

# Striking WEEK SIX

**THIS SET OF LESSONS PROVIDES** games and activities to help children develop kicking skills, fitness, strength, body awareness, eye hand coordination, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).



***Special Olympics***  
**young athletes™**

[www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)



## Overview

**Lesson Plans (Day One, Day Two, Day Three) provide details to help you plan and carry out the Young Athletes program with a group of children between the ages of 2 and 7 years old.**

**Adults Needed:** Plan for at least 1 adult for every 4 children. Recruit help from families, volunteers, older students, college students and others in your community to make sure the program runs smoothly and is fun.

**Time:** Young Athletes is implemented with great enthusiasm, high energy and quick pace. Time estimates are provided to guide completion of each lesson in 30 minutes. However, the pace and length of the lesson should be matched to the needs, interests, ages, and skills of the young athletes in your group.

**Sequence:** There are three lessons for each skill area labeled Day One, Day Two and Day Three. Lessons within the skill area are designed to be offered in sequence to help children become acquainted with the activities and build skills through repetition.

**Resources:** The Lesson Plan Summary Cards include an outline of the activities, list of equipment needed, and page numbers to find the activity descriptions. The cards, Young Athletes Activity Guide, Suggestions from Teachers, and training videos are included in the online Toolkit (see website below).

**Playing at home:** Give families the Lesson Plan Summary Cards and encourage them to sing the songs and play one or two games with their child at home before the next session. Help them learn about the activities by including them in your group sessions and/or providing a family training session. Be sure they have access to the Activity Guide and Videos for more information.

**>> See the Young Athletes Toolkit online at:**  
[www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes](http://www.specialolympics.org/youngathletes)

## Opening Sports Song (4 min.)

**PURPOSE** Start each Young Athletes class with a gathering/warm-up song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with. This will help them warm-up, serve as a gathering activity, create body awareness and support adaptive skills (follow directions, sing along, imitation of motor movements).

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

**SING** **Wheels on the Bus melody:**

- The athletes in our class can jump, jump, jump, jump, jump, jump, jump. The athletes in our class jump, jump, jump - all through the day.
- The basketball player on the team can make a basket (arms up and forward throw as if making a basket as in overhand toss) make a basket, make a basket. The basketball player on the team can make a basket – all through the game.



## Ball Tapping *(5 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball or slow motion ball, floor markers

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** Tap a beach ball toward the child. "Tap the ball across the floor back to me – keep your hand open."

**Tips:** Eyes should be focused on the ball; encourage the child to follow through by twisting his or her belly forward and clapping the hands out in front.

- Progress to having the child stand sideways with 1 foot on each of two markers (front/back).
- Toss a beach ball to the child and have him/her hit the ball with an open hand.
- Great job!

## Handball *(4 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, cone

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, flexibility, general fitness, motor skills, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Now we are going to see if we can hit this ball off the cone. Watch – keep your hand open and hit it like this."

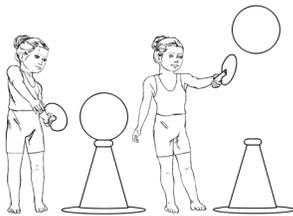
- Place the ball on the cone and hit it with an open hand or fist.
- Line athletes up opposite the cone to take turns hitting the ball and bringing it back.
- OK, now you do it. Good job!



## Side Striking *(6 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, cones; paddle, junior size racket or plastic bat

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Athletes, now we are going to use a racket to hit the ball". Using a side-ways stance, encourage the child to strike a tossed ball with a junior size racket or bat.



- Look at the ball. See it coming to you.
- Now swing the racket. Great, you got a hit!
- Keep practicing being sure all children get several turns.

## Obstacle Course *(6 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Set up a 5 station course with floor markers (dots for jumping on), bean bags with hoop (throwing bean bag through hoop), a series of hurdles (cones with dowel/stick), balance beam, area to run to finish (through a ribbon).

**PURPOSE** Body awareness, general fitness, motor skills (run, jump, throw, balance), and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Now we get to run the obstacle course! Watch and follow me!" Show the athletes how to go through the obstacle course. Then assist athletes in moving through course.



## Obstacle Course *(continued)*

### Station 1: Jump on Dots

- Arrange 10 dots in zigzag pattern, close to one another.
- Athlete will bunny hop on two feet from dot to dot.
- Athlete will jump to the right, then jump to the left, zigzagging down length of dots.

### Station 2: Throw Bean Bag Through Target (basket, hoop)

Athlete will throw bean bag or small ball to a hoop held parallel to the floor or to a bucket.

- Progress to throwing a bean bag or small ball through target (hoop on cone or block) from distance of 3 feet.
- Use floor marker to show where athlete stands.
- Move distance closer or further away, depending on skill of athlete.

### Station 3: Jump Over Hurdles

- Make hurdle using two cones and one dowel or stick. Place dowel through holes in cone.
- Adjust height as needed for athletes. Always start the bar at the lowest height.
- Encourage athlete to jump using two feet, over the bar, landing on two feet.



**Station 4: Walk on Balance Beam**

- Athletes will independently walk the length of the beam, alternating steps.
- Add various ways to move down the beam for advance athletes (backwards, sideways, change directions – forward to backwards).
- Add length to the beam by using multiple beams.

**Station 5: Run to Finish Line (through ribbon)**

- When athlete steps off beam, he/she should run to the finish line. Teach athletes to run through the line.
- Introduce this skill several times as some may stop, not wanting to hit or touch the finish line.
- The finish line is a long ribbon. To set the finish line, attach the ribbon to one side of the area while holding the other end of the ribbon in your hand (or have another person hold the other end).
- As the athlete touches the ribbon, let it go.

**Closing Sports Song** (5 min.)

**PURPOSE** End each Young Athletes class with a closing/cool-down song with motions. Use a common melody and motions that children have done before or are familiar with.

**EXPLAIN** “It is time to end Young Athletes. Let’s sing If You’re Happy and You Know It. Sing along with me and do what I do.”

- SING**
- If you’re happy and you know it, wiggle your arms (flap like a bird’s wings, walk around with arms outstretched)
  - If you’re happy and you know it then your face will really show it if you’re happy and you know it wiggle your arms.



## Opening Sports Song *(4 min.)*

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song. Sing along with me and do what I do."

### **SING AND DEMONSTRATE** **Wheels on the Bus Melody**

- The athletes in our class roll the ball, roll the ball, roll the ball. The athletes in our class roll the ball - all through the day.
- The athletes in our class jump up and down, up and down, up and down. The athletes in our class jump up and down - all through the town.

## Side Striking *(6 min.)*

Repeat the Activity from Day 1.

## Beginning Hockey *(6 min.)*

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, small foam ball, dowel, junior sized hockey stick or junior size plastic golf club

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills, and eye hand coordination

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Today we are going to learn to play some sports. First we are going to play hockey." Place a large ball on the ground.

- Stand in your sideways stance.
- Hold the stick (hockey stick, golf club) with both hands.
- Now hit the ball
- Great!



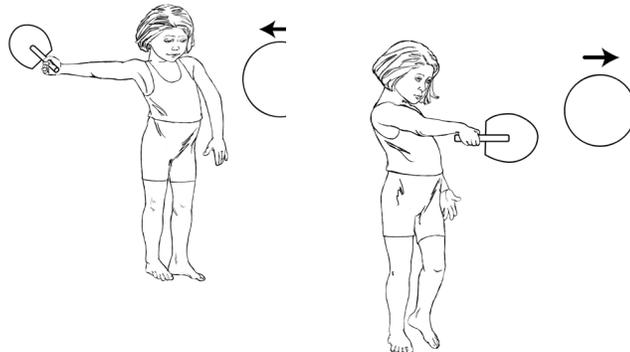
## Beginning *(6 min.)* Tennis/Softball

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, cones; paddle, junior size racket or plastic bat

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills and eye hand coordination

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** “Now we are going to play tennis/softball.” Place a large ball on a cone and use floor markers to help athletes learn how to stand sideways.

- Now stand sideways and hold the paddle/racket with one hand.
- Hit the ball with your paddle/racket.



## Bridges/Tunnels *(4 min.)*

**PURPOSE** Strength, general fitness, and adaptive skills (following directions, imitating motor movements)

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** “OK, Now we are going to play tunnels and bridges. First let’s make our tunnel!” If physically able, have one athlete bend forward so that hands and feet are on the ground to form bridges and tunnels. Encourage other athletes to crawl (inchworm, walk) under tunnel or bridge.



## Bridges/Tunnels *(continued)*

### Tunnels

“Who can bend like this to make a tunnel? (Hands and feet on ground, bottom up making tunnel). Awesome, he/she made a tunnel. Now, who can go under his/her tunnel? Great! After you go under the tunnel, you make a tunnel right next to him/her! Great, now our tunnel is even bigger!”

- One athlete forms a tunnel by touching the ground with his/her feet and hands or by getting down onto hands and knees.
- The other athletes crawl, scoot, under the tunnel.
- Once they go under the tunnel, have each athlete extend the tunnel (by forming a tunnel next to the person who has already made a tunnel).

### Bridges

“Ok! Now we are going to play bridges. Who can bend like this to make a tunnel? (Sit on ground. Place hands/feet flat on ground.) Push bottom off ground. Great! Now let’s make a bridge and go under the bridge!”

- One athlete forms a bridge by sitting with his/her hands and feet flat on the ground and pushing his/her bottom off the ground.
- The other athletes crawl, scoot, under the bridge.
- To make it easier have athletes place their feet or hands on wall or an object and other athletes go under.

## Closing Sports Song *(4 min.)*

Repeat the song you used in Day 1 to end the Lesson.



## Opening Sports Song (2 min.)

**EXPLAIN** "Let's start Young Athletes with our Sports Song (Wheels on the Bus melody). Sing along with me and do what I do."

### SING AND DEMONSTRATE Wheels on the Bus Melody

- The athletes in our class touch their toes (bend and stretch), touch their toes, touch their toes. The athletes in our class touch their toes - all through the day.
- The pitcher on the team throws the ball, throws the ball, throws the ball. The pitcher on the team throws the ball - all through the game.

## Side Striking (5 min.)

Repeat Activity from Day 1 and 2.

## Beginning Hockey (5 min.)

Repeat Activity from Day 2.



## Beginning Tennis/Softball (5 min.)

Repeat Activity from Day 2.



**Kicking** (4 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Beach ball, slow motion ball, junior size soccer ball or playground ball

**PURPOSE** Motor coordination, general fitness, flexibility, motor skills. Introduction of Week 7 skills.

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** "Athletes, now we are going to kick the ball. Watch me!"

**Tips:** The child's eyes should be focused on the ball; Non-kicking foot should be positioned just behind and to the side of the ball; The kicking leg should bend at the knee for a back swing and should follow through; The opposite arm swings forward as the ball is kicked.

- Stand behind the ball. Now kick it.
- Have the child kick the ball towards you with his/her preferred foot.
- Wonderful. Now get the ball and give it to (child) to kick.



## Obstacle Course (7 min.)

**EQUIPMENT** Set up a 5 station course with floor markers (dots for jumping on), bean bags with hoop (throwing bean bag through hoop), a series of hurdles (cones with dowel/stick), balance beam, area to run to finish (through a ribbon).

**DEMONSTRATE AND LEAD** “Now we get to run the obstacle course and practice some things we have learned! Watch and follow me!” Show the athletes how to go through the course. Then assist athletes in moving through course.

### Station 1: Throwing for distance and accuracy

- Set up markers about 3 feet apart.
- Have the child throw the ball at the marker.
- Encourage the child to throw the ball at the markers.

### Station 2: Frog Hoppin’

- Place round floor markers so that they are a distance that the athlete can jump.
- Have athletes hop from one marker to the next.

### Station 3: Walk on Balance Beam

- Athletes will independently walk the length of the beam, alternating steps.
- Add various ways to move down the beam for advance athletes (backwards, sideways, change directions – forward to backwards).
- Add length to the beam by using multiple beams.



**Station 4: Jump Over Hurdles**

- Make hurdle using two cones and one dowel or stick. Place dowel through holes in cone.
- Adjust height as needed for athletes. Always start the bar at the lowest height.
- Encourage athlete to jump using two feet, over the bar, landing on two feet.

**Station 5: Run to Finish Line (through ribbon)**

- When athlete steps off beam, he/she should run to the finish line. Teach athletes to run through the line.
- Introduce this skill several times as some may stop, not wanting to hit or touch the finish line.
- The finish line is a long ribbon. To set the finish line, attach the ribbon to one side of the area while holding the other end of the ribbon in your hand (or have another person hold the other end).

**Closing Sports Song** (2 min.)

Repeat the song used in Day 1 and 2 to end the Lesson.



**You have finished Week Six: Striking Lessons.  
You can now begin Week Seven: Kicking.**

