KICKING

Development

Kicking can be introduced around the age of three and is a skill young children can experience success in relatively easily. Children will be expected to master the skill by the end of Year 4.

Skill Criteria Checklist:

1. Eyes focused on ball throughout kick
2. Forward and sideward swing of arm opposite kicking leg
3. Non-kicking foot placed beside the ball
4. Hips then shoulders rotate forward
5. Contacts ball with inside or top (shoelaces) of foot
6. Kicking leg follows through towards target area
7. Eyes focused on ball throughout kick

TEACHING STRATEGIES

Beginners (at the emergent level of kicking skill development)

- Focus on skill criteria number 1, 3 and 5
- Use small and soft balls – if indoors balloons are great to help encourage foot-eye coordination
- Try stepping and kicking without a ball
- Try placing markers next to the ball where the non-kicking foot should be placed as a visual cue
- Using a marker on the ball (chalk or sticky tape) can also help children focus on where to make contact with the ball
- At this stage, just encouraging children to have a go at as many kicks as possible is the most important thing. For very young children introduce kicking without a step
If children do not have well developed balancing skills they may struggle to kick so you may need to help support them as they kick
- Target kicking for distance not accuracy initially so children develop force in their kick
- Ask children to point at where on their foot they should be kicking the ball
- Instruct children to use ‘penguin feet’ to kick – see teaching cues
- Set up targets and play Ready, Aim, Fire or have a game of Target Practice

Developing

- Focus on the step and kick and then introduce kicking on the run
- Encourage a backswing of kicking foot by have a witches hat behind the kicking foot that the child has to knock over
- Use small soccer balls and introduce challenging targets further away
- Have fun playing Kicking Dodge Ball and start Small Sided Games with modified rules, 2 balls, 4 goals, only kicking, no tackling etc.

Acquired/accomplished level

- Start focusing on the accuracy of kicks
- Incorporate kicking into small sided games of soccer
- Practice kicking with both feet
- Kick on the run
- Kick in partners and have shots at goal - with the activities Introducing Goalie and Shrinking Goals

**Teaching Cues**

- Eyes on the ball
- Kicking foot like a penguin (twist it outwards)
- Step, swing and kick

**Common Errors**

- Kicking with the toe – poking the ball
- Non-kicking leg behind the ball or too close to the ball
Opposite arm not used for balance