



**Run**



**Jump**



**RIDE!**

**Fundamental Movement  
Skill Development  
for the Young Equestrian**

**A Guide for Coaches, Teachers and Parents**



## **There's a revolution going on in kids' sport.**

Research shows there is a right way and a right time to develop the fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills that benefit kids for their whole lives. Just as important, we've learned that by making the process fun for kids, they will stay active and have greater chances to become top-level athletes.

### **Because kids who have fun being active are more likely to stay active for life.**

Just as children need to be taught to read and write, they need to be taught how to run, jump and throw. After all, movement is a child's first language, and our ability to move is the most fundamental means we have of interacting with our world. It's called physical literacy. To develop physical literacy, there are certain fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills our children need to learn the right way, at the right time during their development. These skills include movements such as running, jumping, hopping, balancing, throwing and swimming.

The key to quality sport and physical activity is to design programs with the athletes in mind, whatever their age. That means doing the right thing, at the right time and in the right way.

### **FUNdamentals first**

Younger children benefit from participating in a variety of activities in which they learn a full range of fundamental movement skills. More complex sport skills should only be added to their repertoire when their bodies are ready. Plus participation should always be fun.

### **Focus on child development**

Because not all four-year-olds are the same – some children mature earlier, some a bit later – a child's skill progression should be dictated by their physical, mental and emotional development, not their chronological age.

### **Child small, not adult large**

Children are not little adults, so they shouldn't be participating in sports adults would. Kids benefit from equipment, playing fields and modified games that are scaled to their size.

### **Practice, practice, fun**

The more they get to participate – the more they get to touch the ball or puck – the quicker children improve their skills. This means smaller team sizes are best. And practices are more important than games. When players can have their own puck or ball they develop their skills much faster, and they have more fun while they're at it. Kids should practice two or three times for each game they play.

### **Winning is not a good measure**

Winning at a young age does not correlate to winning when your child is older. Long-term success comes from a long-term approach to skill development. And the stress from emphasizing winning is part of the reason 70% of kids quit sport by age 13.

## Run, Jump, RIDE! for the FUNdamental Equestrian.

### Key Factors Influencing the LTED – From the Equine Canada Long Term Equestrian Development Model

Fundamentals: Everyone needs to develop FUNdametal movement skills, motor skills and basic sport skills before puberty. Together, these skills add up to physical literacy. They are best learned through safe, fun and active participation in games in both structured and unstructured environments.

Activities that develop FUNdamental movement skills (FMS) that lay the groundwork for all other sports include:

- Athletics, running, throwing and jumping
- Gymnastics
- Vaulting
- Swimming
- Skiing
- Snowboarding
- Skating
- Cycling

Examples of motor skills that are developed include agility, balance, speed, coordination and time/space orientation.

Young Equestrians often miss out on the FUNdamentals unless parents and coaches make sure that they are active in other sports. Coaches can help by planning fun activities on and off the horse to develop athleticism and challenge physical and mental boundaries.

**Fundamental movement skills + motor skills + basic sport skills  
= physical literacy**

## The Young Equestrian and LTED Principles (Long Term Equestrian Development)

### “Fun, Safety and Active Participation”

Small children love to sit on ponies and ride. However, to accept a small child into a riding program may be difficult due to their physical abilities and cognitive abilities. This booklet is aimed at coaches, instructors or parents who teach young children on horseback and who are looking at a way to increase the child’s time with horses while providing fun and active FMS games. Elementary School teachers will also find some fun ways to put some fun and imagination into their Physical Education time.

**Grand Prix Jumping** – encompasses running and jumping along with memory skills

**Kentucky Derby/Pony Express** – fun running races that help the Childs fitness and motor skills

**Feed the Horse** – a bean bag toss into feed buckets encompasses throwing skills, hand eye coordination, and motor skills

**Water bucket race** – fill the water buckets from one end of the arena to the other, strength and motor skills

**Dressage or Reining Pattern** – have the kids walk trot and canter a set pattern, memorization skills along with motor skills

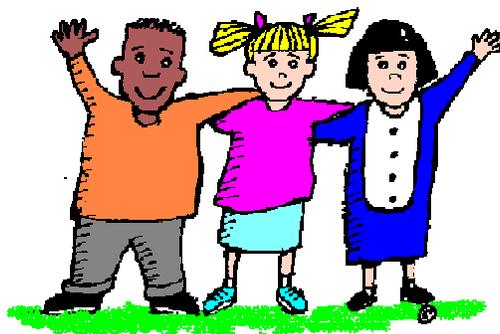
**Trail Course** – A combination of running, jumping and throwing which make up the basic Fundamental Movement Skills that children need to acquire to become better athletes and healthier in general.

**Catch the Horse** – Otherwise known as “tag” can be played with variations, improves funning skills, fitness and cooperation

These games can be used along with regular riding and stable management instruction. At the end of the camp or year, they can perform these games for their parents along with riding, to help get the children used to performing skills for an audience. The games in this guide are only a few suggestions. Creative coaches, instructors, teachers or parents are sure to invent other fun games for the young equestrian that can increase fun, participation and fundamental movement skills.

The emphasis on all of the FMS games is FUN! While the kids are having fun they are developing the movement skills that will help them become better athletes or riders.

Participation ribbons make the games even more fun.



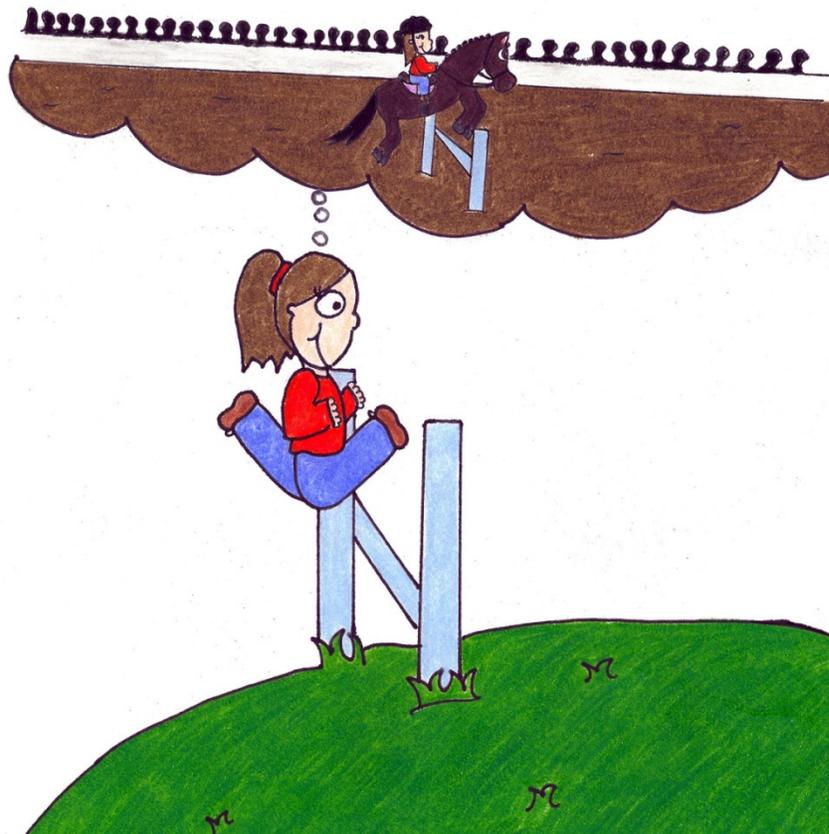
## Game: Grand Prix Jumping

**Equipment required:** jump standards, buckets, poles, jump numbers, indoor, outdoor arena or a grassy field. A school or community gym can also be used.

**Game guidelines:** Coach to set up a small jumping course, children to run and jump through the course or small grid. The kids can even jump the course in pairs. The course should not be too high and the jump poles must be able to be knocked down if the child hits it. The lightest of jump poles should be used.

The coach should check the course and the area the course is set up in for safety and eliminate potential hazards.

This game also helps the children to work at memorizing as they will have to know the course.



## Game: Kentucky Derby or Pony Express

**Equipment required:** flat arena (indoor or out), grass field, school gym or community center, rope or tape for the finish line and start line

**Game guidelines:** the children line up and race to the finish just like the Kentucky Derby. The coach can choose a distance that is easy for any child to run and make it longer as the children progress. As a variation the children can run this as a relay and be Pony Express riders.



## Game: Feed the Horse

**Equipment required:** bean bags, buckets or rings. Hay bags and hay. Indoor or outdoor arena, or grass field.

**Game guidelines:** Each child stands behind a line and throws the bean bag into the bucket or ring. They pretend that they are tossing hay into feeders. There are commercial bean bag toss games that could be purchased for this game.

Coaches can also change the game to have the kids fill haybags and run to hang them on a hook.



## Game: Water bucket race

**Equipment required:** water bucket, small containers and water. Indoor or outdoor arena or grass field

**Game guidelines:** the children fill the small container and run to the larger bucket. This game can be done by teams or individually. This is a summer time game as the kids may get quite wet!



## Game: Dressage or Reining pattern

**Equipment required:** letters or markers, indoor or outdoor arena, grass field or gym. Poles or dressage ring fences

**Game guidelines:** Each child is given a simple dressage or reining pattern to run through inside of the marked area. The kids can walk, trot or canter as directed.



## Game: Trail course

**Equipment required:** small obstacles, jumps, balls, bean bags, buckets, poles

**Game guidelines:** The coach puts together a simple course that the child follows. The tasks could be simple combination of the other games played. The course should be age appropriate in difficulty. The course can be run individually or as a relay with teams.



## Game: Catch the Horse

**Equipment required:** none!

**Game guidelines:** This is a game of tag. One child is the horse until another catches them. Then this child is the horse. Variations of the game can be each child is put in a "holding area" until all of the horses are caught.



## Hard Hats can save lives!

Always be sure that children wear ASTM approved Equestrian Hard Hats that are well fitted and secured with a snug chin strap. Horses and Ponies are unpredictable and accidents can happen even when all precautions have been taken. Bicycle helmets, hockey helmets or helmets designed for other sports do not always provide the protection required for Equestrian use. Younger children have heads that are proportionally larger than that of adults and if they fall they often fall on their heads.

### Protective Headgear Can:

- Help to prevent those injuries associated with head impact that are caused by;

#### **Translational Acceleration**

#### **Skull deformation or penetration**

*Helmets function by absorbing impact energy, sometimes through destruction of the helmet itself, and by stopping sharp objects from piercing the skull.*

*Protective helmets cannot prevent injuries in all cases, depending on the accident conditions.*

### Protective Headgear Cannot:

- Prevent injuries in all cases, including cases in which the accident conditions are within the limits of protection specified for the head gear. There are too many variables.
- Prevent injury due to impacts to areas that are not covered by the headgear.
- Be expected to prevent injuries for conditions that are in excess of the performance capabilities of the headgear.

When working around horses or riding, the child should wear sturdy boots with a heel, hard hats and comfortable clothing that is not loose enough to catch on anything.



Let's create a new generation of equestrians who never ride without wearing a helmet.

## Other Programs for FUNdamental stage riders:

P'tit Trot is a stable management and riding program developed with the FUNdamental age athlete in mind. It is available in both English and Western disciplines and provides a colorful, graphic book that teaches basic riding and stable management that is appropriate for the younger horse enthusiasts.

For more information regarding this program go to [www.ptittrot.ca](http://www.ptittrot.ca)

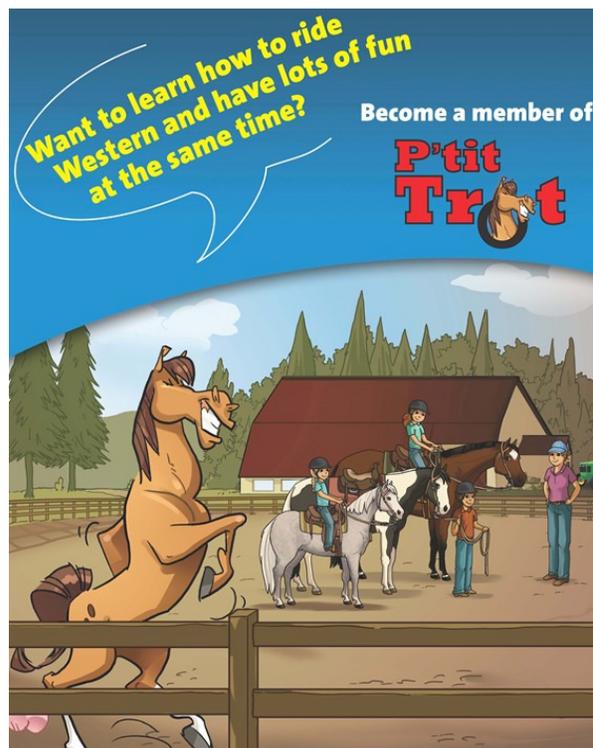
English and Western Learn to Ride Programs are progressive riding and stable management exams starting at a very basic Level 1 and progressing with increased difficulty up to Rider 8 (English) and Intermediate Rider Basic Component (Western). The lowest levels would be suitable for equestrians under the age of 12

## Want to know more?

For more information on the English and Western Learn to Ride Programs contact [coaching@hcbc.ca](mailto:coaching@hcbc.ca) or go to [www.hcbc.ca](http://www.hcbc.ca)

For more information about the Long Term Equestrian Development Model go to [www.hcbc.ca](http://www.hcbc.ca) or to receive a copy of this document contact [coaching@hcbc.ca](mailto:coaching@hcbc.ca) information is also available in a Parent's Guide to the LTED available from HCBC.

For more information about Canadian Sport for Life and Athlete Development go to [www.canadiansportforlife.ca](http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca)



**Parents Check list for Coaches and Instructors.** Here are some questions to ask yourself when evaluating a potential Coach for your child.

- Is this Coach Certified?
- Is this Coach Insured?
- Does this Coach ask that the student carry insurance?
- Is this Coach well respected in the community?
- Does this Coach practice risk management?
- Does this person coach as a hobby or a business?
- Does the Coach know First Aid, and is able to use it?
- Is the safety of the student a prime concern?
- Is the lesson area safe, contained and free of clutter?
- Is he/she punctual and reliable?
- Do you get the full lesson time?
- Do they constantly cancel lessons on short notice?
- Does this Coach practice good business procedures?
- Does this Coach provide supervision at all times?
- If there are lesson horses, are they in good health and condition?
- Are the horses in the barn well fed on a regular basis, and subject to sound feeding practices?
- Does this coach have a zero abuse policy towards all horses?
- Does this coach have a zero abuse tolerance in regards to drugs and medication for horses?
- Are the lesson horses well mannered and appropriate for your child's ability?
- Does the Coach use correct, well-fitted tack which is in good condition?
- Does this Coach encourage Goal Setting for his/her students?
- Does this Coach follow lesson plans?
- Is this Coach able to demonstrate what they teach?
- Does this Coach regularly update their knowledge?
- Does this Coach understand different learning styles and teach accordingly?
- Does this Coach use teaching aids, such as VCR's, blackboards, diagrams, or use a microphone when needed?
- Is rider fitness, nutrition and mental skills training part of the program?
- Does this Coach relate well to the student with positive feedback?
- Is this person neat, clean and business-like?
- Is this Coach able to communicate well?
- Does this coach challenge the student appropriately?
- Does this coach explain clearly what the student should do?
- Does this coach use warm-up and cool-down procedures for horse and rider?
- Has this coach produced good riders with correct skills?
- Is this coach a good role model for your child?

Check out the HCBC website for more coaching information, including the new HCBC Coaches and Officials

For more information about Certified Coaches, contact:  
Horse Council BC  
27336 Fraser Highway, Aldergrove, BC 4W 3N5  
604-856-4304, 1-800-345-8055, fax 604-856-4302  
Email [coaching@hcbc.ca](mailto:coaching@hcbc.ca)

Please contact Horse Council BC if you have any questions regarding the suggested questions

## Run, Jump, RIDE! Report Form

If you have used this program we would love to hear from you. In order to obtain or keep funding for projects like the Run, Jump, RIDE! HCBC needs to be able to report participation numbers to our funding agencies.

Names are not required, just age, gender and the town that they live in. HCBC membership is not a requirement but we would like to know if they are members.

Age	Gender M/F	Town	HCBC member yes or no

Coach Name: \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

Certification: (if any) \_\_\_\_\_ (optional)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of sessions: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you in advance for returning this form. Your cooperation is very much appreciated.

**Return to:**

Horse Council BC, 27336 Fraser Hwy, Aldergrove, BC V4W 3N5

604-856-4304 1-800-345-8055 fax 604-856-4302

coaching@hcbc.ca



Courtesy of:

**Horse Council BC**

**27336 Fraser Highway, Aldergrove, BC V4W 3N5**

**604-856-4304 1-800-345-8055 fax 604-856-4302**

[www.hcbc.ca](http://www.hcbc.ca)

**Many thanks to Caitlin Robar for her illustrations in this booklet.**

