In an ideal world all elementary school children would have frequent opportunities to develop competency in basic motor skills and movement forms. They would initially receive quality instruction from a certified physical education instructor and be provided regular practice opportunities with specific feedback from instructors, as well as access to equipment and physical activity facilities during recesses, lunch periods, and after school. Their movements would become increasingly autonomous because of the development of muscle memory, allowing them to perform repetitive movements without conscientious thought (Magill, 2004). This would prepare them to transition, as adolescents, into successful recreational, expressive, and competitive sports participation (Clark & Metcalfe, 2002; Wallhead & Buckworth, 2004). Because they would have already mastered basic, transferable motor skills and movement forms, they would be able to focus primarily on strategic thinking, aesthetic expression, and teamwork (Young, LaCourse, & Husak, 2000). The importance of childhood movement competency is specifically addressed in NASPE’s National Standard 1:

A physically educated person demonstrates competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities (NASPE, 2004).

In reality, not all children are provided adequate instruction, feedback, and practice time in basic movement and motor skills. Many elementary schools do not employ certified physical education instructors and, even in those that do, there is typically not enough activity time in physical education class and the rest of the day for students to engage in sufficient daily movement and motor skill practice (Coelho, 2010). This is unfortunate because there appears to be an optimal learning time for the development of movement and motor skills, and when these skills are not learned at an early age, they are more difficult to acquire as adults (Stodden, Goodway, Lagendorfer, Robertson, Redfyll, & Garcia, 2008). In addition, children who lack basic movement and motor skill proficiency often drop out or are excluded by others from organized and free play experiences (Center for Disease Control and Prevention, CDC, 1996).

There are various ways teachers can motivate students to practice movement and motor skills independently. Teachers can require children to document their independent motor and movement skill practice in journals, logs, and homework calendars (Smith & Claxton, 2003). They can also require students to present individual or group movement sequences they have created (Hill, 2009). Students can also receive extra physical education credit for participating on non-school athletic or performance teams. Benefits of practicing movement and motor skills outside of class include increased perceived competence, enjoyment, physical activity, and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997).

Challenge System to Promote Movement and Motor Skill

Another way to motivate students to develop specific movement and motor skills is to provide them with a specific set of mastery tasks. The Movement and Motor Skill Challenge System is an example of an organized approach to having students develop mastery in basic movement and motor skills that will provide a foundation for later sport skill development. In this system, students are introduced to a specific set of challenging movement and motor skill activities and then allowed to periodically perform the skills to accumulate points, either as an individual, a partner, or a team member.

The Movement and Motor Skill Challenge System requires minimal equipment making it easy for students to practice the skills both during and
### Figure 1. Movement and Motor Skill Challenges Scorecard

**Directions:** Circle each skill successfully completed and enter total number of points at bottom of form.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Challenge</th>
<th>Level One (1 pt.)</th>
<th>Level Two (3 pt.)</th>
<th>Level Three (5 pt.)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gold Glove</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bean Bag Exchange</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neck Drop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High Fives</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catch 3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Racquet Flip</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Juggling</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hacky Sack</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jump Roping</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hula Hoop</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Points**

*Total Points*  

*100 points possible (90 points plus 10 extra points for attempting all 10 Challenges)*

Outside of regular class time, each challenge includes three levels of difficulty in order to provide an appropriate skill progression (Turner & Turner, 2007, Turner & Turner, 2005). The cumulative point system allows students to achieve a maximum of 100 points which should motivate many students to engage in focused practice in order to set goals to achieve a higher score. Students who are not initially successful at a challenge should be encouraged to continue to practice in order to improve their performance incrementally over time. In addition, with 10 of the 100 points awarded for at least attempting each challenge at one or more levels, students should be more motivated to practice each of the skills (see Figure 1).

After students have been initially taught the movements and motor skill challenges, they should be provided access to equipment so they can practice during recess and lunch periods. While most of the Level 1 challenges may be initially attempted by children as early as 3rd grade, the Level 2 and 3 tasks are more developmentally appropriate for 4th grade and above because of the advanced hand eye coordination and timing requirements (California State Board of Education, 2009). These challenges include the basic manipulative skills of throwing, catching, striking, and kicking, as well as several that require proficiency in body management (i.e., jump roping and hula hoop) (Pangrazzi & Beighle, 2009). The Movement and Motor Skill Challenge System includes: 1) Gold Glove, 2) Bean Bag Exchange, 3) Neck Drop, 4) High Fives, 5) Catch Three, 6) Racquet Flip and Catch, 7) Juggling, 8) Hacky Sack, 9) Jump Roping, and 10) Hula Hoop. Following are detailed descriptions of each of the challenges.

**Challenge 1: Gold Glove**

**Equipment** — Frisbees and beanbags

**Level 1** — Hold a Frisbee with a beanbag on it. Flip the beanbag into the air at least three feet up and catch it with the Frisbee five times in a row.

**Level 2** — Same as Level 1, but use two bags.

**Level 3** — Toss Frisbee and two bags at least three feet above head. Catch Frisbee first and then catch both bags in the Frisbee.

**Challenge 2: Bean Bag Exchange**

**Equipment** — Beanbags

**Level 1** — Stand and toss two beanbags at least three feet above head and catch both bags in the same hand.

**Level 2** — Alternate tossing two beanbags in one hand (juggle with one hand five times in a row).

**Level 3** — Place one bean bag in palm (facing downward) and one between...
index and middle fingers (upward) of same time. Toss both beanbags up and catch them in reversed positions.

**Challenge 3: Neck Drop**
*Equipment—Tennis ball*

**Level 1**—One partner stands behind other partner with tennis ball lightly pressing ball against partner’s neck. When back partner drops the ball, front partner, who has both hands against sides of legs, must catch the ball behind back before it hits floor.

**Level 2**—Same as Level 1, but front person claps hands before catching ball behind back.

**Level 3**—Same as Level 1, but front person claps hands twice before catching ball behind back.

**Challenge 4: High Fives**
*Equipment—Beanbags*

**Level 1**—One person tosses beanbag into air and claps hands five times before catching it.

**Level 2**—Partners face each other. One partner tosses a beanbag into the air and the partner high five each other five times before one partner catches the beanbag.

**Level 3**—Same as Level 2 except both partners toss a bag and perform five high fives before each partner catches a bag.

**Challenge 5: Catch Three**
*Equipment—Beanbags*

**Level 1**—One person tosses three beanbags into the air (at least three feet above head) and catches all three.

**Level 2**—Same as Level 1, except perform a 360 degree turn while beanbags are in the air and then catch all three.

**Level 3**—One person stands and tosses three beanbags into the air (at least three feet above their head) and attempts to catch all three while sitting or laying down.

**Challenge 6: Racquet Flip and Catch**
*Equipment—Tennis racquets and bean bags*

**Level 1**—Toss and catch a tennis racquet after one rotation.

**Level 2**—Same, but do it five times in a row.

**Level 3**—Same, but flip a beanbag into air, flip and catch racquet, and then catch beanbag on racquet.

**Challenge 7: Juggling**
*Equipment—Scarves and beanbags*

**Level 1**—Juggle three scarves using a “U, X, U” motion with both hands five consecutive times.

**Level 2**—Juggle three bags using a “U, X, U” motion five consecutive times.

**Level 3**—Stand side by side with a partner. Each partner uses outside hand only and the partners use a “U, X, U” motion to juggle five consecutive times.

**Challenge 8: Hacky Sack**
*Primary Skills—Striking and kicking*

**Equipment—Hacky Sacks or beanbags**

**Level 1**—Alternate palm and back of hand bounces to same hand and opposite hand five in a row.

**Level 2**—Bump on opposite thigh five times in a row.

**Level 3**—Bump on inside of opposite foot five times in a row.

**Challenge 9: Jump Roping**
*Equipment—Speed jump ropes*

**Level 1**—Jump ten consecutive times while running in place.

**Level 2**—Jump ten consecutive times while running in place and alternating crossing and uncrossing hands.

**Level 3**—Perform five consecutive double unders.

**Challenge 10: Hula Hoop**
*Equipment—Hula hoops*

**Level 1**—Spin hula hoop five consecutive times around waist.

**Level 2**—Spin hula hoop around arm five times and then switch arms in motion and spin around other arm five times.

**Level 3**—Spin hula hoop around neck five consecutive times.

The Movement and Motor Skill Challenge System may be modified by a teacher for their class and additional levels of difficulty added. For example, a more difficult variation of the Bean Bag Exchange Challenge (Level 3) would require using two bean bags in both right and left hands simultaneously. Teachers can also create entirely new multi-level challenges for other activities such as badminton, dance, tumbling, and basketball in order to widen the skill base of their student, more comprehensively address state standards, and to foster an interest in those areas.

Students may combine their scores with a partner or a team as part of an intra or extra school competition. In contrast, teachers may determine to individualize the challenges for each student, personalizing instruction to help them to reach a predetermined point level rather than trying to outscore a classmate (Grineski, 1996). By setting up the Challenges so that groups of students accumulate points to try to exceed team goals, all students are given an opportunity to be successful and student proficiency may ultimately exceed either an individual or competitive format (Johnson & Johnson, 1983; Orlick, 2006). In addition, the group point accumulation approach should result in higher participation levels due to increased peer teaching and peer support (Grineski, 1994).

The Challenges can be initially demonstrated by a live model, posted in illustrative pictures on a bulletin board or website. Teachers can also videotape students performing the skills and then post them on their webpage so students can access the correct form for each skill at any time. Physical education teachers can select a different set of skills for the entire student body each school year and then sponsor a culminating event in which all students are scored in the skills.

**Conclusion**

Given increasing childhood inactivity and obesity, and minimal time for quality physical education in elementary and secondary schools, it is essential that children are motivated and held accountable for independent motor and movement skill practice. The Movement and Motor Skill Challenge System provides a comprehensive set of stimulating, transferable, multi-level skills that children will enjoy, experience success, and hopefully increase their motivation to be physically active on a regular basis.

**References**


Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1996). Guidelines for school and community programs to pro-


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