

Components of developmental physical education

By identifying ten components of efficient motor function we gain an informed picture of the importance of providing the opportunities to nurture these developmental needs. These components are:

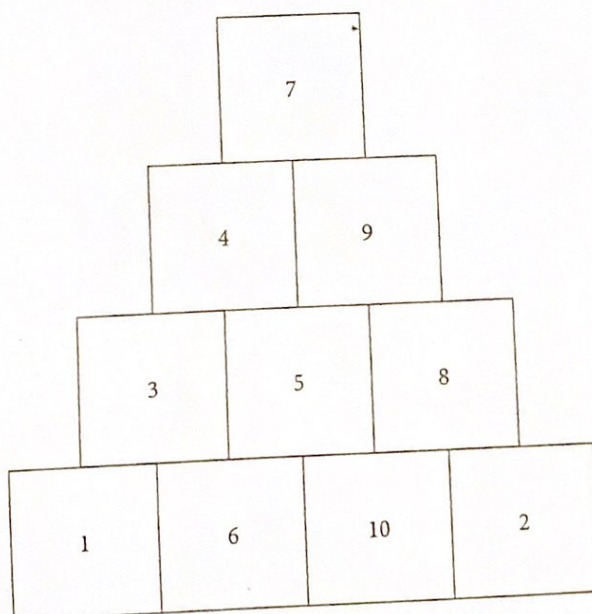
- 1 **Symmetrical activity** – the establishment of managing the difference between the right and left hand sides of the body; development of both sides of the body is necessary because this leads to a greater efficiency of movement and balance. *Beith binnag mae, plewr yn hysgu on ochr rhaid gwnest y ffwrdd arall.*
- 2 **Basic body movement** – training in basic body movement provides children with an ability to play games and take part in activities; through movement children learn further about their environment, their bodies and the body's relationship with space and direction.
- 3 **Large muscle development** – large muscle activities start children towards the development of their bodies in readiness for later life. The strengthening of the muscles around the pelvic and shoulder girdles in particular helps them to be able to carry out their daily tasks with vigour and alertness; the emotional stresses placed on children in school settings can be better met if they have a strong body.
- 4 **Fine muscle development** – during pre-school years children develop hand-muscle control in a haphazard and rather aimless manner – as a result many children are deficient in the area of fine muscle and hand dexterity. It is important for children to develop individual strength, finger coordination, and to begin their symmetrical training in the use of both hands. There are also necessary procedures to implement so as to enable children who have difficulty in tracking objects with their eyes to access learning – another important area for fine muscle development.
- 5 **Eye-hand coordination** – the combination of eyes and hands working together is necessary for the achievement of many tasks and experiences. Many children lack the ability visually to steer their hands through space to accomplish an appointed task.
- 6 **Eye-foot coordination** – children need to be able to control the movement and direction of their bodies by using their legs and feet to greatest advantage. Children need to be provided with experiences designed to correlate visual steering with movement of the feet.
- 7 **Body image** – children need to discover how their bodies move, they have to be able to sort out and distinguish one part of their body from another. Children begin to develop this awareness during infancy; so that this is further developed (and maximized to its highest degree) they need regular activities. If children develop a sound image of their bodies, they will have a base on which to build perceptual skills which will be required in future classroom activities and for life generally.
- 8 **Balance** – balance is the ability to sustain control of the body when using both sides simultaneously, individually or alternately. This involves transference of weight forwards, backwards and sideways. The ability to balance is essential in all locomotive tasks – if children have good balance their bodies can act in an integrated manner, freeing their minds to concentrate on related or abstract matters.

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- 9 **Rhythm** – the development of rhythm helps children develop coordinated body management. It leads to an efficiency and ease of movement, characterized by flow and coordination of movement action.
- 10 **Space and direction** – as part of developing body image awareness children must be able to identify their body position relative to their surroundings. They must be able to plan and execute an efficient course of action when moving from one position to another. The children's awareness of space and direction helps them to read from left to right (in Europe and America at least) and to form letters in an organized way – likewise, for movement needs, the ability to move freely in limited space occupied by others necessitates spacial awareness and the ability to change direction, sometimes quickly and deftly.

By use of a construct that groups the ten components into a pyramid structure (shown in Figure 2.3), thereby showing a group of building bricks to represent the child's body, we are able to consider what happens if any of these bricks were removed. For example, if number 10 were removed, the space and direction component, children would experience problems with movement which would involve locomotive elements of any sort. If a further function were removed, say the eye-hand coordination element, an intensification of problems would ensue, resulting in children with major deficits to their motor function capabilities. Add a shortfall of, say large muscle development, and we are moving into the realms of



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Figure 2.3 Pyramid of motor development (adapted from Stewart, 1990)