

MoveWell

Supporting children's learning and enjoyment of movement





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Introduction

He oranga ngākau, He pikinga waiora.

Positive feelings in your heart will raise your sense of self-worth.

Ministry of Education, 1999, page 4

MoveWell is a resource to provide practical ideas, advice and support to those who are involved in helping develop children's confidence, knowledge, skills, and attitudes so that they enjoy participating in physical activity.

It combines evidence and research into a practical games-based resource, and will have a particular value for primary teachers through its strong link to the health and physical education learning area in *The New Zealand Curriculum*:

learning in, through, and about movement, children gain an understanding that movement is integral to human expression and that it can contribute to people's pleasure and enhance their lives.

Ministry of Education, 2007, page 23

MoveWell represents a significant shift from the idea of teaching and developing *fundamental movement skills* and recognises that these develop in many ways for children, including through children initiating and directing their own play.

MoveWell aims to build from children's playful and creative natures and provide support in situations where adults are facilitating learning experiences with children/tamariki. It recognises that in addition to the learning resulting from a child's own play, there is also a significant value in the support, encouragement, and learning that can develop through adult connection.

MoveWell places well-structured game experiences as central to learning so that children's learning extends beyond the physical competencies and confidence to play games. They also develop a sense of who they are among others (an appreciation of their own strengths), a sense of belonging (when accepted and appreciated by others), and a sense of community (when valued by a team or group).

When these outcomes are cumulative and positive, they are likely to encourage life-fulfilling and perhaps even lifelong engagement in enjoyable physical activity.

The resource is the outcome of collaboration between Sport New Zealand (SNZ), the Accident Compensation Corporation of New Zealand (ACC), and Physical Education New Zealand (PENZ). These organisations have a shared interest in the quality of movement experiences that include play, physical education, active recreation, and sport. It links to the Sport New Zealand Physical Literacy approach (Sport NZ, 2016) and *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) and aims to introduce ACC's SportSmart injury prevention principles for the primary school age group.

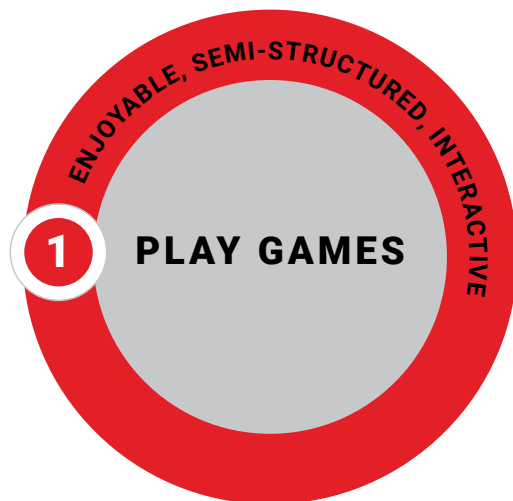
MoveWell recognises the need for children to experience physical activity in a variety of ways, in forms that are meaningful to them, their culture, and wellbeing.

Games are a uniquely enjoyable context for learning that reaches well beyond physical skill development to include both mental and social health outcomes.

Teachers and others are encouraged to design learning environments that promote positive outcomes for all children. The challenge for you is to provide well-structured activities that enable these positive outcomes for all children. We invite you to read on and discover how *MoveWell* can help to build a more active and caring society.

The following five principles provide a guideline for using this resource.





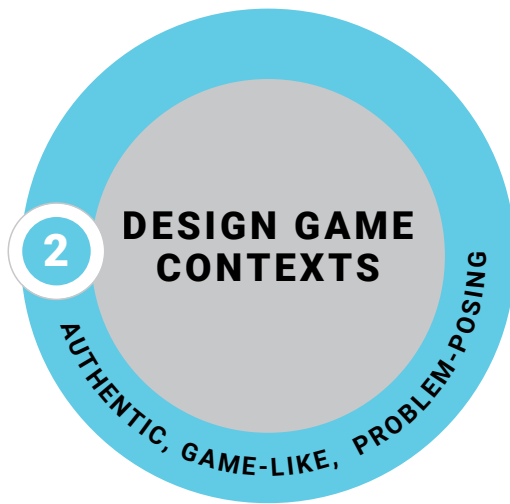
1. PLAY IS CENTRAL TO LEARNING

Through enjoyable, well-designed games, children not only develop abilities in context, they also develop a sense of self, a sense of belonging, and a sense of community.

MoveWell provides a child-centred approach in which children learn through playing games. Children love to play games. When playing games, they live in the moment and they learn to be creative, imaginative, expressive, skilful, cooperative, and active in pleasurable and fun ways. Children learn when they have fun, interact with others, learn through inquiry, and see themselves as being successful and valued team members. Games help develop a sense of self, a sense of belonging, and a sense of community. These outcomes of early engagement in physical education, physical activity, and sport are far more significant than sporting prowess.

Play games:

- that give children a positive experience and encourage them to want to play again
- that provide all children with a positive sense of who they are
- that develop a sense that they belong and are valued by their peer group
- that enable and encourage children to be inventive, creative, imaginative, expressive, skilful, cooperative, and active
- because it's fun, which is important to everyone's wellbeing.



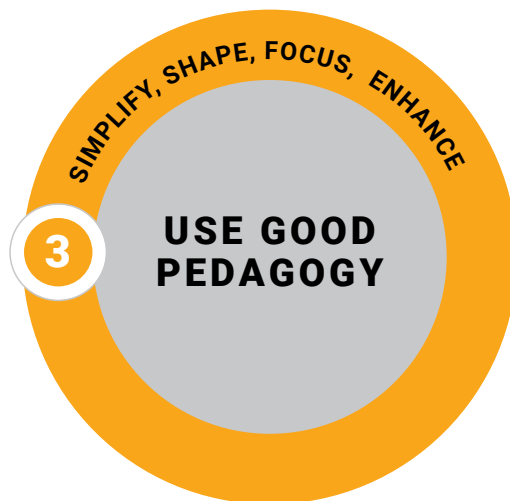
GAME CONTEXTS PROVIDE AUTHENTIC LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Children learn to swim in water, they learn to skateboard on a skateboard, and they learn to play games by participating in them. They do this best when they are well supported in socially inclusive learning environments.

Children need a variety of game experiences that challenge them and provide them with opportunities to develop in physically, emotionally, and socially safe ways. This does not mean providing adult versions of games. You can enhance the experience by setting up well-designed games that encourage children to inquire and challenge themselves through their play.

When designing game contexts, teachers and coaches should aim to:

- modify the activity to match the ability level of the children by changing the rules, equipment, groups, playing area, or demands of the task so that all children achieve success
- cater to the different needs, interests, and abilities of all children
- avoid elimination games
- establish a positive environment in which children interact in a supportive and enthusiastic way
- provide semi-structured, open game environments that lead to positive experiences and a sense of achievement for all children.



GOOD PEDAGOGY INVOLVES ACTIVE TEACHING THAT CATERS FOR ALL CHILDREN'S NEEDS

Learning is enhanced when teachers and others actively engage in designing inclusive lessons, guiding children's learning, and setting problems that engage them in inquiry and problem solving.

The game context should be appropriate to the children's interests and capabilities. When an activity connects to what children can do and like doing, engagement deepens because they willingly spend time playing, exploring, and creating movement in meaningful ways. One way to achieve this is through using a simple 'Let Me Play' model to shape your support:

Leave me to play – Just let me have a go and have fun so that I can work it out myself.

Watch me play – Be there, be interested, and understand what I can do.

Help me play – Give me the support I need in a way that allows me to work it out.

Designing for engagement and challenge also involves modifying activities so that children's needs and learning are matched to the activity. This can be done by:

- **Simplifying** the activity while retaining the essential elements to ensure early success (retain the primary rules, set appropriate boundaries, use small teams, preferably providing some degree of 'challenge by choice' option for the children).
- **Shaping** the practice by manipulating the key variables to create the required learning environment (size of field, the ratio of attackers to defenders, opening or closing the rule constraints).
- **Focusing** the children's attention on the key objectives with guided discovery. Ask inquiry-focused questions and set appropriate problem-solving tasks, with the specific goal of improving children's success and enjoyment.
- **Enhancing** practice by broadening or refining the skill expectations (perhaps by modifying the rules to quicken the pace or changing the playing parameters to create more open space or reduce it, depending on the learning goals).
- **Focusing** on the children's needs, skills, and abilities is particularly relevant when considering disability. Aspects to think about include the surface area, colour contrasts, where the sun is, what equipment to use, and how best to make up the groups of children.

Use guided discovery and problem solving

Guided discovery involves setting problems that challenge children to find solutions. There are two approaches: In a convergent approach, the teacher guides children's inquiry towards discovering a known or best answer to a particular problem. In a divergent approach, the teacher sets a problem that allows many possible solutions and encourages children to create and discover as many different solutions to the problem as possible.

Knowing which approach to use comes from understanding and knowing your learners. This can be developed through using the 'watch them play' emphasis in the suggested model to the left.

Design activities that enable high levels of participation by:

- using small-sided games or small groups (teams)
- allowing choice so that players can self-select their own ability group
- adapting the rules and game conditions to encourage full participation for all ability levels
- allowing lots of time for practice
- ensuring that all children have access to equipment
- using game activities rather than isolated skill drills in which children are standing around waiting their turn, whenever possible
- using problem-solving games rather than teacher-directed drills.



THROUGH GAMES, CHILDREN DEVELOP THEIR PERSONAL, SOCIAL, AND CULTURAL IDENTITY

Participating in enjoyable game activities provides opportunities to develop positive personal, social, and cultural outcomes central to helping one grow in life, know one's own strengths, and contribute to others (family, community, and land).

The game environment is as much a personal, social, and cultural learning experience as it is a physical skill-learning experience. Generally, children are open to learning and willing to participate in enjoyable game activities, and this provides opportunities to develop positive personal and social outcomes.

MoveWell also recognises the importance of cultural competence and valuing cultural difference. Games can affirm and validate the culture and cultural competence of each child through their participation. Cultural competence involves understanding, respecting, and valuing culture and knowing how to recognise culture as an asset.

Explicitly teaching about caring, fairness, equity, active listening, and including others, as well as sharing and giving, adds collective strength to all. At the same time, we need to design learning situations that encourage children to be resourceful and resilient.

Encourage positive personal, social, and cultural outcomes by:

- designing activities that are inclusive of all children
- designing activities in which all children are challenged and can gain a sense of achievement
- enabling cooperative activities that encourage children to work as a group or team and share the joys of different social and cultural experiences
- enabling the children to have input into the nature of the activity – that is, use a co-constructive pedagogical approach
- using time-outs or group discussion times to enable children to discuss and share their thoughts about how the game can be played or how they feel about their experiences (that is, provide opportunities for them to tell their stories)
- praising and encouraging the children and providing effective feedback.

Games should encourage the development of personal and social skills

Teachers and others should create learning environments that encourage children to develop personal abilities and attitudes for engaging in play and making a meaningful contribution. Play activities should encourage children to adhere to the rules and principles of 'fair play' while taking personal responsibility for their own learning. This may mean being willing to get involved and try new things and being able to follow rules, which hopefully will result in developing a sense of pride, self-respect, and self-esteem.

Secondly, children should be encouraged to develop social skills. These include being able to work cooperatively and inclusively with team-mates, being willing to resolve conflicts peacefully, and being able to participate safely while also taking responsibility for the safety of others. This also means respecting the equipment, facilities, and environment and learning to compete fairly and, when required, to lead others to success. Developing these skills does not necessarily happen naturally and may need to be explicitly taught.

Encourage and create fair learning environments

Fairness is about equity not equality – it is not one rule for all.

Teaching about and practising equity rather than equality means introducing rules that make games fair for all children. This can mean introducing different rules for different players. Children often do this themselves in their own free play, for example, when they play with younger siblings. The values of fairness and fair play create a sense of belonging and a sense of community. Teaching these values requires teachers to consider individual differences and design play contexts that meet individual needs. This is especially important when considering disability and inclusion.

When they play together, children learn to value and accept others' differences. Valuing difference often calls for knowledge, patience, and empathy. Values that lead to inclusive attitudes have to be explicitly addressed by, for example, creating game and play scenarios that provide playful, physical interaction that can lead to discussions about equity and fairness for children. During games, children's emotions can range from unabashed excitement and joyfulness to frustration and resentment. These scenarios should be seen as opportunities for learning because emotional investment in games allows children to engage in meaningful discussions about their feelings and experiences. This may involve sharing exciting 'wow' moments, or at the other extreme, it could mean them engaging in conflict resolution so that they learn how to manage this in appropriate ways.



PLAYING GAMES DEVELOPS THE COMPETENCE AND CONFIDENCE TO PLAY GAMES WITH OTHERS AND TRY OTHER PHYSICAL ACTIVITIES

Developing children's game-playing ability helps to build the competence and confidence to willingly spend time playing, exploring, and enjoying games with others.

MoveWell encourages children to develop their competence and confidence so that they feel that they can get involved, interact with others, play games, and try other physical activities. Games are an excellent medium for teaching a broad range of game skills that build the competence and confidence and motivation to want to play games with others.

One of the unique things about games is their ability to help develop this competence or skill. In *MoveWell*, we use a more encompassing definition of skill than has previously been considered. Researchers today recognise skill as involving the ability to read the situation, make decisions, create and adapt solutions, and effect a successful outcome. This view implies two points relevant to learning skill. Firstly, it recognises that the context determines what being skilful is, and therefore, learning in context preserves all the environmental and game-like features of the skill. Secondly, skill emerges as the performer encounters problems posed by the game setting. In other words, games provide real problems and situations for children to work out as they play. Research shows that skills taught in isolation do not necessarily transfer.

Game skills include teamwork, cooperation, and support. However, these terms are not just meant in the purely social sense. Teamwork is about playing with confidence and competence in your position, supporting other players in a game context, and not just about getting on with your teammates. Cooperation, likewise, is not only about being socially cooperative but also about working together within a team context: for example, in a game of team tag, this could mean teaming up to corner and tag an opposing player. This is teamwork and cooperation, and these are game skills that children learn when playing meaningful games in context.

Previously you may have taught movement skills, such as catching, throwing, kicking, passing, and jumping. Movement skills include large body movements as well more precise and small body actions. When supporting children to develop these skills, using the context of the game is far more motivating and successful than designing experiences that rely on practising tasks in isolation.

Should you teach the correct technique?

Our advice is that you should not start by teaching technique but rather develop the child's understanding and willingness to play the game first (*Leave me to play*). If and when necessary, you can help children develop their abilities once you have understood the child's needs (*Watch me play, then Help me play*) through short individual or small-group learning situations that can be designed into the game. Learning should always be situated in real games, which enable children to develop their ability to adapt to real situations.

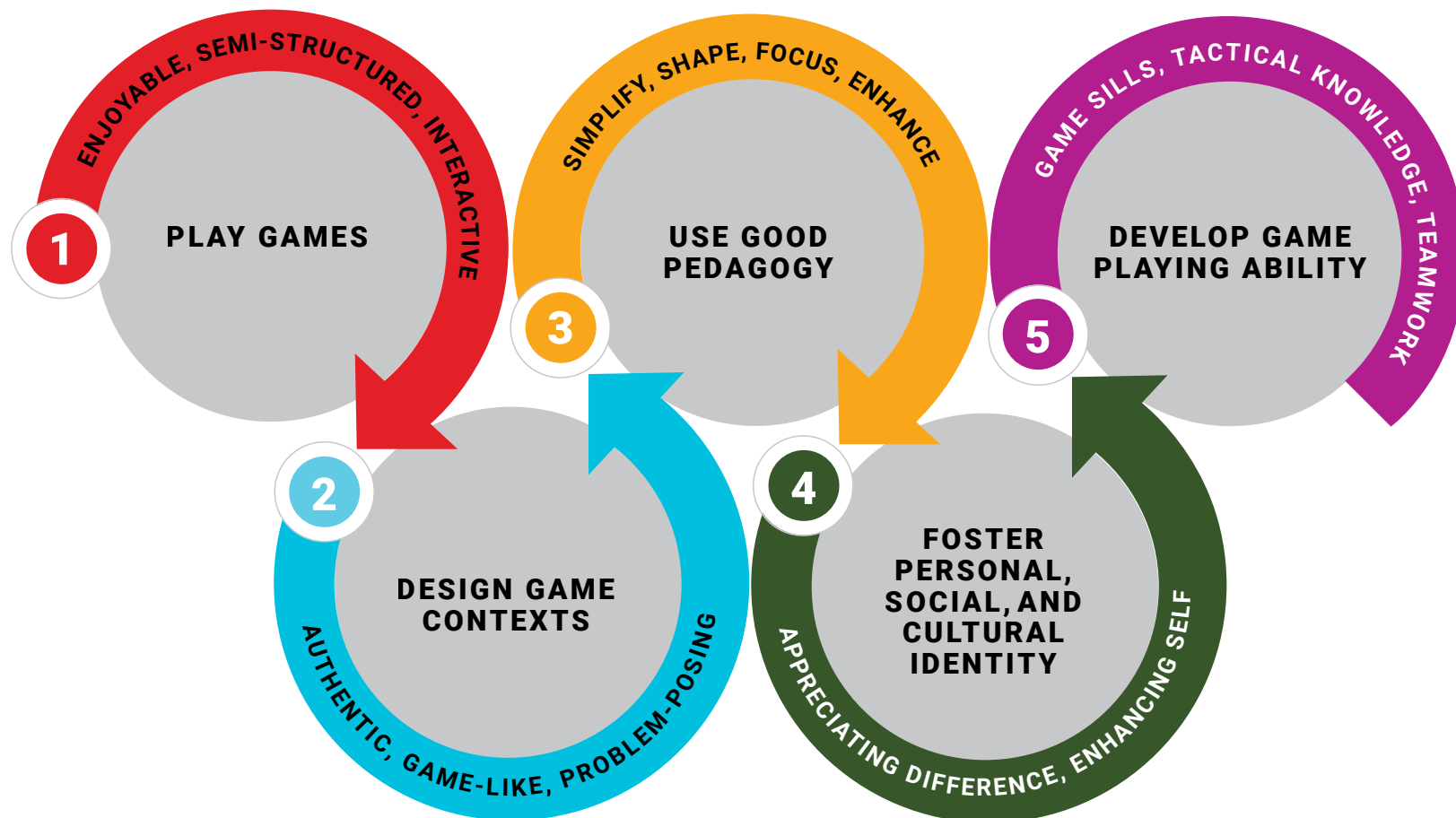
Provide a range of game experiences that:

- develop game skills such as the ability to read the situation, to support fellow players, to work as a team, and to create and adapt solutions
- develop movement skills that enhance game-playing ability, such as kicking, jumping, throwing, catching, passing, and dodging – teach these through a game context rather than in isolation
- provide variety of practice that requires children to skilfully adapt to different contexts.

MoveWell Framework

These five principles define the *MoveWell* approach and are well supported by contemporary theorising and research relating to games education and skill acquisition¹.

We trust that you will enjoy supporting children in this way.



¹ for example see, Gibson, 1966, 1979; Kelso, 1995; Button et al, 2020; Chow et al, 2015; Ovens, 2013; Ovens et al, 2013, Ovens & Smith, 2006; Sheets Johnstone, 2011; Slade et al, 2019; Smith, 2011, 2013, 2015, 2016.

How to use this resource

MoveWell is a resource for teachers, coaches, and whānau who want to support the development of game skills for children. Game skills are not necessarily individual in nature and often involve more than one player. For example, attacking a goal is a game skill that involves several players working together. Meanwhile, the defenders work together to stop the attack. A teacher or coach should aim to teach children how to work together to perform these game skills, which develop children's ability to play games.

The resource also guides teachers and coaches to develop children's movement skills in an enjoyable, games-centred way. Individual movement skills, such as throwing, catching, kicking, passing, and so on are important to learn. However, these are best taught through games – as effective movement solutions to the problems posed by the game. Movement skills taught in isolation can result in children struggling to transfer them effectively into games. This resource focuses on teaching children the skills that give them the competence and confidence to play games with others and feel a sense of success. While the game category matrices are not definitive, they capture the more generic skills of each game form that can be taught to primary-school-aged children.

MoveWell can be used to develop game and movement skills for children in health and physical education in schools, for coaching in sports clubs, for community groups, and in the home.

About the MoveWell principles

The five *MoveWell* principles are explained in the introduction. Engage with these to use this resource to its full potential. The principles underpin the philosophy of the resource and are designed to ensure that the children's learning experiences are positive and enjoyable.

About the games

The resource includes 60 games to develop game and movement skills and promote social and personal development for children. The resource is divided into six sections for different game categories: invasion and tag games, cooperative games, net/wall games, striking/fielding games, target games, and challenge games.

About the game skills matrices

Each section begins by describing the game form and is followed with a matrix that identifies and explains the game skills that can be developed through the games in that section. The games and game skills included in each category are extensive but not definitive. They are the recommended games for developing children's game-playing ability, which reflects the *MoveWell* philosophy and principles. Where this resource refers to 'skill', it is not suggesting isolated skill-drills. Skill emerges in real contexts, in and through the game when players read the play, make decisions in real time, and successfully carry out goal-directed actions.

Each game has a brief outline that describes the game. It also has information about the equipment needed, the set-up, the learning focus, game rules, and a concept clinic, which identifies and explains key concepts that can be taught through this and other similar games.

Some of the games in the challenge and cooperative games categories can be interchanged depending on your learning focus. For example, in challenge games you might focus on problem solving, while in cooperative games you might focus on group work, active listening, and/or assertiveness.

Most of the invasion games in the resource are played with large balls, so the children pass hand to hand rather than feet to feet or with hockey sticks or similar. This retains the basic game skill concepts without requiring children to manipulate equipment or exhibit the more technical movement skills involved in some major games. However, many of these invasion games can be played using hockey, lacrosse, and soccer movement skills.

About the learning focus and concept clinics

The richness of this resource is its focus on teaching and learning through games and on extending skill-learning content for teachers and coaches based on contemporary skill-learning research.

In the **learning focus** section of each game, teachers and coaches can easily identify the game skills that can be enhanced through the game.

The **concept clinic** adds information about the game skill or personal or social development concept that is the learning focus of the game. This is the professional content knowledge that underpins the game skill. Teachers and coaches are encouraged to engage with the concept clinic information to extend and clarify their skill-learning knowledge.

Reflective questions for children and teachers or coaches are included for each game under the game **progressions** section in the game template. The concept clinic aims to help teachers and coaches with the answers to the children's learning questions.

It is important to remember that the intention of this resource is to develop children's generic game skills rather than teach them adult versions of sport.

About the set-up and play for the games

Most of the games can be played indoors or outdoors on the grass or a court area. Frequently the writers suggest using either one-third of or half a netball or tennis court. These are size indicators only, and teachers and coaches can set up the size of the playing area to suit the age of the children and the number of players. All the games are designed for small teams to increase opportunities for children's participation. Avoid playing one large game and rather set up multiple small-sided versions of the game, encouraging the children to referee themselves.

About the equipment

It is not essential to have a lot of expensive equipment to deliver this resource, but it is important to have quality equipment. For example, soft balls that don't hurt children if they are hit are essential to ensure their enjoyment and foster their continued participation. It is not necessary to have expensive rebounders as, for example, mini tramps placed at a closer throwing distance can be used, and even planks of wood on an angle will work in the games.

Benches are useful as low nets and can be stacked to make higher nets. Even an elastic band, skipping rope, or chalk mark on the ground will do as a net.

If you are a teacher in a primary or intermediate school, spend some time setting up or renewing your PE gear shed. Nothing will put children off more than old flat balls or racquets with broken strings. Having the equipment to teach physical education is just as important as having notebooks, pencils, and books for classroom learning. Make the case for a budget. There are a number of quality physical education and sports equipment providers online. Search their catalogues to see what is required for your children.

About research and skill-learning terminology

The bibliography provides readers with access to current skill-learning research and understanding. *MoveWell* has consciously avoided skill-learning terminology, but one term that is essential to understand is the concept of perception-action coupling.

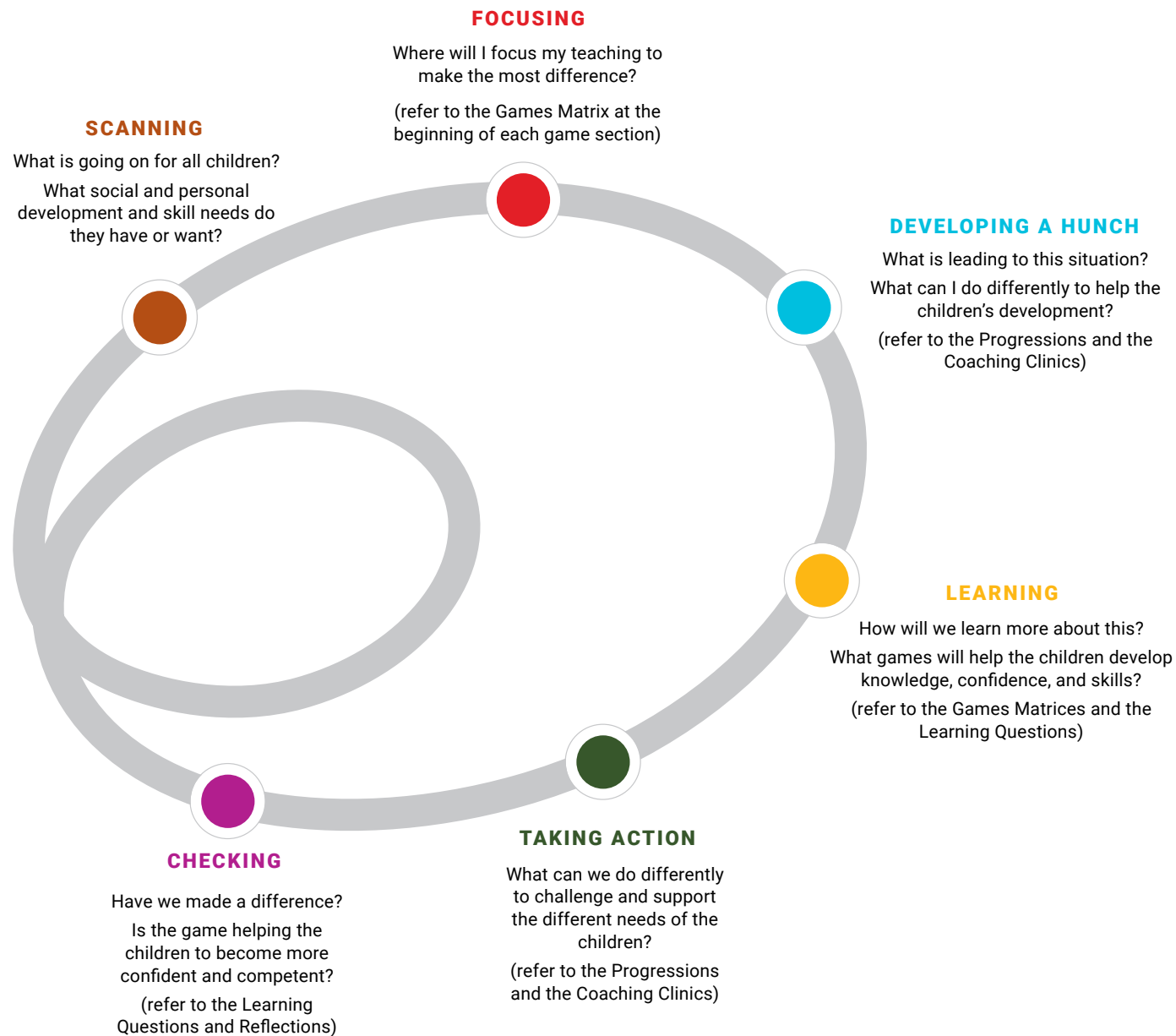
What is perceptual-action coupling, and why is it so important?

In short, it is the inextricable linkage between perceiving the environment around you and your movement in that environment. It underpins our focus on the need to teach game skills by playing games.

When playing games, we perceive the ever-changing situation and either move in response to those changes or initiate change ourselves by moving to manipulate the situation in our favour. In turn, this change in our perceptual information makes us change our movement to correspond. This ongoing coupling between movement and perception is key to learning in any open environment, but particularly in a games environment. So, we learn to play games by developing the perceptual-action couplings that form the basis of game skills.

Knowing where to start

It will be tempting to jump straight to selecting games for the children that you teach, but the following process suggests an inquiry-based approach to using this resource most effectively for children's learning. To get the best out of *MoveWell*, work your way through the 'How to use this resource' spiral, asking yourself:



Adapted from the spiral of inquiry, Timperley, Kaser, and Halbert (2014)

About structuring sessions

Begin each session with an active start. Children generally dislike being sent for a run to warm up. Instead, get them to select one of the games to achieve the purpose of the traditional 'warm-up'. This focuses and motivates the children, increases body temperature, and uses joints and muscles through the range of motion needed to develop the game skills.

Identify the learning that you want to achieve in the session. Use the games matrices and list of concept clinics to select and organise a range of concepts and games as the context for learning. For example, you may want to focus the children's learning on playing angles as well as fairness and equity. Hence, you may choose to play 1.13 **Aotearoa Tchoukball** with its focus on playing angles, followed by 1.7 **End Ball** with its focus on developing fairness and equity. Similarly, you may select 1.12 **Tapu Ae** to put a learning focus on te reo Māori and tikanga Māori, followed by 2.1 **Inchworms** to develop group-work skills.

Adapt and modify the game to match the ability level of the children. Use the progressions outlined in each game to help you simplify or enhance the game to suit the needs of the children. In addition, use games with small teams to help ensure high levels of participation and practice. The aim is to ensure that children get lots of opportunities to play and learn at their level.

Let children play. Learning takes time and good sessions provide plenty of enjoyable activity time for each child. While it may feel constructive to stop the game to provide lots of information and instructions, it is generally better to keep games active and encourage children to learn through questioning, inquiry, and guided discovery.

The learning questions listed in each part of the game template can be used as a springboard for 'teachable moments' during the sessions and/or as reflective questions for the children at the end of the session. The concept clinics aim to provide game-skills content knowledge to assist teachers and coaches prepare their sessions. The teacher reflection section is an important part of the pedagogy after teaching to see if the session has met the needs of the children.

Involve children in their learning by providing them with choices about what they play, how they play, and who they play with. Challenge them to identify the next steps in their learning, giving them a voice and responsibility, and watch them thrive.



Provide a safe emotional and physical environment for playing games. The children's wellbeing in developing a sense of self-worth through play and a desire to be active and involved is a more important outcome than developing high-performance sports players. Be observant of how children interact, support each other, play fairly, and become engaged in the games. Games provide an excellent opportunity to focus on the personal and interpersonal aspects involved in being an active and contributing member of a team. At the same time, providing a safe environment also involves being sensitive to the messages around equity, including gender, culture, and ability.

All of the games have a focus on safety through *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) and the ACC SportSmart principles. For example, teaching children to move well, specifically learning to change direction and land from a jump, can protect against injury. Emotional and physical safety are paramount.

Enjoy the games and enjoy teaching children game skills that will provide them with a wonderful sense of self-worth and the skills to 'move well'.