



SOUTH AUSTRALIAN LITTLE ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION INC.

HOW TO HELP AT LITTLE ATHLETICS PARENT HANDBOOK





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HOW TO HELP AT LITTLE ATHLETICS

Welcome to Little Athletics, a sport the whole family can enjoy. Little Athletics is all about everyone, parents included, getting fit, having fun, making friends and learning new skills!

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INTRODUCTION

HOW TO HELP AT LITTLE ATHLETICS

'How to Help at Little Athletics' is for new parents or individuals who have not been involved with Little Athletics before. It aims to provide basic information about all the events that make up the weekly program at most centres.

Where do you fit into the picture?

Every parent is an important part of the Little Athletics community. Without your help, there would not be anyone to conduct the events for our children.

During the Little Athletics season, you may be required to help out in many different ways, including as a Chaperone (also known as Age Manager), Official, General Event Helper or any other necessary roles.

New parents are advised to read this booklet before you help on an event so you have a basic understanding of how to help. This knowledge will make things easier for you, other helpers and the athletes.

Lastly, did you know that there are other opportunities for further athletics learning? There are a number of coaching and official courses that you could do to further improve your athletics knowledge.

Please visit www.littleathleticssa.com.au to find out more!



02 | TRACK EVENTS

HOW TO HELP AT LITTLE ATHLETICS

SPRINTS

Sprints are short running events, from 50 to 400 metres.

At the start of a sprint, the athletes are placed in a lane one metre behind the line.

The starter gives three commands:

1. **“On your marks”** — the athlete puts the toes of one foot to (but not on) the line. The opposite arm is held out in front to balance.
2. **“Set”** — the athlete leans forward with weight over the front foot.
3. **Gun Sounds** — the athlete runs.

Under 12 to Under 17 athletes can use starting blocks. The runners must stay in their allotted lane for the whole race.



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TRACK EVENTS

HOW TO HELP AT LITTLE ATHLETICS

DISTANCE RACES

Distance races for Little Athletes are 800 metres (U9-U17) and 1500 metres (U10-U17).

The starter gives only two commands to begin a distance race;

1. **“On Your Marks”**
2. **Gun Sounds**

The athletes can't use a crouch start and do not have to run in set lanes.

You Can Help at Sprint & Distance Races By:

- Marshalling athletes and placing them behind the line.
- Timing the race using a manual stop watch or electronic timing.
- Judging the places.
- Marshalling runners after the race and making sure their times are recorded.
- Recording athletes times.
- Be the starter and fire the gun!



04 | TRACK EVENTS

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HURDLES

Hurdle races are sprints with obstacles (hurdles) placed in each lane. Hurdle sizes change with the age group of the athletes. They start at 45cm in height and go up to 76cm. Distances range from 60m to 300m.

All hurdle races are run in lanes and the starter gives the same signals as for sprints. Your Little Athlete will need some coaching and practice before they try the real thing.

You Can Help By:

- Doing the same jobs as for Sprints and Distance Races.
- Setting up the hurdles (most centres have marks on the track to show where the hurdles go).
- Picking up hurdles knocked over by athletes or blown over in the wind.
- Adjusting the heights of the hurdles as required.



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TRACK EVENTS

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RELAYS

Relays are the most spectacular to watch and fun for athletes to compete in. It's one of the few opportunities athletes have to compete as a team. centres train teams and enter them in the Little Athletics SA State Relay Championships.

Relay teams consist of four runners who each run a set distance — 100, 200 or 400 metres according to age and the type of relay. The athletes carry a baton that must be passed to the next runner within a specific 30m changeover zone.

In the Shuttle Relay, athletes line up opposite one another e.g. 2 athletes up one end, 2 at the other. The first runner starts with the baton, runs to the other end and passes it to the second runner. They continue back and forth until the last runner crosses the finish line.

You Can Help By:

- Marshalling runners and escorting them to their starting positions.
- Learning the rules and becoming a changeover judge.



RACE WALKING

Race Walking is a technical event. It is a distance race so athletes don't have to stay in designated lanes. Distances include 700, 1100 or 1500 metres.

Race Walkers must keep one foot in contact with the ground at all times and make sure that the advancing leg is straight when it first makes contact with the ground, until it's directly under the body.

You Can Help By:

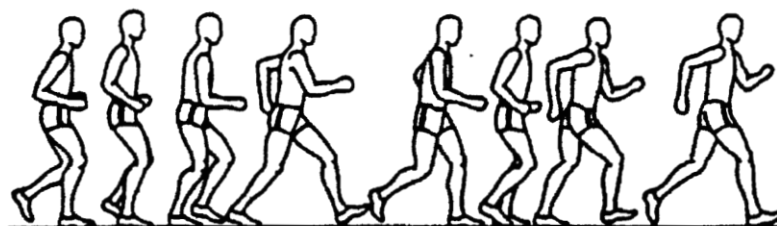
- Doing the same jobs as for Sprints and Distance Races.
- Learning the rules and becoming a Walks Judge.



Correct technique



Loss of contact



Bent knee

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FIELD EVENTS

HOW TO HELP AT LITTLE ATHLETICS

LONG JUMP

A Long Jump venue consists of a run up (grass, dirt, asphalt or synthetic material) and a sand pit. The athletes run along the run up until they reach the take-off mat (U6-U10) or board (U11-U17), jumping from one foot into the sand pit. The take-off foot must be on or behind the take-off mat/board. Athletes must land in the pit and walk out of the pit forward of the mark they made on landing.

You Can Help By:

- Watching that the athlete's foot does not go over the edge of the mat/board.
- Spiking — marking the spot where the jumper landed. Place a spike with a tape measure attached at the edge of the mark in the pit closest to the take-off area.
- Measuring the jump. Hold the other end of the spiker's tape, pull it tightly over the take-off area and read the measurement. When a mat is used, the measurement is taken from the front of the imprint made by the take-off foot. If a board is used, the measurement is taken from the edge of the board nearest the pit.
- Raking the pit after each jump to remove evidence of the last jump and make it level and safe for the next jumper.
- Recording the athlete's performances.



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FIELD EVENTS

HOW TO HELP AT LITTLE ATHLETICS

TRIPLE JUMP

Triple Jump requires the same venue as Long Jump, is measured the same way and has the same basic rules. Triple Jump is only available for athletes in Under 11's or higher.

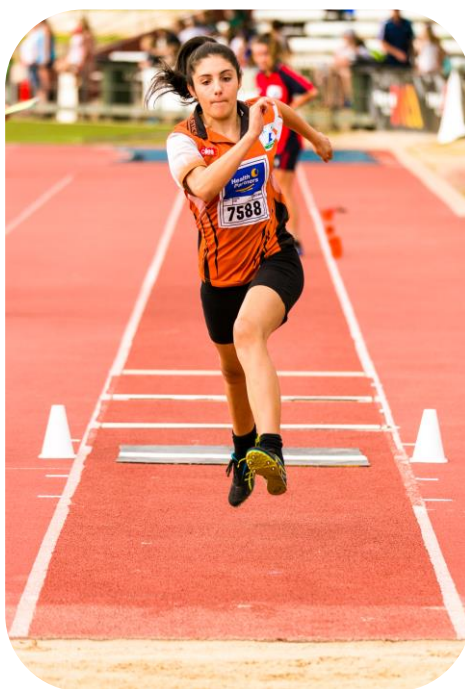
The board is placed at a whole metre distance from the edge of the pit depending on the age and ability of the athlete. The athlete chooses the distance that will be their take off mark.

Triple Jump has three distinct stages:

1. **HOP** - Take off from the board on one foot and land on the same foot.
2. **STEP** - Take off from that foot to land on the other foot.
3. **JUMP** - Jump forward and land in the pit.

You Can Help By:

- Doing the same jobs as Long Jump.
- Moving the board from one mark to another.
- Check the athlete is actually performing the correct sequence of hop, step and jump.



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FIELD EVENTS

HOW TO HELP AT LITTLE ATHLETICS

HIGH JUMP

High Jump is an event for Under 8's and above only. U8-U10's must use the "Scissor Jump". The "Fosbury Flop" can only be performed by the Under 11's and above.

The High Jump equipment consists of a landing mat, two uprights, a bar and a measuring stick. The athlete must run up, take off from one foot, clear the bar and land on the bag without knocking the bar off the stand. Each athlete usually has three chances to clear a height. If they clear it on the first or second attempt, they must wait until the bar is raised before having another jump.

You Can Help By:

- Picking up the bar if the athlete knocks it off.
- Raising the bar after all the athletes have finished at a particular height.
- Recording the athlete's performances.



10 | FIELD EVENTS

HOW TO HELP AT LITTLE ATHLETICS

SHOT PUT

A Shot Put venue consists of a ring and landing area (sector). The shot is a metal ball. Its weight and size varies according to the age of the athlete.

The athlete stands in the ring with the shot balanced at the base of the fingers (not on the palm) and the shot shall touch or be in close proximity to the neck or chin. The shot is pushed forward like a 'high five' so that it lands in the sector. The arm must not be pulled backwards or dropped downwards during the attempt — this gives an illegal throwing motion. The athlete must wait until the shot has landed before stepping out the back of the ring.

You Can Help By:

- Spiking - marking where the shot lands. It must be within the sector lines but cannot land on the sector lines.
- Pulling the tape through the centre of the ring so that the put can be measured.
- Measuring - reading the distance from the inner edge of the ring to the place the shot landed.
- Retrieving the shot and returning it to the ring.
- Learning how to judge a fair put in order to officiate the event.
- Recording the athlete's performances.



FIELD EVENTS

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DISCUS

A discus is a rubber, wooden or synthetic disc that is thrown from a ring and must land inside a marked sector. The discus is usually thrown one handed, using a backward swing to build up momentum before slinging it into the sector.

For safety reasons, the discus ring is surrounded by a cage when someone is throwing. Common rules apply for the throwing events, however there are no rules on how a discus is to be thrown.

You Can Help By:

- Doing the same jobs as Shot Put.



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FIELD EVENTS

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JAVELIN

Most athletes don't start Javelin until Under 11, however vortexes and TurboJavs can be used for younger groups.

The thrower holds the javelin in one hand and pulls the implement back, turns side on and throws the javelin into the sector. The javelins metal head must strike the ground first, but it does not need to stick into the ground. Athletes cannot cross or touch the front throwing line.

The throw is measured similarly to the other throw events. As the javelin is a dangerous implement, all athletes, officials and spectators should keep well away from the runway and the sector.

You Can Help By:

- Doing the same jobs as Shot Put.
- Watching that the athlete does not cross or touch the throwing line.
- Ensuring that athletes, officials and spectators are in a safe area, well away from the runway and the sector.



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CHAPERONING

HOW TO HELP AT LITTLE ATHLETICS

A helper who assists as a “Chaperone” (also known as an Age Group Manager) are the individuals responsible for recording athletes’ results. Chaperones are people who take a group of athletes (generally of the same age group) from one event to another and record the athletes achievements from the different events onto a recording sheet.

The recording sheets are provided in the age groups recording folder and must be provided back to the Little Athletics centres Recorder at the conclusion of the meet. Alternatively, some centres use a Timing Solutions app to record and submit results.

The Chaperone role is not a set position and should be shared and rotated between different parents from week to week.

Recording Results - Track:

- Times are recorded in the positions that the athletes finish the race.
- Time is rounded up to the next whole 10th of a second (for manual timing) e.g. stopwatch shows 10.17 secs - record 10.2 secs.
- Where an athlete starts but does not finish the race, mark “DNF” (Did Not Finish).

Recording Results - Throws and Long/Triple Jump:

- Athletes receive 3 throw/jump attempts, with each result recorded in the columns. The best result of the 3 is indicated in the “Best” column.
- Results are recorded as 4.32m, 9.59m, 14.83m etc.
- For any fouls, mark an “X”.
- To avoid long waiting periods for Throw Events, allow athletes to have 3 consecutive throws. Have all attempts marked with a field marker, but only measure and record the “Best” attempt.

Recording Results - High Jump:

- Athletes are allowed 3 attempts at each height.
- For any successful attempts, mark a “O”.
- For any fouls, mark an “X”.

You Can Help By:

- Offering to be a Chaperone at the start of each weekly meet.
- Sharing the load with other parents.
- Organising athletes so they are ready for their turn.
- Make it FUN for the athletes and other parents, and praise all achievements!

4 | TINY TOTS

HOW TO HELP AT LITTLE ATHLETICS

TINY TOTS CENTRE PROGRAM

The Little Athletics Tiny Tots Centre Program is for children who are 3 -5 years of age and are in the Tiny Tots age group. The program seeks to encourage the development of Fundamental Movement Skills that underpin the growth of specialised sporting skills in athletics and other sports.

The aim of the program is to improve the physical, social, emotional and cognitive development of children through a play-based approach that is engaging and stimulating. All Tiny Tots participate together as a group, using modified equipment in a variety of fun activities. There are no winners or losers, just development of individual skills!

At most centres, the program is run by a designated Tiny Tots Coordinator or it is shared between parents. You do not need to have a coaching background to assist. The program strongly encourages parents to share the experience with their children.

You Can Help By:

- Assisting the Tiny Tots Coordinator with activities and/or setting up equipment.
- Being involved and having fun with your child!



15 | ROLE OF PARENTS

HOW TO HELP AT LITTLE ATHLETICS

Parents play a very important role in their child's Little Athletic involvement. Do not underestimate the effect you can have on your child's long-term participation and enjoyment of sport. By taking a considered and understanding approach, a parent can be their child's most valuable asset.

Tips To Help Your Child:

- Encourage your child to participate if they are interested.
- Focus on your child's efforts rather than the overall outcome (result) of the event, as this will assist the child in setting realistic goals related to their ability by reducing the emphasis on winning.
- Teach your child that an honest effort is as important as a victory, so that the result of each event is accepted without undue disappointment.
- Encourage your child to always participate according to the rules.
- Never ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or losing an event.
- Remember that your child is involved in Little Athletics for their enjoyment – not yours!
- If you disagree with someone's judgement/decision, raise the issue through the appropriate channels rather than questioning the person's judgement and honesty in public. Please remember that most people give their time and effort freely for the children's involvement in Little Athletics.
- Recognise the value and importance of all the volunteers at the centre, as they give their time, resources and knowledge to provide an enjoyable and safe environment for your children and therefore, deserve your support.





FURTHER INFORMATION

HOW TO HELP AT LITTLE ATHLETICS

1. Getting Started in Little Athletics Video — <https://littleathletics.com.au/education-training/video-resources/>
2. Coaching & Officiating Little Athletics Tips Video — <https://littleathletics.com.au/education-training/video-resources/>
3. Little Athletics SA Officials Guide Rulebook — <http://salaa.org.au/Officials/Officials-Guide-Rulebook>
4. Little Athletics SA Standard Rules of Competition — <http://salaa.org.au/Competition/Standard-Rules-of-Competition>
5. Officiating Courses — <http://www.salaa.org.au/Officials>
6. Coaching Courses — <http://www.salaa.org.au/Coaches>

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