

# FUN, FITNESS, AND FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT PATTERNS

Age: 6 - 8 years (females)

6 - 8/9 years (males)

Participants with an intellectual disability can enter at any age (with or without support person)

In this stage, participants continue to develop and master the fundamental movement patterns in a multi-gymnastics (i.e. all gym disciplines) environment. They will also begin to learn gymnastic sport skills. Skill development programs should be well-structured, positive and FUN!

This is a “sampling stage”, that is, participants should sample a range of sport activities, and gymnastics should be one of the sports for all! There is little pressure to achieve, as participants have an opportunity to enjoy sport, have fun, and develop fundamental motor skills. The skills that participants acquire in FUNdamentals gymnastics programs will be beneficial for both competitive and recreational activities in any sport and will enhance their quality of life and health. During this stage, many participants will move from gymnastics to other sport programs.

Some participants will show an interest in more advanced gymnastics programs. These participants will be streamed into special programs that suit their ability and which may include preparation for competition or Special Olympics. All advanced programs should still include participation in at least two of the gym sports. The basic premise of Fun, Fitness and Fundamentals does not change, but more advanced classes will be of slightly longer duration, with a higher intensity of activity. There is no participation in formal competitions during this stage.

## What qualities will be developed in this stage?

- The Fundamental Movement Patterns gain quality, definition and refinement as the basis for building gym-specific skills.
- Fun activities and games should be used to develop physical capacities (basic strength, postural control, core strength and flexibility), as well as agility, balance and coordination
- Basic skills should be introduced for all gym disciplines
- A variety of fast-moving, active games should be used to develop power and endurance, as well as linear, lateral, multi-directional and segmental speed
- Cognitive development: Recall/memory, concentration, problem-solving
- Participants develop an acceptance of gym rules, related to safety and accepted social behaviour
- Sport ethics are introduced (fairness, acceptance, right to participate)
- Psycho/socio development: Desire to learn and to be active, self-confidence to try, self-expression and group social skills, self comparison and task focus

## What does NOT belong in a FUNdamentals gymnastics program?

- Excessive repetitions of exercise for conditioning
- Risky positions and exercises - hurdlers stretch, candle stand, head rotations, hyper-extensions of joints, inverted bridges without legs or hands raised, jumping jacks
- Inflexible teaching approaches
- High emphasis on comparison of physical and motor abilities; testing programs that encourage comparison with others
- Excessive skill training activities
- Selectivity and focus on more skilled participants

## Performance Qualities

There is no formal competition in this stage.

Activities and programming should be designed to allow participants to perform in informal settings to develop:

- Social skills – communication, relationships, cooperation, leadership
- Self-expression
- Confidence
- Self-esteem
- Love of performing

## Amount of Time in Gymnastics

In this stage, some participants may be guided into programs that may lead into competitive stream in future years.

- Recreational gymnastics programs: one class per week for 1 to 1.5 hours
- More advanced programs: two or three classes per week for 1.5 to 3 hours per class.
- **Participants in this stage should not train more than 6-8 hours per week. Younger participants in this stage should train 6 or fewer hours per week.**
- Number of weeks per year: up to 36-40
- All children should continue to participate in at least 3-4 other activities on a regular basis.

## Role of Parents

- Parents should introduce participants to a range of activities, provide encouragement and show interest in participating in sport and physical activity
- Usually parents make the decision to register the participant for gymnastics; to keep the child busy and expending energy, to help with socialization and to develop fundamental skills.
- Parents should ensure that a balance is maintained with school, other sport and non-sport activities
- Parents should be prepared to transport participants to activities, and to pay for these activities

## Monitoring

- Fundamental movement patterns and skill development
- Social skills
- Emotional and behavioural stabilities
- Cognitive abilities
- Monitor growth by taking standing height measurements on the birthday and recording for future reference. As well, shoulder, back and hip flexibility can be monitored. (see measurement protocol in Appendix)

## Events and Activities

- In-class demonstrations and sharing
- Performances for other gymnasts and parents: “Rou-tinys” and mini-displays, holiday shows
- Local public demonstrations and performances
- Recognition - awards, rewards and achievement
- Fun participatory events: Ribbon days, skill demos
- Becoming “little helpers” at club activities and events

**GCG programs for this stage:** Participants in this stage may be working in the early levels of the CANGYM family of programs. Participants in advanced programs may progress to the intermediate levels of CANGYM.

*Up Down All Around* and other provincially endorsed school-based programs

**Type of Coach:** Certified GCG NCCP Foundations to Gymnastics coach

