

## Parent Information Briefing Document

### Physical Literacy

by Bradley Takai - Director of Physiotherapy

#### Introduction

At the Institute of Golf we believe one of our responsibilities is to help parents and children develop a simple and clear understanding of Physical Literacy and its crucial importance when put into the context of wanting our children to participate in sport, not just for enjoyment or the pursuit of excellence, but most importantly for their health and social interaction.

#### What is Physical Literacy?

Physical Literacy is the development of both Fundamental Movement Skills and also Fundamental Sports Skills, or in our terms, Fundamental Golf Skills. The gradual learning of these skills provides a child with a better physical understanding and familiarity with their body, its capability's and its limitations. This knowledge in turn allows them to develop greater confidence in themselves and their abilities, and provide them with greater control over their bodies and its physical movements. This will then enable them to work on honing the skills to react intuitively and instinctively to the many and various demands that sporting (and life's) activities will place on them.

#### Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS)

FMS is not complex but it is different for everyone – basically FMS is a general term used to encompass the basic movements that most of us take for granted or expect to be instinctive. However when you work in an environment where you see hundreds if not thousands of children you very quickly realise that they are each unique and where some shine, others struggle and vice versa.

Simply put we can begin to categorise FMS Skills as follows:

- Locomotive skills i.e. walking, running, skipping, jumping etc.
- Stability skills i.e. balance (both stationary and in motion e.g. swinging a bat or a golf club).
- Sending and receiving skills (manipulative) i.e. throwing, kicking, hitting a ball with a bat/club, catching, trapping a soccer ball etc etc.

In our programmes we include a range of FMS skills such as throwing, jumping, balancing etc all of which are applicable as Fundamental Sports Skills required for Golf.

These are also activities that parents can learn and adopt and easily work on with their children. They can also be a fun way of spending quality time together, whether it's in the backyard, at the beach or even inside the house!

#### How kids learn FMS

Despite the fact that all kids develop, mature and learn at different speeds, we can reasonably predict that the majority will learn these skills in a similar order and go through similar stages of the learning processes. The order of learning and the stages of learning are based on age, nerve, muscle and brain development.

To understand what we mean we will use the example of learning to catch a ball.

- Firstly we learn to catch a ball, perhaps a soccer ball or similar size, with both hands.
- Then we learn to catch different sized balls e.g. a tennis ball.
- Then we learn to catch with one hand.
- Primarily we have learned to catch whilst standing still - so then we have to learn to catch whilst moving.

To catch a ball that is not thrown directly to us we have to learn to predict a point of interception and how fast we are going to need to move to be at that interception point so as to catch the ball e.g. cricket, baseball, softball, volleyball etc. But to achieve these aspects it is imperative that we have a good grounding in the basic FMS skills - learn to walk before you run so to speak.

Another example would be learning to throw a ball.

- Initially the act of throwing tends to be all arm action only - either underarm or overarm - either way there is little or no leg or body action - therefore not great distance or power. (Typically seen in the age range of 3 - 6 years but a late developer may still throw like this up to 7 or 8 depending on activity levels at school and home, with friends family or specialists. If we identified this as a shortcoming at 6 or above we would be recommending a course of action).
- As we get a little older and our body, brain, nerves and muscles have begun to mature, we begin to introduce a little torsional or rotational movement of our upper body and most likely step forward as we throw - typically however the relationship between the left and right sides of our brain are still a little immature and we tend to step forward onto the same foot as the arm we use to throw the ball. (Typically seen in the age range of 6 - 7 years but a late developer may still throw like this up to 8 - 9 or 10 depending on activity levels at school and home, with friends family or specialists. If we identified this as a shortcoming at 8 or above we would be recommending a course of action).
- As we mature further we learn to throw off the opposite leg or foot to our throwing arm and begin to generate greater rotational movement through our torso, so enabling a longer 'back-swing' if you like, of our arm and then the firing of our throwing hip (right arm, right hip) that generates lag and torque which creates power and distance. At the same time we learn to combine other skills to learn to control range and targeting. (Typically seen in the age range of 7 - 9 years onward but a late developer may only begin to throw like this as late as 10 or 11, depending on activity levels at school and home, with friends family or specialists. If we screened a child age 9 or above and they were not throwing like this, again we would be recommending action).

Once again these are the basic FMS skills at work described through what we referenced earlier as 'order and stage'. It is important to understand that trying to teach lets say a Stage 3 technique to a child who's physical development is Stage 1 is not effective and is more likely to cause frustration and disappointment for both parent and child through incorrect expectation levels and lack of achievement - this is where we can offer help and guidance.

### **Future Stars**

As Golf is our target sport we ensure that the primary fundamental skills that are focused on for improvement through the Future Stars programmes are:

- Balance and Stability i.e. walking the line.
- Co-ordination i.e. catching, skipping.
- Striking i.e. hitting.
- Sending object i.e. throwing, kicking, hitting.

We also know that many of the other FMS skills can have an extremely positive effect on the ability to improve golfing performance long term, so we also ensure that we include other fundamental movement skills, and/or recommend other sports to compliment FMS skills development.

This touches on another important topic which we will address in another Parent Information Brief - this is the subject of (sport) specialisation versus age - when should our children be specialising in a sport?

### **Our FMS checklist for parents**

- At least 60 minutes vigorous activity every day.
- A wide range of activities e.g. different size and shaped balls for throwing, catching and passing; climbing; jumping; balancing etc etc.
- Inclusion of professional instructor led programmes which will provide social activity and provide the opportunity for checking and consultation with instructors.
- Consult with a suitably qualified or focused professional.
- Basic instruction and encouragement - this also helps with leadership.
- Leadership through participation.

### **References:**

Sport & Recreation New Zealand (SPARC) provide some fantastic information and resources, which can be found out:

<http://www.sparc.org.nz/en-nz/young-people/Ages-5-12-Years/Developing-Fundamental-Skills/>

Canadian Sport for Life is an exceptional resource for parents, teachers and coaches and

<http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca/default.aspx?PageID=1020&LangID=en>

### **About the author:**

Brad Takai is a CEO and Co-founder of the Institute of Golf. Since teaming up with Craig in 2006, Brad has been able to uniquely bridge the technical and physical components of Golf, the foundation on which many of the Institute of Golfs concepts and philosophies are based on.

Brad Takai's Qualifications Include:

- Level 4 Institute of Golf Certified
- Bachelor of Health Science in Physiotherapy
- Level Two Kinetic Swing Certification
- Certified TPI Golf Fitness Instructor

Brad has created the medical framework and guidelines for the Institute of Golf. Brad is the personal physiotherapist to a number of New Zealand's leading Tour Professionals and amateur players, and helps oversee the development and management of these players. Brad continues to push the boundaries of the industry, with ongoing development of programmes, initiatives and strategies, as well building relationships with leading experts in the field to ensure that the Institute of Golf is a world leader in the golfing performance industry.

### **The Institute of Golf:**

All to many times in this day and age we are bombarded with new terminology. When left unexplained this typically generates many, if not all of these emotions within us, especially when it is with reference to our children or those that are under our care and responsibility.

- Frustration
- Annoyance
- Fear
- Concern
- Interest

It is our goal through this and subsequent Parent Information Briefing documents to help demystify some of this industry jargon, empower you the parent or caregiver with some simple knowledge and provide you with a simple resource for references to other sources of information out there on the world wide web.