

PLAY

Physical Literacy Assessment for Youth



CS4L
PHYSICAL
LITERACY

fun

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What is Physical Literacy?

We know that today's children and youth are much less active than in the past. In the interests of their long-term health and wellness, we need to help them become more active and stay active.

The first step is to help them become physically literate.

Only seven percent of Canadian children get enough daily exercise.

The average child spends six hours a day in front of a screen.

People who are physically literate have the competence, confidence and motivation to enjoy a variety of sports and physical activities. As a result, they are more likely to stay active.

But what is physical literacy exactly?

Like reading and arithmetic, which develop a literary or numerical vocabulary, physical literacy develops a "**movement vocabulary**" of *fundamental movement skills* and *fundamental sport skills*.

These skills are the basis for moving with competence and confidence in every kind of activity environment (on the ground, both indoor and outdoor; in and on water; on snow and ice; in the air).

But physical literacy is not just about learning basic fundamental movement skills. Physical literacy is also about having the competence, confidence and motivation to apply your fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills in new situations.

To make this happen, you need more than just a wide range of movement skills. You need a proper learning environment, provided by a parent, coach or leader.

The environment should encourage free play, new activities, opportunities for working together, freedom to ask questions and a supportive socio-moral environment.

In schools, once children have begun to learn literacy and numeracy skills, they are tested and graded on their level of comprehension. Parents receive report cards so they can help improve their children's academic abilities.

Shouldn't we assess their physical abilities in the same way?

This is the purpose behind PLAY.

What is PLAY?

PLAY stands for Physical Literacy Assessment for Youth. It's a collection of workbooks, forms and score sheets, which comprise the tools designed to assess physical literacy in children and youth.



PLAY includes these tools:

PLAYfun

Used by a trained professional* to assess a child in 18 fundamental skills/tasks, such as running, throwing, kicking and balance.

PLAYbasic

A simplified version of **PLAYfun** that can be administered quickly by a trained professional to provide a snapshot of a child's level of physical literacy.

PLAYself

Used by children and youth to assess their own physical literacy.

PLAYparent

Used by parents of school-aged children to assess their child's level of physical literacy.

PLAYcoach

Used by coaches, physiotherapists, athletic therapists, exercise professionals and recreation professionals to record their perceptions of a child's level of physical literacy.

PLAYinventory

A form used to record and track a child's leisure-time activities throughout the year.

PLAYself, **PLAYparent** and **PLAYcoach** are not skill assessments; they are forms used to supplement the skill assessments, **PLAYbasic** and **PLAYfun**.

The **PLAY** tools were developed by Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) with the expertise of Dr. Dean Kriellaars, of the University of Manitoba.

Use the **PLAY** tools to assess individuals aged seven and up and to track physical literacy over time.

*Trained professionals: coaches, physiotherapists, athletic therapists, exercise professionals and individuals trained in movement analysis.

What is PLAYfun?

PLAYfun provides an assessment of key movement skills performed by the child. The tool itself is made up of 18 tasks that cover the child's physical abilities. Each ability is graded on a four-point rubric with the following categories: Initial, Emerging, Competent and Proficient.

Who can use PLAYfun: Since PLAYfun involves the assessment of specific skills, the evaluator must have some education in movement and motion analysis. This could include NCCP-certified coaches, exercise professionals, physiotherapists, athletic therapists or other sport and recreation practitioners. These individuals must have the knowledge to accurately assess the child's technique, and must be able to identify gaps in the child's development when assessing each task.

For a parent: PLAYfun provides a thorough assessment of your child's skills and abilities. By having a trained professional assess your child using PLAYfun, you will gain insight into your child's strengths, weaknesses and physical development. Use this information to create goals and track improvement.

Learn about the other PLAY tools at:
play.physicalliteracy.ca

For a coach, physiotherapist, athletic therapist, exercise professional or recreation professional: Use PLAYfun in conjunction with the other PLAY tools to create a baseline assessment of the child's current level of physical literacy. You and the child should mutually establish *realistic goals* (where the child wants to be) and a manageable process to reach them.

Physical Literacy Assessment for Youth

Directions

1. Ask the child to perform each of the tasks listed in the first column of the PLAYfun Form.
2. Observe the child performing the skill and rate each skill based on the four categories provided (Initial, Emerging, Competent and Proficient).
3. **Take action :** View a list of calls-to-action in your PLAYfun Workbook or on our website at:
play.physicalliteracy.ca
4. Remember to use the PLAYfun Tool along with the other PLAY tools to see all perspectives of the child's level of physical literacy.

Additional Information:

Confidence

On the right hand side of the tool, you'll see a column labelled "Confidence". In this column, indicate whether the child had low, medium or high confidence when performing each task.

Comprehension

The comprehension boxes are used to track the child's knowledge of each task and confidence while performing them.

Prompt: If the child needed the assessor to give them an additional prompt (e.g. "Go on. You can do it."), or to incite them to perform the skill/task, place a tick in the "Prompt" column.

Mimic: If the child waited for one of their peers to perform the skill first, place a tick in the "Mimic" column.

Describe: If the child asked the assessor to describe the skill/task, place a tick in the "Describe" column.

Demo: If the child asked the assessor to demonstrate the skill/task, place a tick in the "Demo" column.



fun workbook

In this section, you'll learn how to use and score the **PLAYfun** Tool, and how to match the child's score with the appropriate call-to-action.

To simplify things, we've broken down **PLAYfun** into five subsections:

1. Running
2. Locomotor
3. Object Control – Upper Body
4. Object Control – Lower Body
5. Balance, Stability & Body Control

For each subsection, the workbook provides a framework to use the **PLAYfun** Form.

The framework will describe:

- Equipment needed
- Instructions (how to administer)
- Definitions of Initial, Emerging, Competent and Proficient
- Examples of how a hypothetical assessor may have answered each question. Refer to these examples if you are looking for additional insight.

As you progress through the workbook, you will determine a score for each section. Match this score with the list of calls-to-action.

Each call-to-action suggests solutions to improve the child's level of physical literacy.

It's all about finding ways to engage the child and improve their level of physical literacy. We are dealing with the child's well-being, and they deserve our full support.

Before using the **PLAYfun** Tool, read the following sections while reviewing a copy of the form

Did you know - the **PLAYfun** Tool can be filled out online at play.physicalliteracy.ca

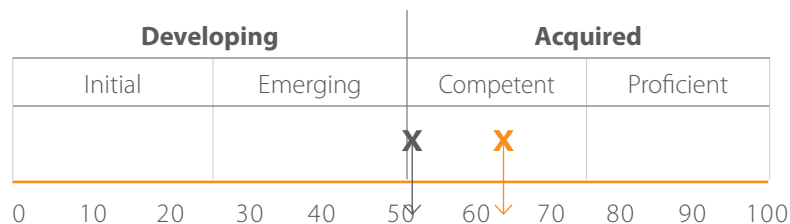
Important

Important: Each question uses a 100mm scale so that the assessor may place a mark anywhere along the scale within each box. This allows the assessor to be more specific when defining the child's ability for each task.

Remember that the top score for proficient is the very best anyone could be at the skill, regardless of age.

Example: This assessor has placed a black mark on the left-most side of the "Competent" box to identify that Child A has only just acquired the skill. This score is worth 51/100.

An orange mark has been placed farther to the right side of the "Competent" box to indicate that Child B is more competent than Child A, who has just acquired the skill. This second score would be worth 63/100.



Running

Running is the foundation of physical preparation for many sports and is a competency that should be as proficient as possible. An individual's running skill can mature and continue to improve well into adulthood, but the sooner it's properly developed, the better!



Framework

The Running Score is based on the following questions and their rating systems:

Equipment

For this task, you'll need 4 pylons (each 3 metres apart in a square formation)

Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Mature running form not present
- Person is substantially overshooting or undershooting pylon placements
- Slipping, tripping and/or stumbling is present

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Rounds corners with numerous steps
- While changing direction, shuffle or stutter-steps are present
- Mature running form present

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- May partially round corners, taking one extra step to change direction
- Most of the corners are consistent in lateral shifts in body direction
- Speed is at a jogging rate or faster

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Accelerates rapidly
- Performs a controlled lateral shift at each pylon with minimal footwork
- All four corners exhibit controlled and powerful changes of direction and speed
- Speed is maximal

Q1 Run a square

“I want you to run a square around the pylons. I want you to run a square as best you can. Ready? Run now.”

Running

Q1

Run a square

Assessment Example

Josephine is a 10-year-old girl learning to play basketball. Her coach, Sylvain, wants to know how physically literate Josephine is, so he decides to use the *PLAYfun* Tool to assess her fundamental skills. Sylvain asks Josephine to do the first running task: Run a square. As Josephine performs the task, Sylvain notices some weaknesses in her technique, and some gaps in her development.

The first thing Sylvain notices is Josephine's acceleration. When Josephine accelerates, she moves with her head down and body leaning forward. She's not able to get off to a quick start because of her undeveloped starting technique. He also notices how her arms flap out to the sides.

By the time Josephine has reached the first pylon, her body has straightened up and she has picked up speed. Her speed causes her to overshoot the pylon, and as she comes back around to the next pylon, she overshoots that one as well. It is clear that Josephine lacks the control to round each cone with measured steps. The inconsistency in her pace, from a slow, staggered acceleration to a more lumbering run also takes away from her control and technique.

These signs are indications that Josephine's accelerating, running and turning abilities are at an "Initial" stage. Sylvain believes Josephine will show smoother technique when running in straight lines for a longer distance, as she does have the tendency to straighten out as she picks up speed, but for this activity Sylvain places a mark on the left side of "Initial".

Developing					Acquired					
Initial		Emerging			Competent		Proficient			
X										
0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

Q2

Run there and back

“I want you to run a straight line to the pylon, stop, turn around and run back. I want you to run to the line, turn around and run back as best you can. Ready? Run now.”

Equipment

For this task, you'll need 2 pylons (5 metres apart)

Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Stumbles, slips or trips repeatedly
- Does not exhibit flow in transitions
- Movement is disjointed
- Oversteps lines
- Slow speed
- Running form missing key features

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Arm movements and leg movements only synchronized in some phases, not all
- Sliding stop or shuffle-step stop
- Basic features of mature running form observed
- Rounded turnaround is evident

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- Motion is along a straight line there and back
- Good speed (jog to run)
- Pivoting turn that is not fluid or quick, but is successful
- Mature running form is evident

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Sprint speed
- Accelerates rapidly
- Decelerates in control to a momentary stop
- Pivots and changes direction in a continuous manner
- Arms and legs used purposefully for propulsion

Assessment Example

After running Josephine through the first task, Sylvain decides to see how she does at the second task: Run there and back. Sylvain sees that while Josephine still has some developing to do, her technique is stronger when she runs in a straight line for a longer distance.

As Josephine accelerates, she still tends to lean forward and flap her arms, but as she gets going she runs with a more upright posture and uses her arms more for propulsion than for flailing. However, Sylvain sees that as she approaches the pylon and begins to slow in preparation for turning, she comes to a stuttering stop and almost oversteps the line.

Sylvain recognizes that Josephine has some developmental areas that definitely need work and refinement, but he's also aware that she has some strengths in her technique as well. He places a mark near the halfway mark under “Emerging”.

Q3

Run, jump, then land on two feet

“I want you to run, jump at the pylon and then land on two feet. I want you to run, jump and land on two feet the best you can – just like a long jump. Ready? Go now.”

Equipment

For this task, you'll need 2 pylons (5 metres apart)

Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Not able to sequence the leap from one foot during the run
- Very tentative in all sequencing of movements
- Twists trunk or performs a twirling action
- Lands on a single foot
- Low speed and distance travelled

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Segmented action between the run, jump and landing
- Exhibits offset landing or multiple contacts on landing

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- Able to leap from one foot to land on two feet
- Limited distance travelled
- Slow running speed (jog)
- Transition from jog to leap may not result in loss of speed
- Upper body remains vertical during entire task to ensure landing

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Able to accelerate to a good speed and shift from a single leg (hop) with smooth transition
- No loss of speed
- Powerfully drives body upward with hip action of opposite leg and toe off of planted foot
- Aerial phase shows re-orientation of body for landing with arms moving forward
- Very good distance travelled
- Well-controlled landing on two feet

Running

Assessment Example

Janice coaches the athletics team at a local elementary school. She wants to know how physically literate the children are, especially those who plan to participate in the upcoming track and field meet, so she decides to use the *PLAYfun* Tool to assess their movement skills. Janice has a group of eight-year-olds do the third running task: Run, jump, then land on two feet.

Janice is immediately impressed by Peter's technique. He is not tentative during his run and he leaps off of one foot well. Though he sometimes lands on one foot slightly before the other, Peter is pretty coordinated in terms of getting both feet involved in the landing.

One thing Janice notices, however, is that while Peter does have a fast run up, he doesn't get as much distance on the jump as Janice thinks he should. She sees that, though he lands fairly square, Peter tends to twist his trunk a bit when he's in the air before he lands. Although Peter's technique is developed in certain areas, the twisting, the lack of distance and the fact that he doesn't land with two feet every time causes Janice to put a mark under "Competent", but close to the "Emerging" line.



Locomotor

Children need a wide variety of movement skills that they can perform in different settings (outdoors, indoors, in and on water, on snow and ice and in the air). They also need a certain level of motor competence to participate in most activities. A child with highly-developed movement skills and greater competence will be more likely to participate in physical activities.

Framework

The Locomotor Score is based on the following questions and their rating systems:

Q4 Crossovers

“I want you to perform crossover steps from this pylon to the next. I want you to perform a crossover, or grapevine, step from here to there. Please do the best you can. Ready? Go now.”

Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Does not perform crossover steps (side shuffles, or other incorrect movement)
- Performs half the crossover step (front leg crossing over, or rear, but not both)

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Crossover steps are inconsistent but evident
- Speed of progression is slow
- Upper body isn't participating

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- Able to show front and rear crossover steps for the entire distance travelled
- Speed is moderate and does not falter
- Evidence of upper body coordination present

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Demonstrates fluid crossover steps
- Coordinated upper and lower body actions
- Excellent speed of progression

Locomotor

Equipment

For each task in this section, you'll only need 2 pylons (5 metres apart)

Assessment Example

Scott is nine and he has never played baseball before. He's really excited, and his mom wants him to have the best experience possible. She asks her brother, Dan, who coaches baseball, what she should do to help make sure Scott is ready. Dan has been watching Scott since he was a baby and knows his nephew is fairly athletic, but he wants to know just how physically literate Scott is, so he offers to take him out to the park.

At the park, Dan has Scott run through a number of *PLAYfun* locomotor activities, including crossovers. Scott takes to the activity with good speed, and for the most part he's able to display front and rear crossovers. However, Scott sometimes misses a rear step, and when he does it throws off his whole motion and instead of adjusting in mid-stride, Scott usually has to stop and start fresh.

Dan also sees that Scott's upper body coordinates well with the movement of his lower body, but again, when Scott stumbles, it takes him a moment to realign his coordination. Dan places a mark under "Competent", but he places it close to "Emerging".

Developing				Acquired						
Initial	Emerging			Competent	Proficient					
				X						
0	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100



Locomotor

Q5 Skip

“I want you to skip step from this pylon to the next. Skip as best you can. So, I want you to skip from here to there. Ready? Go now.”



Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Fails to perform skip action
- Upper limb action is disconnected with lower body
- Speed highly variable or very low
- Shuffle-like motion of legs
- Poor lower and upper body control

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Leg action consistent with a skip
- Arms at side or slightly reciprocating
- Synchrony of arms to legs may be limited, but not flailing
- Initiation of skip takes a few steps and skip is inconsistent or lost in stopping
- Trunk angle variable

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- Has basic skipping action with limited, but consistent, arm action
- Low amplitude and speed
- May exhibit ramp-up in form
- Body is tall

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Uses arms and legs in a reciprocal pattern with good limb excursions (elbow bent)
- Exhibits fluid and consistent skip action from first to last step
- Good speed

Assessment Example

After having him go through the crossover task, Dan asks Scott to try skipping. Dan sees right away that Scott is able to perform the basic skip action. His leg action is consistent with a skip, and though his arm action isn't fully developed and somewhat limited, it is consistent also. Scott keeps his body tall, for the most part. He doesn't get his feet particularly high off the ground, and his speed isn't tremendous, but his motions are steady. He slows when he prepares to turn at the cone, but he doesn't falter.

There is certainly room for Scott's technique to develop, but because he is consistent throughout the task, Dan places a mark at roughly the halfway mark under “Competent”.

Q6 Gallop

“I want you to gallop from this pylon to the next. Front gallop as best you can. So, I want you to perform a gallop from here to there. Ready? Go now.”

Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Lift off or aerial phase not present
- Body faces sideways rather than forward

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Lift off or aerial phase present but inconsistent
- Upper arm motion not fluidly connected to lower limbs
- Unable to have consistent flow
- May falter in speed (slow to reacquire step)
- Body may twist

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- Consistent aerial phase with synchronized upper limbs
- Speed may be slow and amplitude low
- Flow of gallop steps may be intermittent

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Fluid action of upper and lower body in synchrony
- Immediate transition from start to gallop action
- Trunk facing forward entire distance
- Amplitude and speed are very good

Assessment Example

Before Dan takes Scott back home, he decides to run him through one more task. He already has a sense of Scott's level of competence in terms of doing crossover steps and skipping, but he wants to know how developed Scott is at the gallop.

At first, Scott struggles to lift off the ground. Once he gets the motion going, the aerial phase of his gallop is present, though inconsistent. Scott also has a tendency to twist his body with each gallop. With the twisting of his trunk, Scott also struggles to keep his upper arm motion fluidly connected to his lower limbs.

One area that Scott shows consistency is in his speed. He moves through each gallop quickly, and Dan knows that once Scott addresses the weaker areas of his technique, his tendency toward speed will be more of an asset. For now though, Scott might want to think about going through the movements at a slower pace until he gets it down. Dan places a mark a little less than halfway along the “Emerging” line.

Q7 Hop

“I want you to hop from this pylon to the next. I want you to hop as best you can. Please hop from here to there. Ready? Hop now.”

Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Fails to maintain single leg support and touches down opposite foot
- Performs a jumping action
- Upper body and lower body in asynchrony

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Inconsistent distances and low amplitude of displacement (horizontal or vertical)
- Balance control problems evident during progression
- Starting is stutter-like
- Stopping is sloppy and possibly over-hopping or premature ending

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- Able to hop on one leg from start to end with medium distance hops
- Evident aerial phase
- May not employ opposite leg to assist
- Distance may vary from hop to hop in mid-range
- Start and stop control may be limited

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Substantial hopping distance that is consistent in distance in mid-range
- Immediate transition to hopping and immediate hop to stationary position at end
- Continuity in motion
- Good horizontal and/or vertical speed
- Uses opposite lower limb and upper body in synchrony with the other lower limb

Locomotor

Assessment Example

Geri is a lifeguard at the community pool. She has agreed to run swimming lessons for seven-year-olds. Because she knows how important physical literacy is for swimming, she has requested that the kids show up early to each lesson so that she can assess her pupils' fundamental skills.

Today, she is leading them through *PLAYfun's* "Hop" task. Jennifer takes her turn and Geri can see the gaps in her development as well as the potential in her technique. When Jennifer hops, her movement is fluid, but after taking a couple she begins to lose her balance. Sometimes she has to step down with her opposite leg to keep from falling.

Although her pacing is erratic as she moves between the cones, Jennifer does well to maintain a fairly consistent medium-range distance from hop to hop. She sets herself up to reach the cone each time without coming up short or landing beyond. For the most part, Jennifer displays synchrony between her upper and lower body, though when her balance falters, so too does her coordination. Geri places a mark under "Emerging" edging on the side of "Competent".



Q8 Jump

“I want you to jump from this pylon to the next. I want you to jump as best you can. Please jump from here to there. Ready? Jump now.”

Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Does not perform a two-foot jump
- Performs an offset landing or takeoff with staggered feet
- Unable to perform more than one jump in a row

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Able to jump, but exhibits inconsistent distances each jump
- Upper body may be rigid
- Arms not participating in jump motion
- May show balance control problems during task

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- Performs a continuous jumping action from start to finish
- Limited arm action
- Lower body triple flexion (hip, knee, ankle used for propulsion)
- Distance travelled is limited (less than one full step)
- Speed may be limited due to limited jump distance

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Jumping distance is substantial (length of body)
- Evident lower body triple flexion (hip, knee, ankle used for propulsion)
- Arm swing evident and propulsive
- Fluid start and stop
- Speed of transport is very good

Locomotor

Assessment Example

Barry coaches a youth football team that consists mainly of 12-year-olds. One of the boys playing this year, Kyle, is an accomplished track athlete and swimmer, so Barry imagines Kyle's physical literacy will be well developed. Even still, Barry makes a point of gauging all his athletes' levels of physical literacy at the start of the season by using *PLAYfun*. He has Kyle perform the jump task.

The first thing Barry notices is how well balanced Kyle is. Kyle is able to perform a continuous jumping action from start to finish, leaving with and landing on both feet evenly. He uses his arms well to help propel his jump. As well, Kyle's body appears to be relaxed and not rigid at any point during the task.

One weakness in Kyle's technique is the way he tends to jump for height instead of distance. Barry figures Kyle travels less than one full step per jump, and because of the amplitude of the jump, Kyle's speed is also hindered. Barry places a mark under "Competent" near the halfway mark.

Developing		Acquired	
Initial	Emerging	Competent	Proficient
		X	

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



Object Control - Upper Body

Framework

The Object Control – Upper Body Score is based on the following questions and their rating systems:

Q9 Overhand throw

“I want you to overhand throw the ball at the wall and make it bounce back over the top of your head. I want you to throw the ball as best you can. Please try to throw the ball against the wall as best you can. Ready? Throw now.”

Note: sidearm throw is acceptable and can be assessed as competent or proficient

Equipment

For this task, you'll need:

- A large wall (target area)
- 1 pylon (2 metres away from the wall)
- Tennis ball (or similar)

Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Throw fails to produce ball motion in the desired direction
- Insufficient distance/velocity
- Limb motion restricted to a single joint or upper limb
- No coordination with trunk or lower limbs
- No weight shift
- Trunk rotation absent

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Ball is sent with poor speed or trajectory (one of the two)
- Basic sequencing of lower body to trunk to upper limb action is evident
- Weight transfer limited
- May appear disjointed in sequencing of limb motion
- Very limited follow-through

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- Trajectory and speed of ball is adequate
- Sequencing of lower body, trunk and upper body is present but limited
- Weight shift is minimal
- Follow-through present but limited
- Trunk rotation present but limited

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Velocity of ball is good
- Trajectory of ball is well controlled
- Upper and lower body sequencing is present
- Weight shift is pronounced from trail to lead leg
- Follow-through is present and fluid
- Very evident trunk rotation

Object Control

Assessment Example

Becky just turned 10. She wants to play a whole bunch of sports this summer, which pleases her mom, Beth. Beth is a physiotherapist and knows how important it is to be physically literate. She decides to use the *PLAY* Tools with Becky to see if there are any gaps in her daughter's development of physical literacy. As Becky works through the overhand throw task in *PLAYfun*, Beth sees a number of things that Becky does well, and a few that will need some work.

The first thing Beth notices is the consistency with which Becky throws the ball at the wall so that it bounces back above Becky's head. She manages to get enough trajectory and velocity on the ball almost every time, and her accuracy with where the ball lands is pretty steady as well. Becky also displays a smooth follow-through. Not only does she bring her hand well behind her head, she extends her arm through in a fluid motion.

From there, Beth pays attention to Becky's trunk rotation and stance. When Becky begins the motion, she is too square to the wall, which cuts down on her trunk rotation. This lack of trunk rotation in turn diminishes the appropriate weight shift from trailing leg to front leg.

Beth sees that Becky's power, accuracy and arm movement are all well-developed areas of strength, but that Becky really needs to focus on her stance and trunk rotation. Once Becky has refined her technique in this regard, Beth believes her daughter's weight shift from trailing leg to front leg will develop more naturally as well, as she already has the tendency to shift weight when she throws. Because of this, Beth places a check in the "Competent" box close to "Emerging".

Developing					Acquired				
Initial		Emerging			Competent		Proficient		
					X				

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Q10

Strike with stick

“I want you to strike the ball. I want you to strike the ball as best you can. Please try to strike the ball as best you can. Ready? Strike now.”

Equipment

For this task, you'll need:

- A baseball tee (adjustable height)
- A baseball bat (or similar)
- Tennis ball (or similar)

Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Grasp of implement inappropriate (cross-over hands, uses a single limb to swing, etc.)
- No coordination between upper and lower body
- No weight shift
- Swinging action is weak and trajectory of implement wavers
- Limited wind-up and follow-through

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Elements of the swinging action present but not all the sequences of weight transfer, trunk rotation and arm swing are evident
- Dominance of one arm relative to the other
- Upper limbs don't work together

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- Swinging action evident with good speed
- Limited weight transfer
- Wind-up and follow-through limited but present
- Sequencing of weight transfer, to trunk rotation, to arm swing is present but may be modest and slightly disjointed

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Powerful swinging action with good speed of implement
- Strong stepping action and weight transfer from trailing to leading leg
- Synchronized and sequenced weight transfer, to trunk rotation, to upper limb rotation
- Implement trajectory is well controlled with excellent wind-up and follow-through

Object Control

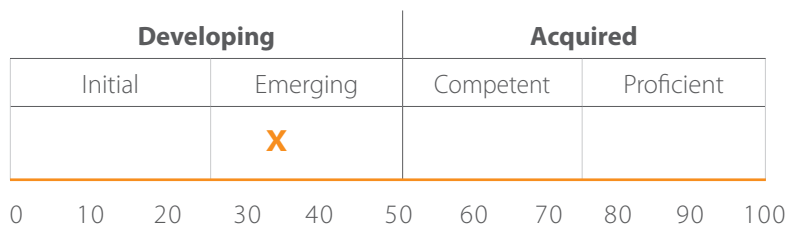
Assessment Example

Max played professional lacrosse for years. Now that he's retired, he coaches and runs clinics and camps for kids. Part of his philosophy is for kids to be comfortable and capable of performing other sports skills aside from just those that relate to lacrosse. Max understands that this is all part of being physically literate, which he tries his best to develop in each of his practices.

Twelve-year-old Laura hasn't played too many sports, so her parents decide to register her for private lessons with Max. She runs and swims and loves to hike, but hasn't done much in the way of team stuff. She thinks lacrosse looks like fun. Max understands that from her other physical activities, Laura will be competent in a range of fundamental skills. Since lacrosse requires the hand-eye coordination that comes from using a stick, Max decides to have Laura strike with a stick.

Laura has a good grasp of the bat when she picks it up and swings it, but Max can see this is an unfamiliar technique for her. Although there is some weight shift from her back leg to the front, her trunk doesn't rotate much and her motion is almost entirely in her arms. She leans forward as she swings as opposed to rotating through the action.

Despite Laura's obvious gaps in development, neither arm seems to dominate the other, and she displays coordination between her upper limbs – likely developed during swimming, Max figures. He places a mark not quite at the halfway mark of “Emerging”.



Throwing

Q11 One-handed catch

“I want you to catch the ball that I throw to you with only one hand. You can use whichever hand you like, but only one hand. I want you to catch the ball with one hand the best you can. Please try to catch the ball the best you can. Ready? Catch now?”

Equipment

For this task, you'll need:

- 2 pylons (3 metres apart – child at one, assessor at the other)
- Tennis ball (or similar)

Rating System

Developing

Initial: *Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:*

- Unable to track the incoming ball
- Does not move hand to ball purposefully
- Shows an elbow-flexion-style of a clutching catch
- Bats at ball to only make contact

Emerging: *Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:*

- Tracks incoming ball poorly
- Moves hand to ball but fumbles or bobbles during catch and/or drops ball
- Uses “stiff” limb motion during catch

Acquired

Competent: *Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:*

- Tracks incoming ball well
- Moves hand to ball and receives the ball well
- Minor fumbles
- No bobble or loss of contact (no double catch)
- Does not exhibit clasping or clutching grasp

Proficient: *Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:*

- Fluidly moves to intercept ball in the air with positive hand reception
- Capable of snatching the ball out of the air

Assessment Example

Jamal is one of the facilitators of a fundamental skills camp for youth at the local fitness centre. Today, the kids are practicing their one-handed catching, as per the *PLAYfun* Tool. Jamal lines up across from Jody, who just turned eight years old.

The first thing Jamal notices is that, while Jody tracks the ball well and moves her hand toward it purposefully, she has trouble catching it. She tends to swat at it, and even when she “cheats” and tries to catch it using both hands, she still fumbles it or bobbles it. Jamal also notices how stiff Jody’s arm is when she goes to catch it.

Jamal knows that eventually Jody will begin catching the ball, and that at that point her tracking and purposeful movement will aid her, but for now he places a mark under “Emerging” near the “Initial” line.

Equipment

For this task, you'll need:

- 2 pylons (4 metres apart)
- Basketball (or similar)

Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Unable to control the ball when stationary or moving
- Hand-eye coordination is non-existent

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Able to control the ball when either stationary or moving (one or the other, but not both)
- Hand-eye coordination is limited

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- Able to control the ball when stationary and moving
- Lacks fluid changes from stationary to moving and moving to stationary
- Hand-eye coordination is adequate

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Well-controlled dribble in place for each repetition
- Exhibits a fluid change from stationary to moving
- Body, lower limbs and upper body are synchronized
- Hand-eye coordination is strong

Assessment Example

Frank coaches a junior basketball team. He works on skill development all through the season, but he believes it's particularly important to find out early on where the students are strong or weak in terms of their development so that he can structure practices accordingly.

On the first day, Frank always has his kids focus on dribbling. He has started following the *PLAYfun* Tool, and now does the hand dribble stationary and moving forward task. As the players go through the activity, Frank is shocked by how developed Kaz's dribbling skills are.

Whether stationary or moving between pylons, Kaz controls his dribble well. His shift from stationary to moving is smooth, and he keeps the ball close, even when he picks up speed. The ball never gets away from him, and he hardly ever has to reach for it. He dribbles between hands equally, and when in motion his whole body moves as one. Frank places a mark under "Proficient" near the "Competent" line.

Q12

Hand dribble stationary and moving forward

"I want you to dribble the ball three times at the first pylon, and then I want you to dribble from the first pylon to the next. Dribble the ball as best you can. So, dribble three times at the first pylon and then dribble the ball to the next pylon and stop. Ready? Dribble now."

Object Control - Lower Body

Framework

The Object Control – Lower Body Score is based on the following questions and their rating systems:

Q13 Kick ball

“I want you to kick the ball at the wall. You can kick the ball with one foot – whichever foot you like. I want you to kick the ball with one foot as best you can. Try to kick the ball above the marker on the wall. Please try to kick the ball as best you can above the marker. Ready? Kick now.”

Equipment

For this task, you'll need:

- A large wall (target area)
- 1 pylon (4 metres away from the wall)
- Soccer ball (or similar)
- Marker on wall placed 1 metre above the ground

Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Misses the ball due to a lack of coordination and timing
- No synchrony between upper and lower body
- Support leg and foot are poorly planted
- Whip-like kicking action with no follow-through
- No speed or ball control
- Kicks with toe

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Speed of ball is slow
- Some evidence of directional control is present
- Foot contact reasonably solid

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- Ball is directed appropriately
- Speed of ball is good

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Ball is powerfully propelled in a controlled direction
- Upper body leads lower body
- Strong follow-through is present

Object Control

Assessment Example

Betty coaches a U11 girls' soccer team. Based on the *PLAYfun* Tool, she decides to have them all kick a ball over a one-metre line on the wall as a way to gauge their kicking skill.

One of the girls, Vanessa, lacks coordination and often misses the ball. When she does kick the ball, she rarely gets reasonable contact. Betty sees that a big part of the issue is due to the poor placement of Vanessa's support leg, and also because Vanessa lacks synchrony between her upper and lower body.

When Vanessa does connect with the ball, she is not able to get it above the one-metre mark on the wall, and though the rebound sometimes comes back in Vanessa's direction, it is not consistent. Betty doesn't think Vanessa has played before, but she knows that with practice she'll get better. Betty places a mark halfway under "Initial".



Kicking

Q14 Foot dribble moving forward

“I want you to dribble the ball from one pylon to the next. I want you to dribble the ball as best you can. Please try to dribble the ball as best you can from here to there. Ready? Go now.”

Equipment

For this task, you'll need:

- 2 pylons (5 metres apart)
- Soccer ball (or similar)

Rating System

Developing

Initial: *Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:*

- Ball control is absent or rudimentary
- Ball is lost for majority of movement
- Foot-eye control is disjointed

Emerging: *Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:*

- Able to exhibit some ball control in a stuttering manner
- Initiation and stopping of ball may be absent or very limited (ball travels past the second pylon)

Acquired

Competent: *Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:*

- Ball in control through most of the distance
- Starts and stops at lines
- Body and ball separation varies through movement
- May exhibit some control limitations during initiation and stopping of ball
- Body may twist to allow the contact leg to lag and maintain contact with the ball
- May not face forward the entire distance

Proficient: *Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:*

- Ball trajectory is in control for the entire distance
- Body and ball separation is well maintained during each step
- Ball start and stop is fluid and well controlled
- Trunk faces forward the entire distance

Assessment Example

Now that Coach Betty has spent an adequate amount of time on her players' kicking, she wants to see how capable they are of dribbling the ball forward using their feet. Kim is one of the first girls to collect a ball and step up to the first pylon. She's confident to try the activity, and it doesn't take long for Betty to see why.

From the moment Kim pushes the ball forward for the first time, she keeps it well under control. She uses both feet so as to keep the ball at an appropriate distance from her body as she moves, and only rarely does she need to lunge forward or step out of line to control the ball. Even when she approaches the pylon and turns, she keeps the ball at a controlled distance.

Betty notices minor turning in Kim's body throughout the drill. Sometimes Kim twists so that she's no longer facing forward, and once or twice the leg with which she is dribbling the ball lags, causing the rest of her body to pull ahead. However, these moments are few, and Kim always seems able to pull the drill back together before she has fully lost control of the ball. Betty places a mark a little past the halfway mark under "Competent".

Developing		Acquired	
Initial	Emerging	Competent	Proficient
		X	

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100



Balance, Stability & Body Control

Framework

The Balance, Stability & Body Control Score is based on the following questions and their rating systems:

Q15 Balance walk (heel-to-toe) forward

“I want you to walk 'heel-to-toe' from one pylon to the next while keeping your balance. Walk as quickly as you can while keeping your balance. Walk from here to there while keeping your balance. Ready? Walk now.”

Equipment

For this task, you'll need:

- 2 pylons placed 2 metres apart (or a 2-metre line on the floor)

Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Loses balance repeatedly
- Does not use arms to balance
- Poor or inconsistent placement of feet from step to step

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Able to demonstrate features of balance control
- Tentative stepping action
- Non-fluid
- Major balance control problems during stepping
- May lose balance once or twice in all steps

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- Able to maintain balance through all steps
- Shows good foot placement, but may be slow
- Exhibits minor balance control problems through some of the steps
- Upper limb wavering may be evident

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Quickly walks along the line in a fluid continuous motion
- Very minor balance adjustments may be evident at ankles
- There may be slight upper limb wavering

Balance

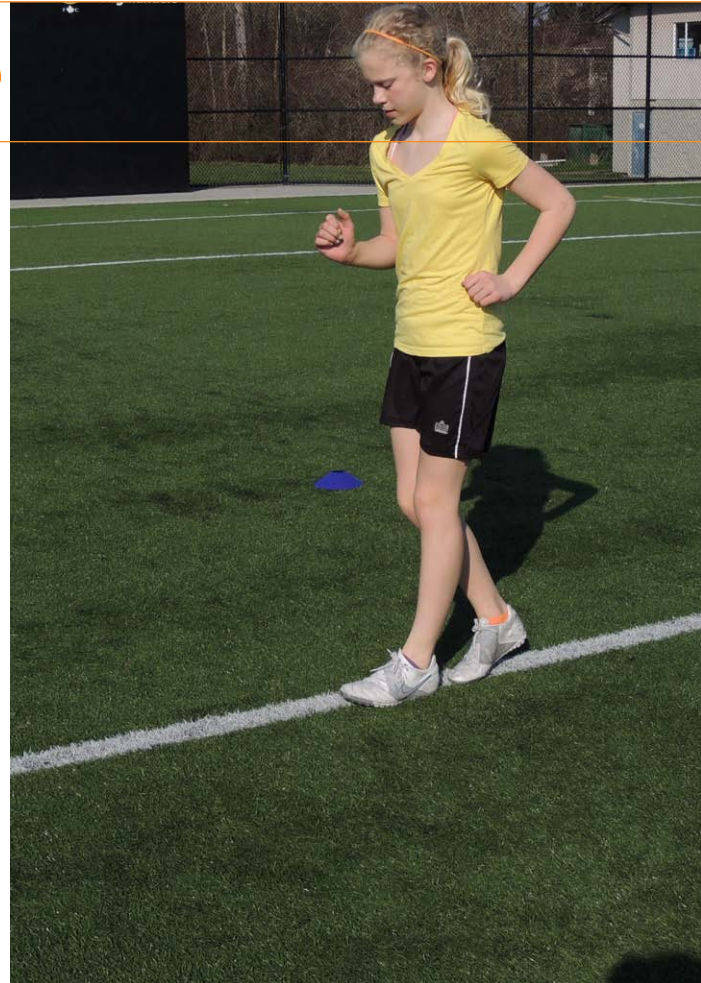
Assessment Example

Stacy, a former high-performance gymnast, owns a gymnasium where she runs various introductory gymnastics classes. She enjoys watching the young boys and girls who come to her classes and experience the various gymnastics skills while developing their physical literacy. Her current group is all seven- and eight-year-olds, and today she's assessing their balance by having them walk forward from heel-to-toe.

As Rudy steps up to the first pylon and begins walking heel-to-toe toward the other pylon, he starts out tentatively and his first couple of steps are unbalanced and lack fluidity. However, as he gets moving, Rudy maintains balance and a composed body posture.

Stacy sees that as Rudy's confidence in the activity builds, so too does his speed. However, as he goes faster, he's also more prone to wobble. Rudy does a pretty good job of using his arms for balance, but when he begins to wobble, he tends to flail.

Stacy places a mark under "Competent" but closer to "Emerging" because when Rudy takes his time and goes slow, he handles the task well and displays fairly well-developed technique.



Developing		Acquired	
Initial	Emerging	Competent	Proficient
		X	

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Q16

Balance walk (toe-to-heel) backward

“I want you to walk backward 'toe-to-heel' from one pylon to the next while keeping your balance. Walk backward as quickly as you can while keeping your balance. Walk backward from here to there while keeping your balance. Ready? Walk now.”

Equipment

For this task, you'll need:

- 2 pylons placed 2 metres apart (or a 2-metre line on the floor)

Rating System

Developing

Initial: *Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:*

- Loses balance repeatedly
- Doesn't use arms to balance
- Poor or inconsistent placement of feet from step to step

Emerging: *Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:*

- Able to demonstrate features of balance control
- Tentative stepping action
- Non-fluid
- Major balance control problems during stepping
- May lose balance once or twice in all steps

Acquired

Competent: *Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:*

- Able to maintain balance through all steps
- Shows good foot placement, but may be slow
- Exhibits minor balance control problems through some of the steps
- Upper limb wavering may be evident

Proficient: *Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:*

- Performs a “cat walk” along the line in a fluid continuous motion
- Very minor balance adjustments may be evident at ankles
- There may be slight upper limb wavering

Stability

Assessment Example

Once Stacy has the class go through the forward task, she then has them walk backward between the pylons by going toe-to-heel. When Rudy begins, he again starts tentatively and with some balance issues, but this time he does not work through them as quickly as when he walked forward. Stacy sees weaknesses in his technique.

As Rudy walks backward, he loses his balance often. Even when he slows right down, he struggles to get through the steps without wobbling. His actions lack fluidity and, although he gets his arms out to help him balance, more often than not they are flapping in the air. She does note, however, that Rudy places his feet in the right places each time, even if he loses his balance shortly thereafter.

Stacy finds it interesting that Rudy showed good technique and balance moving forward, but not so much when he moves backward. She places a mark under “Emerging”, slightly closer to the “Initial” side.

Developing		Acquired	
Initial	Emerging	Competent	Proficient
	X		

0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100

Q17

Drop to the ground and get back up

“I want you to drop to the ground and come right back up. I want you to drop to the ground and get back up as best you can. Ready? Go now.”

Equipment

For this task, you'll only need floor space

Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Sits down tentatively one limb at a time
- Kneels first, then slowly sequences limbs to ground

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- Performs a “burpee-like” movement without fluid control
- May show a longer pause on ground and lack fluidity between drop and coming back up

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Places each limb down in succession but smoothly
- Doesn't drop to floor

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Person performs a controlled fall to a momentary stop on the ground
- Rapidly and fluidly returns to standing position

Assessment Example

Dustin is a ski instructor who loves helping young kids who come through his program. When they first join, most of them are not able to stay up on the skis and spend most of their time sliding along the snow on their bodies. He takes great pleasure in seeing these kids get in control of their skis as well as their bodies. A big part of skiing is being physically literate, so Dustin has his students drop to the ground and get back up as part of their physical literacy warm-up.

Sarah is one of the smaller kids in this week's group, and he can tell she's shy. This is probably her first time skiing, and maybe she's not used to skills like these. He watches as she tentatively lowers herself to a sitting position, one limb at a time, with jerky movements. The next time she drops to her knees and pauses there before slowly standing back up.

Dustin hopes that as Sarah gets more comfortable with her surroundings and being around the group, she will explore her movements with a little more rigour instead of holding back. But at the same time, if it is a lack of skill development that's holding her back, he wants to make sure that she gets the adequate amount of time and instruction to help her learn these movements properly. For now, he places a mark under “Initial”.

Body Control

Equipment

For this task, you'll need:

- Floor space
- 1 ball

Rating System

Developing

Initial: Presence of numerous major gaps during execution:

- Has difficulty reaching the object
- Fumbles in the lift or lower
- Drops the object
- Exhibits right-to-left shifts in lift or substantial body twisting

Emerging: Limited number of major gaps, but able to execute basic sequencing of the task:

- Transition between lift and lower segments is broken and not fluid
- Exhibits swaying or minimal body-twisting

Acquired

Competent: Basic level of execution with minor sequencing errors:

- Able to control ball during lift and lower
- Transition between lift and lower segments is slightly choppy
- Some sway

Proficient: Overall proficiency is depicted by the quality of the movement:

- Fluid and controlled reach with momentary pause at lift
- Secure grasp and synchronized lifting action from all body parts
- May be a stoop or squat lift
- Well-controlled descent and low-impact contact with ground

Assessment Example

Luke is a physician who is coaching a U12 girls' volleyball team. Admittedly, Luke is not an expert in volleyball, but he does know physical literacy. As long as he helps the girls become as physically literate as possible, he's confident their success in volleyball will follow.

He has each girl take a ball and spread out around the gym floor. Using his *PLAYfun* Tool, Luke asks that they all lift the ball above their heads and lower it back to the ground. The girls begin the task and Luke watches as Carly performs the drill with a high degree of competence.

She lifts and lowers the ball confidently with a secure grasp. She maintains control the whole time. The transition from lift to lower is smooth, and all her movements appear to be fluid. Also, her body is controlled and neither her limbs nor her trunk sways during the activity. Without having seen Carly playing volleyball on the court, he has a feeling she'll be competent when she does. He places a mark under "Proficient".

Q18 Lift and Lower

"I want you lift up the ball above your head and then lower it back down to the ground. I want you to lift and then lower the ball as best you can. Ready? Go now."

Score

Scoring

To score the *PLAYfun* Tool, measure the distance between the beginning of the “Initial” box (left-most side of the box) and the assessors mark in one of the four categories. This distance will be a score out of 100 (i.e. 1 point per millimetre).

Do this for all 18 tasks to obtain the child's *PLAYfun* Physical Literacy Score.

Calls-to-action

- Continue to routinely assess the child's skills using *PLAYfun* or *PLAYbasic* to ensure they are developing physically literate.
- Use the *PLAYfun* Tracking Sheet located at the back of the workbook to keep track of these scores for your reference in future assessments. This will allow you to see how much the child has improved, and also how quickly. Both of these indications will help identify problematic areas in need of improvement.

- Ensure that the child has many different opportunities to develop ALL fundamental skills. This could be in the home, at school, in organized sport, in community recreation and/or during leisure time.

For a list of quality sports and activities that will help the child develop their locomotor, object control and balance skills, visit:

play.physicalliteracy.ca

- Ensure that the child can be active in a fun and safe environment. This will allow them to advance in competency, which will in turn make them more confident. Without confidence, the likelihood of performing a task in front of people is dramatically reduced. This will limit the child's desire to participate in activities with a group, on a team and even with friends and family.
- Ensure that the child understands words that describe movement. What is a hop versus a jump? Visit our website for a glossary of movement terms.
- Gain additional insight into a child's physical literacy by using the other *PLAY* tools at your disposal. For more information visit:

play.physicalliteracy.ca

Participant's Name _____

Add up the section totals to obtain the Subtotal.

Next, divide the subtotal by 18 to obtain the **PLAYfun** Physical Literacy Score.

Running	score
1. Run a square	
2. Run there and back	
3. Run, jump, then land on two feet	
Total	
Locomotor	
4. Crossovers	
5. Skip	
6. Gallop	
7. Hop	
8. Jump	
Total	
Object Control – Upper Body	
9. Overhand throw	
10. Strike with stick	
11. One-handed catch	
12. Hand dribble stationary and moving forward	
Total	
Object Control – Lower Body	
13. Kick ball	
14. Foot dribble moving forward	
Total	
Balance, Stability & Body Control	
15. Balance walk (heel-to-toe) forward	
16. Balance walk (toe-to-heel) backward	
17. Drop to the ground and back up	
18. Lift and Lower	
Total	

PLAYfun Physical Literacy Score	
Running	
Locomotor	
Object Control – Upper Body	
Object Control – Lower Body	
Balance, Stability & Body Control	
Add up the section totals to obtain the Subtotal	Subtotal
Divide the subtotal by 18 to obtain the PLAYfun Physical Literacy Score	Total



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CS4L Champion

Dean Kriellaars, BPE, MSc, PhD, CEP

Dr. Kriellaars is a faculty member of the School of Medical Rehabilitation, Department of Physical Therapy, at the University of Manitoba. He is a member of the Spinal Cord Research Centre and a scientist of the Manitoba Institute of Child Health.

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He is a CS4L Champion making a difference!

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References:

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