



Leaping

Leaping is similar to running except for a longer and exaggerated flight phase. It requires taking off on one foot and landing on the other. Many children enjoy the feeling of being airborne, especially if the skill is being executed under make-believe scenarios such as, leaping over 'rivers infested with crocodiles' or over obstacles 'to escape from a tiger'.

As your child masters the leaping skill and applies it to common daily encounters such as clearing water puddles, small drains and low obstacles, he will learn to move confidently. Leaping is also used in many games and sports, such as basketball, netball, badminton and soccer.

Developmental Phases

Leaping

Initial



- Arms swing at random, not alternate to legs.
- Inconsistent use of take-off leg.
- Inability to lift body up to gain distance or height.
- Movement looks like a running step.

Transition



- Arms are used for balance, not to produce body lift.
- Legs are not fully stretched when off the ground.
- Body is stiff and leans forward slightly.
- Movement looks like an elongated run. Slight lift above ground is visible.

Mature



- Arms swing in opposition to legs.
- Forceful straightening at take-off with both legs fully stretched when off the ground.
- Definite forward lean of body.
- Able to achieve distance and height.

Approximate Age of Development (in years)

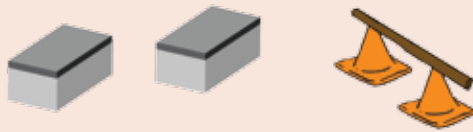
Initial	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Transition	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mature	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Teaching Strategies

Leaping

What to do if your child...

... does not look up when leaping?



- Create an 'electric wall' of obstacles from low to medium height (e.g. shoeboxes, cones, alphabet foam mat pieces, stacked up juice cartons). Be sure to use objects that are safe.
- Get your child to leap over obstacles.



... lacks confidence to clear a wide distance?

- Create 'rivers' for leaping over by using picture cards or toy crocodiles/fishes.
- To build confidence, get your child to clear 'rivers' of different widths.

... does not use arms to assist the lift?

- Get your child to hold a ribbon or small towel in one hand. Tape a small piece of ribbon on alternate foot.
- Encourage your child to stretch hand with ribbon or towel to touch alternate foot when leaping over the obstacle.



... is not lifting knees and feet during a leap?

- Create low barriers (by drawing lines on floor or using bean bags/milk or juice cartons/shoeboxes) and hang objects in front above eye level.
- Get your child to look up when leaping over the obstacles.

Variations

“Can your child leap...?”

How the body moves	Force/Effort	Time	Flow
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and land gently like a fly • and land like a dinosaur without swinging his arms 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • quickly/slowly • stay in the air as long as he can • continuously, following a drumbeat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and freeze upon landing • after a short run-up • with hands on his head
Where the body moves	Location	Direction/Pathways	Levels/Extensions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • over the markers as if they were water puddles • over different objects around the room • over the playground tiles/foam mats 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diagonally to the left/side of the court • with left/right foot leading • continuously around a big circle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and touch front knee with one hand • and clap in the air • with high knee-lift
With whom/What the body moves	Self (body parts)/People		Objects
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • and touch his knees upon landing • over your outstretched legs • while taking turns with you 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • from one lily pad to another (marked with chalk) • and touch a ball hanging overhead • over the shoebox/newspaper roll

COMBINATIONS

- Lightly over a ‘tree trunk’ (e.g. newspaper roll) and land gently like a fly
- Continuously from one lily pad to another with higher knee-lift

Activity 1

Leaping

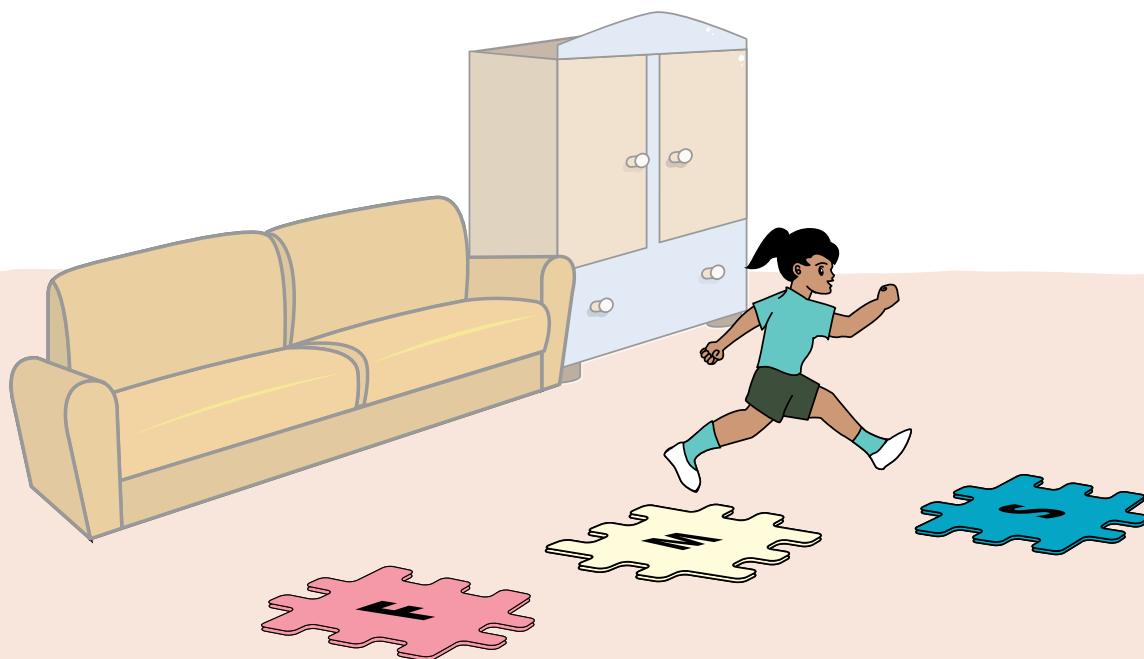
LOCOMOTOR SKILLS



- Alphabet foam mats or yoga mats help absorb landing force, minimising the risk of injury to your child's knees.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Alphabet foam mats



HOW TO PLAY

- Randomly place foam mats to serve as lotus leaves around the play area. Have your child squat on one. Ask him to spring forward like a frog, and land back in a squat on another “lotus leaf”.
- At every sound of “Ribbet!” made by you, your child has to leap to the next “lotus leaf”. Make it more challenging by increasing or decreasing the frequency of saying “Ribbet!”. Your child has to leap according to your tempo.



- Challenge your child to give a little run before landing on each “lotus leaf”.

BE AWARE

- Encourage your child to spring higher by pushing off and stretching the front of his foot.

PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT

- Do this activity when you and your child chance upon a puddle of water. Encourage your child to leap over the puddle.

Activity 2

Leaping

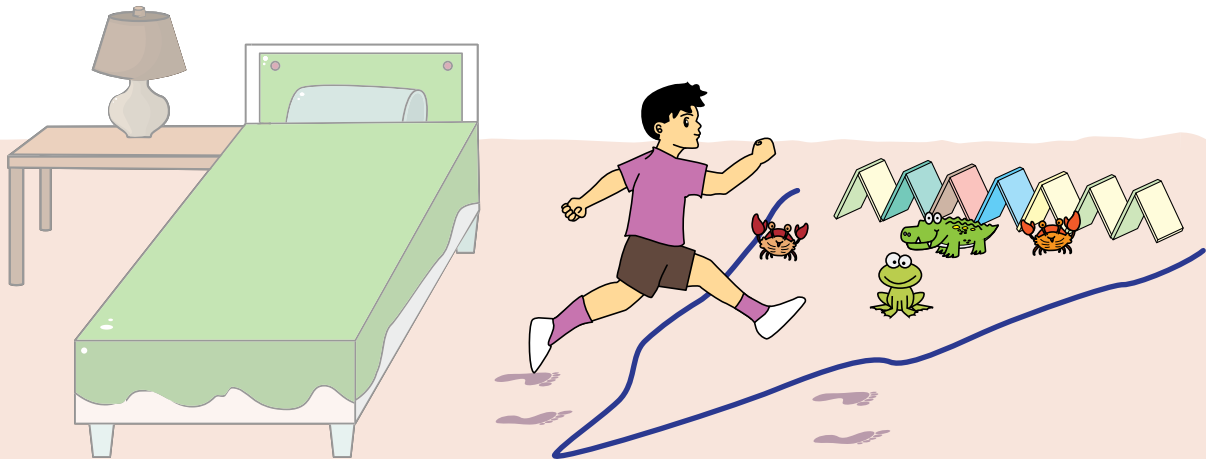
LOCOMOTOR SKILLS



- Make sure there are no objects, such as furniture or walls too close to the designated play area that your child may collide into.

WHAT YOU NEED

- Rope or tape
- Safe objects, such as toy snakes, toy fish and soft sponges, to serve as things found in rivers



HOW TO PLAY



- Arrange the rope or tape to form a giant “V” on the floor. This serves as a river. Read your child the tale of “Little Red Riding Hood”. Have him dramatise the journey “Little Red Riding Hood” takes to his grandmother’s house. Ask your child to think of a safe way to cross the danger-filled “river”.
- Encourage your child to add a run before his jump over the “river”. He will discover that this increases his leaping distance, allowing him to cross the wider part of the “river”.

- Populate the river with sea creatures and foam mats. Your child must now leap higher to clear the “river”.

BE AWARE

- For younger children who are still learning to leap, start them off from the narrower end of the “river”. Gradually progress towards the wider end when they are ready.
- Lay cut-outs of footprints to help younger children know which foot to take off and land on.
- Prompt your child to swing and reach out his arms while calling out for “grandmother”. This will help him propel his body and maintain balance.