements adaptation in function of the situation). This phase is trained every time that competition/game exercises are proposed, in other words we switch the attention of the child on the situation exploiting the natural excitement which the play conveys. In the most interesting phases, the movement mistakes tend to emerge again and the gaits less consolidated will be avoided: this behaviour should be constantly corrected to "oblige" the athlete to use all that he had learned and speed up in this way the learning of the highest level of coordination.

At this point of the course, It is useful to add the performance of little jumps during the forward push step; do it slowly and feet united, minimal at the beginning but by rising the speed they will be wider, each child will naturally adapt the effort to their own skating abilities.

At this point of the course, it is necessary to introduce the preparatory movement for the christiania braking.

The presuppositions for the correct performance are the owned ability to flex the knees and control of the torso; you may start by doing tight turns around a skittle, paying attention that, during the turn, the legs, arms and torso position are correct.

Show the children the arrest execution then ask them to do that movement on the place on the right and on the left, successively and carefully ask them to try at a minimum speed.

The experience teaches that there are no big problems to do the movement, if it is so in the next lessons many repetitions will be done, increasing slowly the normal speed.

In the light of that, the final game phase done in every session, gains a greater meaning and, even if leaving the children free, take care of it anyway.

### **Lessons 32, 33, 34**

To improve the skating on one foot, the indispensable key for every movement is the use of another exercise: draw with the skittles two big circles separated 4 or 5 metres from each other (big as the ones of the artistic skating), ask the children to skate externally the circles making an 8 keeping always on the ground the internal roller blade and pushing with the external one. This exercise improves the steadiness and accustom them to move the barycentre from the right to the left and vice versa.

If the children start to absorb the phases of the play (attack, defence, position in the rink etc...) you can use this part of the training to make them individuate their skating problems and how they obstacle them to play: reaching rapidly the position, stopping in the right place, turning etc... This practical exemplification should push them to do the exercises correctly.

If most of the children are able to do the one foot skating (even if not perfectly), start from this lesson to propose another gait taking the idea depending on the difficulty they show in turning: the eagle step.

As we know this step is preparatory to the edge change, but it will be always easier for children to outline the edge change (180 degrees) than keeping the intermediate position (eagle step, 90 degrees). In this case also the lack of the inferior limbs coordination and especially the knees articulation, make things harder;

Start by teaching the eagle position standing still and hold the barre with one hand, there are two types of problems, the articular fluency at the level of the pelvis and the coordination. Make them repeat the movement many times on the left and on the right making sure that:

- the feet stay on the same line with the points externally;
- the knees should flex to lead to the feet position;
- the pelvis turns naturally of 90 degrees;
- the back follows the pelvis in the rotation.

You shall use a game to force this position which is remarkably not instinctive:

dispose the children in pairs (of the same height), one in front of the other, they hold each other's hands or shoulders and ask them to skate in the round. The position should result, even if in a weird way, the play has the advantage of keeping the torso in the correct position for the eagle step.

After many repetitions make them try the movement, generally children don't understand which foot they should lift up, they can't turn their torso and tend to hold the legs straight without flexing the knees. In the most uncoordinated cases it is necessary to hold the child while skating and make him try until he remember the movement. The eagle is also a weird step, there are children who do it naturally and others who fight for a long time, even if after some training most of them learn to turn (180 degrees) without knowing how to keep the intermediate position, it is necessary to insist until they will do it well or the quality of the edge change will never be good.

### **Lessons 35, 36, 37**

In this lesson we introduce some skating exercises borrowed from the proprioceptive exercises performed without roller blades.

The station on one foot and the full united feet jumps with forward gait have already been introduced, now we increase the level of difficulty and propose the following types of jump to perform from standing still and then under command:

1. jump on one roller blade, right and left;
2. jump on both roller blades making a half turn (180 degrees);
3. jump on one roller blade making a half turn (180 degrees);

The first two jumps shall not be too difficult, the third is more demanding.

If the results are discrete it will be possible, in the next lesson, to make them try the first two jumps in motion, for the third jump value one child at time.

The eagle position becomes from this lesson an element on which to insist a lot, at least initially it is necessary to make them repeat the position standing still and holding the

barrier and keeping the balance all by themselves.

The rotation movement of the torso and of the pelvis which assists the opening of the feet is not so natural, we never do it walking or running, so the children don't have it in their own motion schemes, creating the automatism requires a great deal of time and patience for that reason we insist a lot on the simpler modality (standing still) even if every time we make them try also in motion.

### **Lessons 38, 39, 40**

Jumps.

The jumps, which are proposed from three or four lessons up to now, are now added among the gaits to perform during the tracks, the instructor will determine the number of repetitions and the frequency according to the abilities of each child.

The eagle step.

Generally at this point some children are confident with the movement while some others aren't.

We start by giving some physical reference for the performance of the step, every child will have a skittle around which he will turn doing the eagle; it's not a real complication in fact for some children it is a help given that the skittle becomes the focus of the attention and the body follows it.

The exercises done around the skittle function to improve the self-confidence with the movement which includes: feet, pelvis, torso and shoulders, but it is necessary at the same time to make them try the gait keeping the straight trajectory. In fact, as we already mentioned, the eagle is a preparatory movement to the edge change, change which should happen without trajectory and speed modifications. For the movement happens in a eased and efficient way it is necessary that the placement of the opening foot is perfectly aligned and the body turns in total coordination.

The following lessons, until May, keep the described setting aiming the fixed objectives which are:

1. forward skating
  - a. push step;
  - b. chain step;
  - c. squat skating;
  - d. one foot skating;
  - e. crossed step;
  - f. snowplow stop;
  - g. eagle;
  - h. edge change;
2. backward skating
  - a. chain step;
  - b. edge change;

However, it is necessary to add some further instructions. Measures and concerns.

### **One foot skating.**

This step, to perform on both feet, is not generally consolidated especially in younger

children where the motion abilities are inferior. There is a basic problem linked to the movement of the barycentre constituted by the four wheels of one roller blade: the precise movement inside the base is difficult because of the fear to fall toward the outside (toward the opposite part of the lifted foot). The child instinctively keeps the barycentre internally (between the feet) so that he can easily find back the steadiness by lowering again the lifted foot. It results a jumping skating which doesn't give to the foot on the ground the needed ability of control. We can use the following exercise suggested various times last lessons:

Children put the roller blade only on the dominant foot (it's easier to control):

- Forward pushing with a foot without the rollerblade trying to keep a straight trajectory with the rollerblade;
- As said above but doing slalom between the skittles placed at least 1 metre one from the other;
- Skating around the big artistic circle (the one without bushing) both in clockwise and anticlockwise sense;

Change the rollerblade and repeat the exercises.

In these exercises with one rollerblade the child is naturally forced to search the balance on the four wheels; performing external turning trajectories (from the part of the foot with the rollerblade) he slowly experiments this position of the barycentre and eliminates the fear of falling.

### **Snowplow.**

This is a difficult step to learn yet for two reasons:

1. to perform it, strength is required;
2. doing the chain step we acquainted the opposite motion scheme: divaricated rollerblades, points in, feet pressure on the internal line and application of the strength to tighten the legs;

The snowplow employs the ankles and knees articulations, the ankles are also in a position (rollerblades points in the inside) not very suitable to oppose resistance. Wheels at the bottom of the rink may worsen the problem, in a situation of good fluidity the exercise becomes remarkably easier, the opposite situation when there is high friction where strength is required for the younger children for whom it could be an excessive difficulty in the first year of skating.

From the position perspective, it is necessary to get used to the knees flexion and the pressure of the feet on the external line.

Exercises:

### **Appendix**

Proprioceptive exercises

The exercises chosen for a session should always be proposed to perform open-eyed and close-eyed; the duration of each exercise should be of 20 seconds.

- Balance on one foot: it's the easiest exercise, stay balanced on one foot alternating the right and the left, repeat it with eyes closed.

- Variation of the balance on one foot: standing on one foot make the point of the foot on the ground touch the opposite hand lifting simultaneously the other leg backward.
- Christ: on one foot assume the position with the body parallel to the ground and the arms open, alternate the right foot to the left.
- Forward jumps: do little jumps on one foot (marked by the whistle) forward and backward so that to keep the position, it is important that at each jump the stable balance is taken back without moving the foot, the two feet alternate, repeat with eyes closed.
- Lateral jumps: as said above but the movement is on the right, left, repeat with eyes closed.
- Balance on the points: stand on the points of the feet and keep the balance, you can add a difficulty by asking the children to lose the balance and gain it back thanks to the arms.
- Balance on one point: it's the same exercise performed above on one foot, alternating left and right foot.
- Balance on heels: repeat the two points above but with balance on heels.
- In squat position lift slightly a foot keeping the balance.
- Walk keeping the squat position.
- Jump on one foot: 15/20 metres of jumping on one foot, both right and left.
- 360 degrees: standing still position ask the children to indicate with his extended arm any kind of reference, make him close his eyes and ask him to make a turn around himself and stop and the initial position, make him open his eyes and verify where he points the arm.
- Tree rolling on the floor with the body completely distended and the extended arms over the head, both right and left.
- Statue: in pairs a child close the eyes, the other assume a position as he pleases, the first keeping his eyes closed, touches the other to understand what position it is and assume the position perceived; let him open his eyes and verify if he is correct.
- Track: walk on the bench, somersault on the mattress, squat walk, walk on the bench, somersault on mattress, jump on one foot, walk on the little soft mattress , tree rolling.
- Rhythm: sit with outstretched legs, flex a leg while the other outstretch to the rhythm dictated by the trainer.
- Rhythm: after several lessons the rhythm will be given by a metronome, the children will have to look the arm and listen to the noise. It requires attention, sight, ear, coordination of the legs and sense of rhythm.

After further lessons the coach will make the metronome start without telling to the children and they must be careful to start the exercise.

#### Articular elasticity

Simple exercises to improve the wideness of the movements of the articulations.

- Sit on the floor: take a foot with the hands and bring it to the opposite ear. Do it with

- the right and the left.
- Sit on the floor: with crossed legs, push the knees towards the floor so that to widen them as much as possible.
- Sit on the floor: with the legs completely outstretched, try to touch the points of the feet with the hands.

## Games

The games have the purpose of doing exercises in a funny way; in the lessons proposed there are games at the end of every session, the different level of difficulty and of fantasy of the instructor will guide the choice to the most suitable ones.

- Poison ball: it's the classic game (a child tries to eliminate the others by hitting with a ball), you can do it by using a lot of tennis balls so that who throws the ball does not have to take it back continuously; at the beginning skating is difficult, the game could result slow and and not funny.
- Tag: the children disposed along a line give each other a tag of a fruit, the wolf-child asks to eat a fruit and the child with that tag run away and the wolf tries to catch him.
- The instructor catches the children: this one and the following are funny games and very efficient to give the instructor the measure of the learning of skating; the children run away and the instructor catches them giving a little bit of advantage, little by little that the children improve it will result more difficult to catch them. An interesting variation propose that the caught children, to turn back to the game, have to go in a zone marked by skittles skating in squat position.
- The children catch the technician: the opposite of the above game, at the beginning it will be absolutely simple for the technician to not be caught even in tight spaces, at the end of the year he will hardly resist more than ten seconds;
- Relay race: you can organise them in different ways: simple turns of the court, skittles tracks, obstacles etc... but the passage of the baton stays the same. It's a game in which there are two teams and the coach has to pay attention that they are equally able, at the end of every relay the winner team receive a handicap for the next turn (ex. extension of the track), in this way all the children will win.
- Throwing tennis balls: if there are a lot of tennis balls it is fun to let them throw in the rink and make them take back by the children.
- Four square: another classic, 4 skittles disposed in a square of a couple metres side, four children occupy the corners and switch their positions, a child in the middle of the square tries to occupy a free corner during the switches.  
You can also use more than 4 skittles and extend the side of the square increasing the abilities;
- Pushing in couples: place the children in couples of similar height, one child takes the other for the hips and pushes him while the other keeps both rollerblades on the ground, after a turn they invert the positions.
- Little wheel cart: as the previous exercise but the pushed child is in squat position.
- Double little wheel cart: it's a quiet complicated exercise to propose at the end of

the year. A pair of similar height in squat position (see the picture) keeps on balance sitting each of them on the rollerblade of the fellow player, a third child pushes them. The roles exchange after a pair of turns.

- handball: this is the first team game that it's proposed with specific rules. It is useful to give the sense of playing in the rink to the children: understand their own position, the one of the fellow players and of the adversaries; introduce also the two basic moments of the team game: the attack and the defence. You can do it with a variable number of children per team but, generally, no less than three and no more than six. It's a handball very simplified, it is sufficient that children learn how to pass the ball and to take back the basic positions when they have to defend. They receive a point when a team take the ball in a specific zone of the rink, marked with the skittles, after at least 3 passages. It is necessary a little bit of good sense to maintain a right balance between order in the rink and fun.
- Timed rack turns, single or chase.

#### Ability evaluation.

1. \*Station on one foot with eyes closed: XX seconds;
2. Jumps on the place on both feet: number of jumps in 10 seconds;
3. \*Jumps on the place on both feet with edge change: number of jumps in 10 seconds;
4. Push step: 1 turn track (20x40) done behind the goals with 4 skittles to mark the small corners of the penalty areas, seconds XX;
5. Forward chain step: 1 track turn (20x40) behind the goals with 4 skittles to mark the low corners of the penalty areas, seconds XX;
6. \*left foot forward skating; hold, mark the track with the part of the push and the beginning of the gait on one foot, seconds XX;
7. \*right foot forward skating; hold as for the left foot, XX seconds;
8. Squat skating: 20 metres, XX seconds;
9. Backward chain step: 30 metres, XX seconds;
10. Forward crossed left step: 4 turns on artistic circle, XX seconds;
11. Forward crossed right step: 4 turns on artistic circle, XX seconds;
12. Left, right eagle step: slalom between two parallel lines of skittles separated 2 metres and long 15 metres each, skittles separated of 2 metres, eagle step around the skittles alternating left and right;
13. Edge change: maintaining the speed and the trajectory, do a first straight track of 30 metres at the maximum gait, repeat the same track at the maximum gait but with two edge changes, the first at 10<sup>th</sup> metre (forward-backward) and the second at 20<sup>th</sup> metre (forward-backward) and record the difference in seconds between the two times;
14. Snowplow stop: stop space, 20 metre track done at the maximum performance and braking from the marked point, record the length of the space of arrest in centimetres;

\*The exercises marked with an asterisk have to be proposed three times recording the best result.



For all the exercises:

- In case of fall, repeat the exercise after a break.
- The correctness of the movement must be valued although it is always intercepted by the time employed; ex. The squat skating, if not well performed it is better not to assign that parameter.
- In the track turns it's difficult that children stay focused for a maximal performance, nearly 50 seconds needed are far too long, so it is necessary to push them for all the time so that they will do the maximum effort.

This form is not linked to the necessity of the evaluation of the improvement of the children in time, it is useful to value the quality of the skating in a group of children after nearly 9 months of lessons in the first year. The aim during the time is to keep steady or improve the quality of the teaching and value the progress of quality due to the introduction of new methods and exercises.

For the statistics evaluation will be correct, it is necessary that:

- the number of the lessons taken every year shall be more or less the same;
- the conduction of the lessons is as it was proposed;
- the children valued have taken part at at least 80% of lessons;
- the measures and the modalities indicated for each exercise shall be perfectly respected;
- if possible, do the test always in the same facility;

Variations of methodology and exercises must be signed every year to highlight improvements/worsening of the reached quality.



# Skills Test Book


Evaluation Forms for the SKATE  
Project.

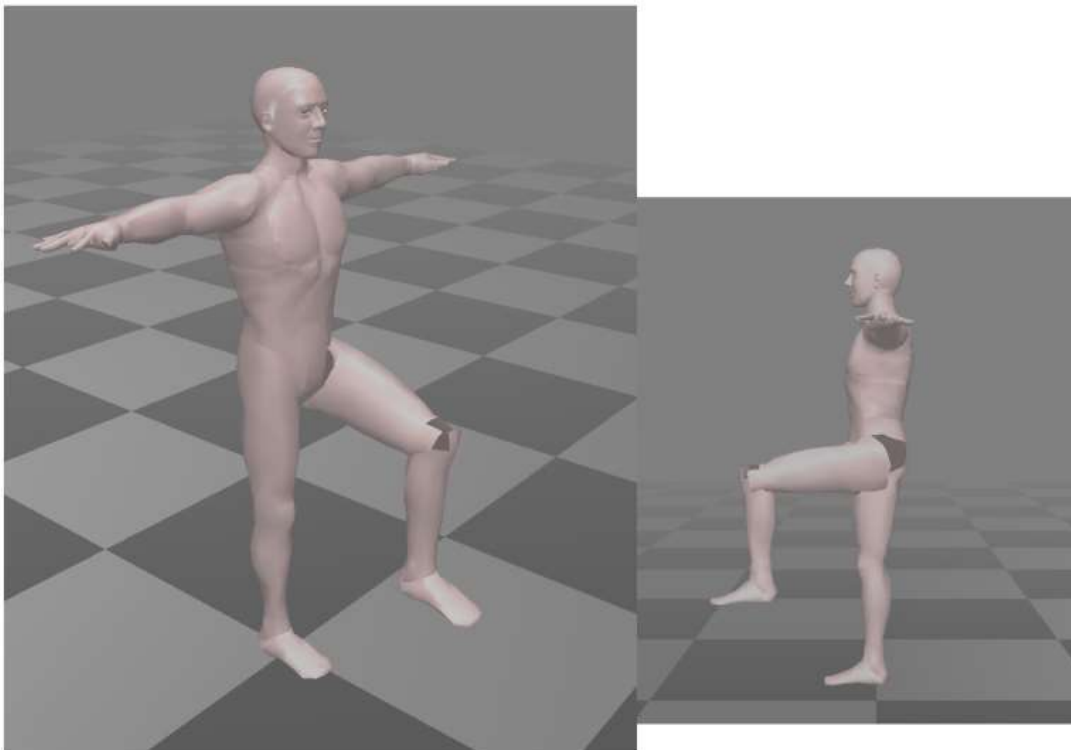


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## Equilibrium


A1

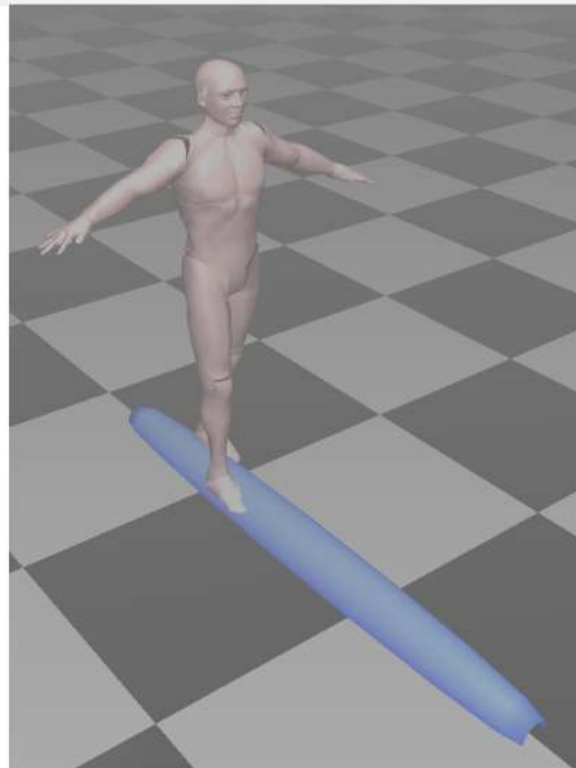
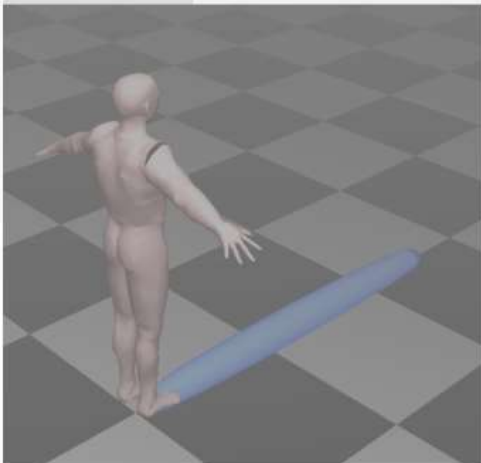
|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Objective</b>   | Test the statics equilibrium  |
| <b>Materials</b>   | A. Wood/metal axis cm (L x W x H) 30 x 2 x 2<br>B. Crono<br>  |
| <b>Description</b> | The subject is positioned on the axis with one foot (without skates) and with the eyes closed, helping himself to stand up leaning on the wall. At the teach start kid detach himself from the wall and will try to keep the balance as long as possible.<br>Test time will be stopped when the subject touches the ground or the wall with any part of the body. |
| <b>Measurement</b> | 4 tests, 2 for each foot.   |
| <b>Evaluation</b>  | Evaluation from 1 to 5: 1<1,5 sec; 2 if between 1,5 and 3 seconds, 3 from 3 to 5; 4 from 5 to 8; 5 if >8 seconds  |



## Equilibrium

A2

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Objective</b>   | Test the dinamic equilibrium  |
| <b>Materials</b>   | Equilibrium Axis cm (L x W x H) 400 x 5 x 10<br>   |
| <b>Description</b> | The subject is positioned on the axis with both feet, helping himself supporting with the side wall. On the teacher signal, immediately release the hand from the wall to make a single-step move to the front. |
| <b>Measurement</b> | One test counting the touches and the falls.  |
| <b>Evaluation</b>  | Evaluation from 1 to 5:<br>1. no touches or falls<br>2. 2 touches<br>3. 3/4 touches and or a fall<br>4. 5 touches and falls<br>5. More tan 5 touches and or falls   |

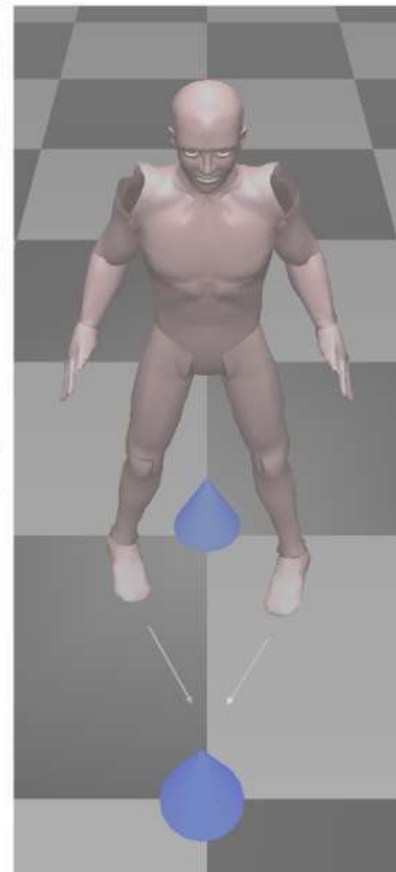
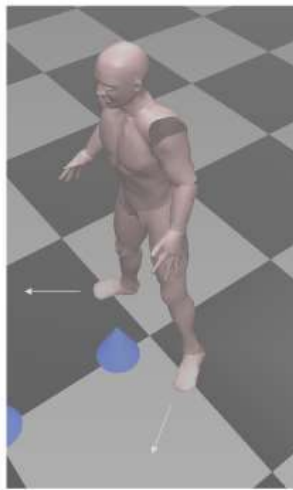
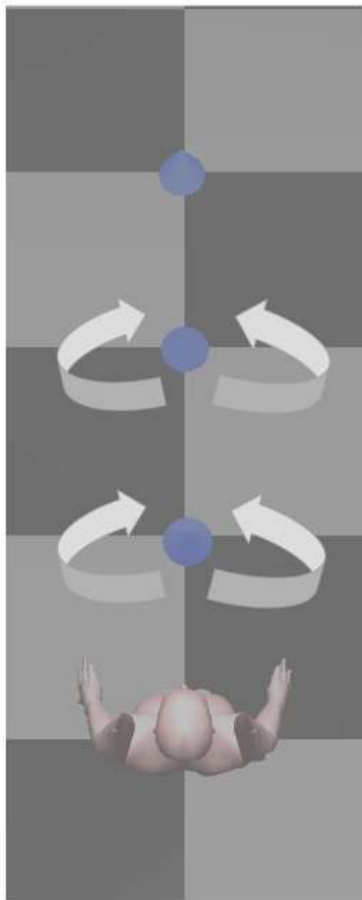


| <b>Forward Slide</b> |   | <b>B</b> |
|----------------------|---|----------|
| <b>Objective</b>     | Test the efficiency of the impulse.   |          |
| <b>Materials</b>     | A. Cones enough for 15m<br>B. Cronometer.<br>C. Skates  |          |
| <b>Description</b>   | Starting with natural side foot, after a 5 meters run-up, the kid skates forward (having the cones as reference for the way and the change of the foot – but not mandatory). Distance cone to cone: 1m. |          |
| <b>Measurement</b>   | Number of foot changes to finish the 15m.   |          |
| <b>Evaluation</b>    | Seconds to make the course and number of the steps done.  |          |

## Chain Slide

C

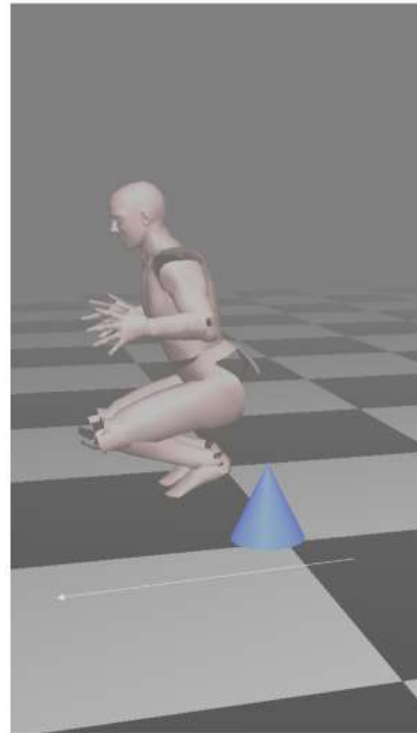
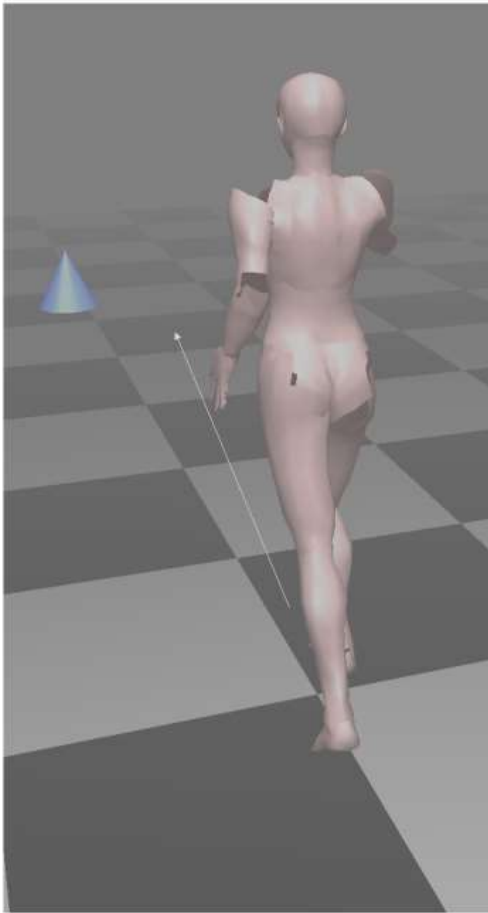
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| <b>Objective</b>   | Test the Chain Slide style.  |
| <b>Materials</b>   | A. 10 Cones.<br>B. Cronometer.<br>C. Skates  |
| <b>Description</b> | After a 5 meter run-up, the kid skates in chain slide with the cone between the legs making the correct movement on every cone |
| <b>Measurement</b> | Time to make the entire circuit (10meters)   |
| <b>Evaluation</b>  | Seconds to realize the course.   |



## Bend Slide

D

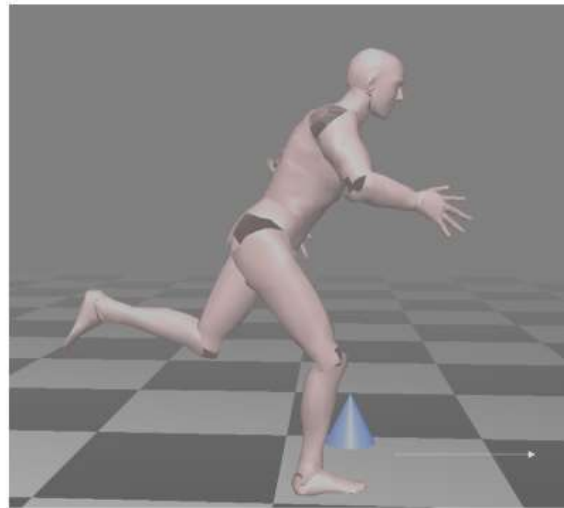
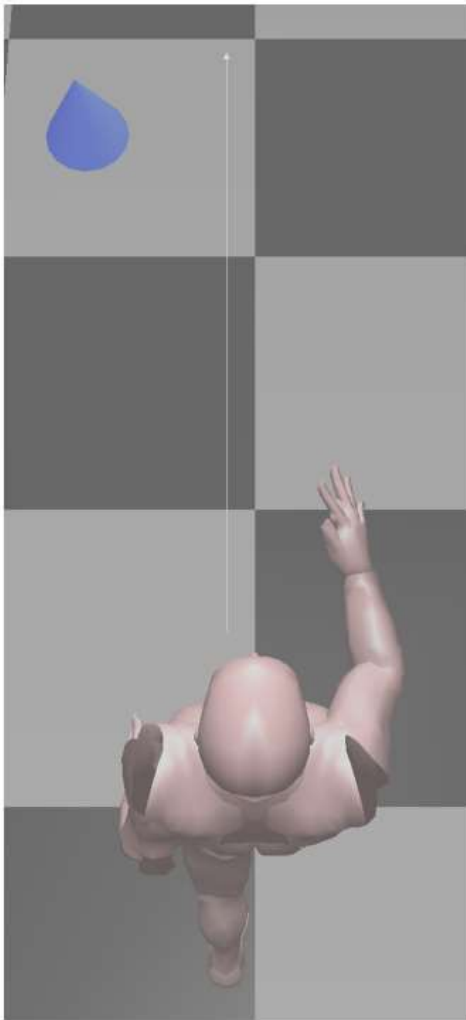
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|--------------------|---|
| <b>Objective</b>   | Test Bend slide and equilibrium   |
| <b>Materials</b>   | A. 1 Cones.<br>B. Skates  |
| <b>Description</b> | After a 10 meter run-up, at the cone, the kid skates taking blend position.   |
| <b>Measurement</b> | How far kid goes (m) from the cone and the accuracy of the movement.  |
| <b>Evaluation</b>  | Evaluation 1 (bad) to 5 based on : mobility, equilibrium and meters reached by the kid. Suggested metric for meters: 1 if the kid reach 2 meters, 2 for 5m, 3 for 8m, 4 for 10m, 5 for 15m. |



## Skate on one foot

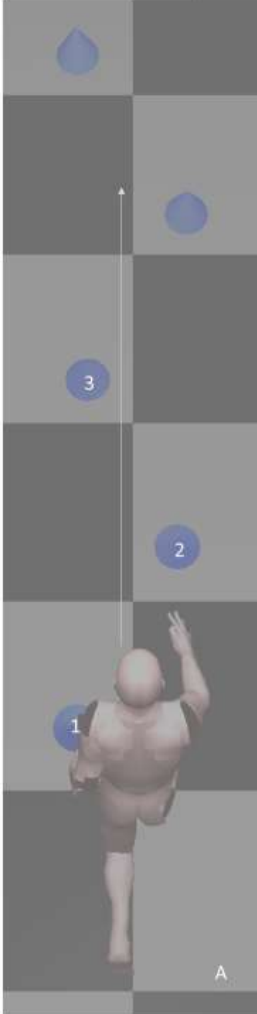
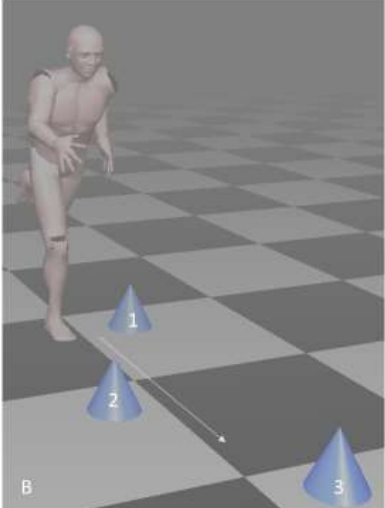

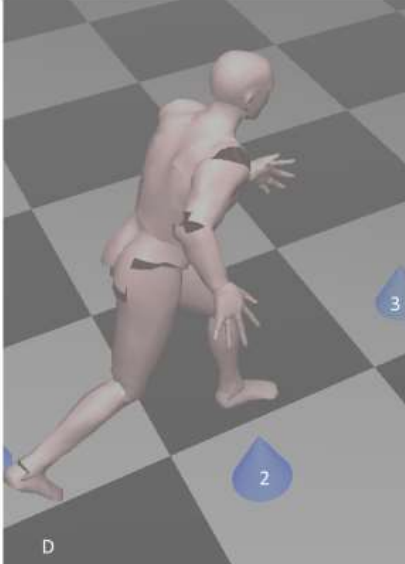

E1

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Objective</b>   | Test the dominion of imbalance.  |
| <b>Materials</b>   | A. 1 Cones.<br>B. Skates   |
| <b>Description</b> | 1. After a 10 meter run-up the kid skates on only one foot, starting at the cone. Use both feet. |
| <b>Measurement</b> | How far kid goes (m) from the cone.  |
| <b>Evaluation</b>  | Meters done using both feet. ( 2 tests )   |


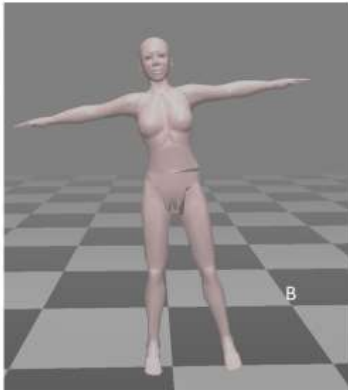
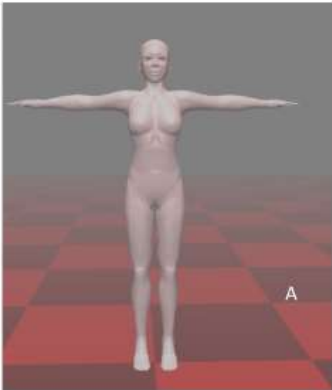
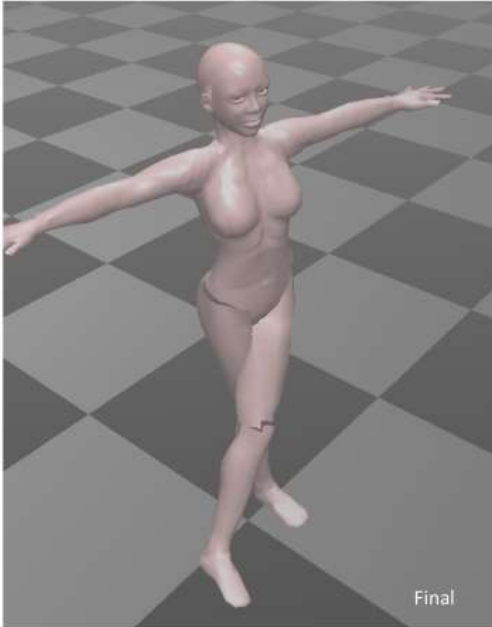
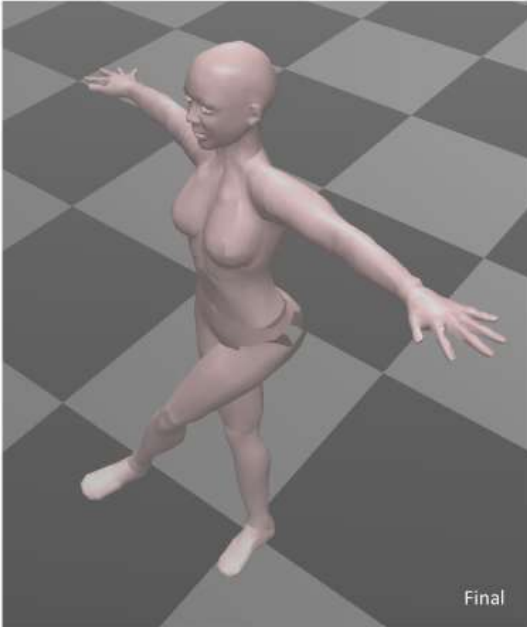




| <b>Skate on one foot</b> |  | <b>E2</b> |
|--------------------------|--|-----------|
| <b>Objective</b>         | Test coordination and equilibrium of the child.  |           |
| <b>Materials</b>         | A. 12 Cones.<br>B. Cronometer.<br>C. Skates  |           |
| <b>Description</b>       | After a 5m run-up, starting with natural side foot, the kid skates from cone to cone, changing on each cone the push foot. Distance cone to cone: 1m |           |
| <b>Measurement</b>       | Time to make the entire circuit (12 meters)  |           |
| <b>Evaluation</b>        | Time to make the entire course.  |           |

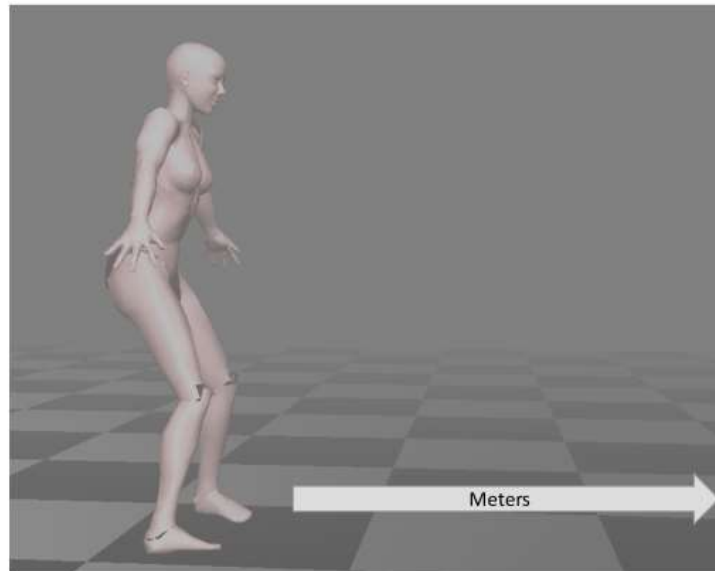
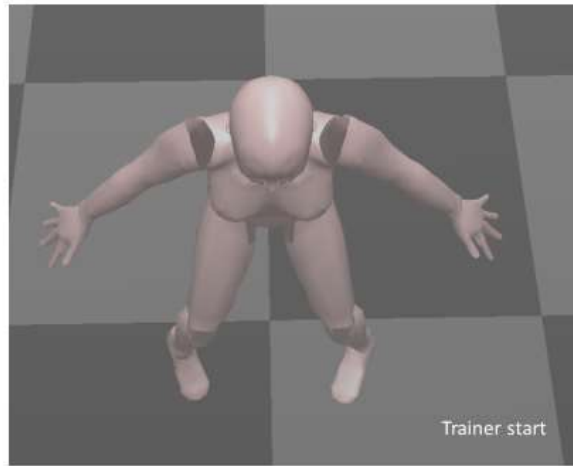
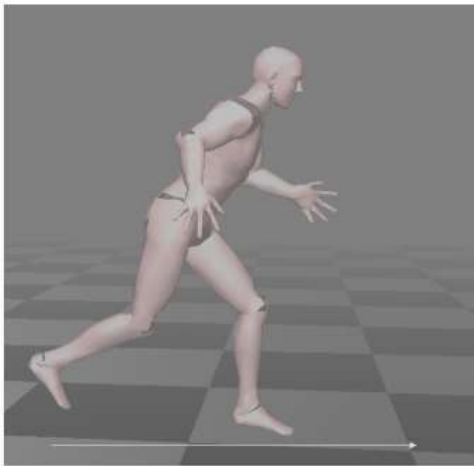
| <b>Cross step</b>  |  | <b>F</b> |
|--------------------|--|----------|
| <b>Objective</b>   | Test the execution of the gesture.   |          |
| <b>Materials</b>   | A. Skates  |          |
| <b>Description</b> | The kid should cross (2 times, both legs) the leg simulating the cross step. |          |
| <b>Measurement</b> | The trainer will evaluate the execution and the equilibrium.                 |          |
| <b>Evaluation</b>  | Evaluate the accuracy of the movement and the equilibrium from 1(bad) to 5.  |          |

## Snowplough

G

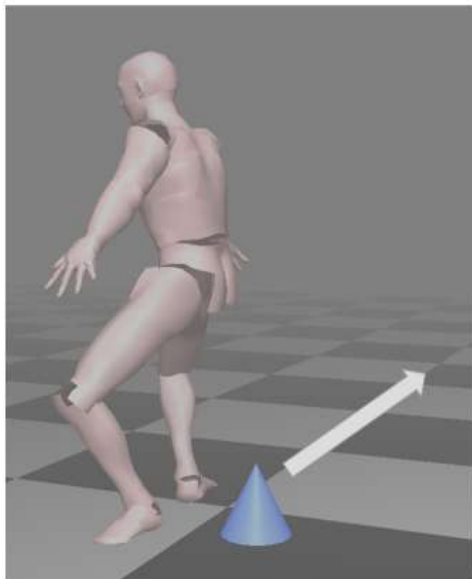
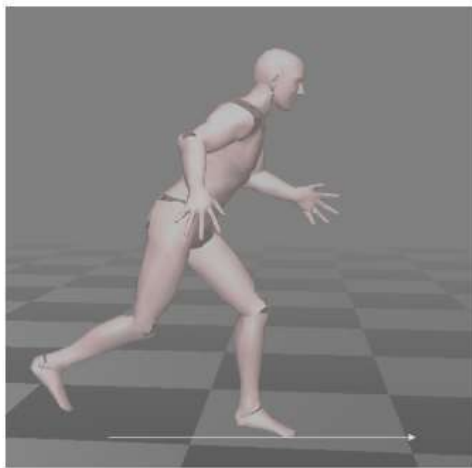
|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Objective</b>   | Test the dominion of the brake with snowplough position.                              |
| <b>Materials</b>   | A. Skates   |
| <b>Description</b> | 1. After a 10 meter run-up the trainer must scream a start of the break to the child. |
| <b>Measurement</b> | The meters to reach the stop.   |
| <b>Evaluation</b>  | The meters from the teacher's signal to stop.   |



## Duckwalk

H

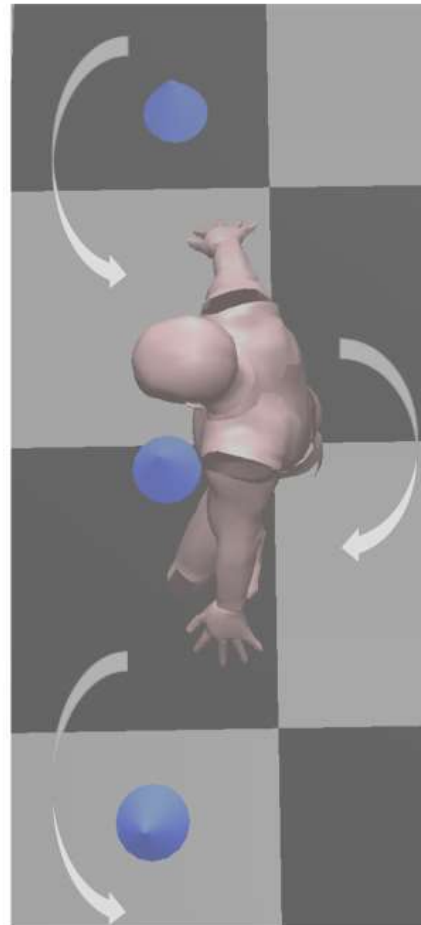
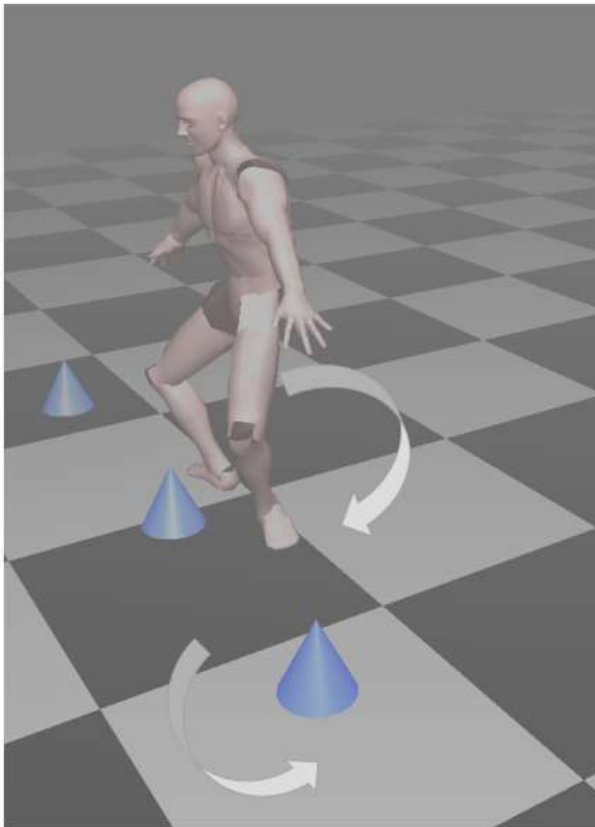
|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Objective</b>   | Testing the equilibrium and flexibility to realize the figure   |
| <b>Materials</b>   | A. Skates<br>B. Cones   |
| <b>Description</b> | 1. After a 10 meter run-up, at the cone the child will start to slide in duckwalk position. Both sides. |
| <b>Measurement</b> | The meters until the stop of the slide.   |
| <b>Evaluation</b>  | The meters from the start of the movement (should be at the cone)                                       |



## Change Direction

11

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>Objective</b>   | Test the dominion of imbalance.   |
| <b>Materials</b>   | A. 6 Cones.<br>B. Skates  |
| <b>Description</b> | 1. After a 10 meter run-up the kid skates and start to turn side using duckwalk on each cone.<br>Delimitate the way of the circuit.<br>2. Distance of the cones 1,5m. |
| <b>Measurement</b> | Time to complete the circuit.   |
| <b>Evaluation</b>  | Time to complete the course.  |



## Change Direction

12

|                    |  |
|--------------------|--|
| <b>Objective</b>   | Test the dominion of imbalance.  |
| <b>Materials</b>   | A. 6 Cones.<br>B. Skates   |
| <b>Description</b> | 1. After a 10 meter run-up, the kid skates and start to turn side jumping and making a 180° round mantaining the skate in parallel.<br>2. Distance of the passageway: 2m. Total distance of the circuit: 15m |
| <b>Measurement</b> | Number of turning of the kid.  |
| <b>Evaluation</b>  | Number of jumps to finish the course.  |

