

# How to Help at Little Athletics

ACT LITTLE ATHLETICS ASSOCIATION

Learn about all the events offered



**family. fun and fitness**

How to Help at Little Athletics is for new parents or individuals who haven't been involved with Little Aths before. It aims to provide basic information about all events that are included in most Centre programs.

## **Where do you fit in the picture?**

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

During the Little Athletics season you will be rostered to help out as an official, including at carnivals, or you might be asked to assist each week with your child's group.

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 officials and the athletes.

The ACT Little Athletics Association has an Officials Program. This accreditation is more specific, concentrating on the rules. For further information speak to your Centre secretary, Officer of Officials or contact the Association office.

## 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 signals:

1. “On your marks” — the athlete puts the toes of one foot to (but not on) the line.
2. “Set” — the athlete leans forward on the front foot.
3. Gun sounds — the athlete runs.

Under 11 — 17 athletes can use starting blocks.

The runners must stay in their allotted lane for the whole race.



## Distance Races

Distance races for Little Athletes are 800 metres (U9 — U17) and 1500 metres (U10 — U17). Some Centres have unlaned distance races up to 300 metres for U6, 500 metres for U7 and 700 metres for U8.

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

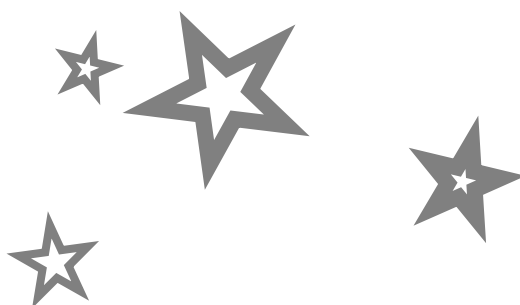
1. “On Your Marks”
2. Gun Sounds

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.
- Firing the gun! Do a starters course and become the race starter.

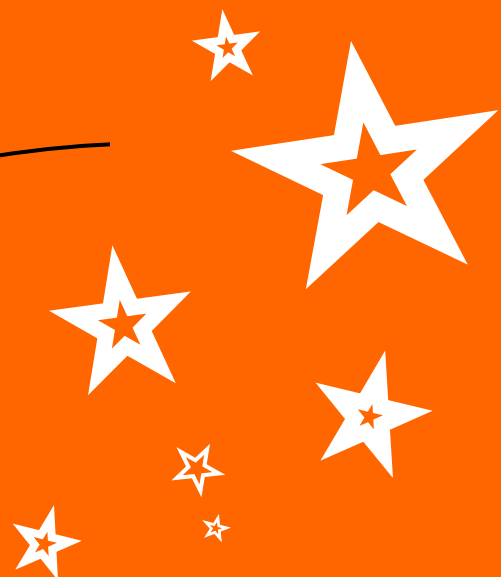


## Hurdles

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 job as for sprints.
- 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 down in the wind.
- Adjusting the heights of the hurdles as required.





## 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 LAACT Relay Carnival.

Most relay teams consist of four runners who each run a set distance — 100, 200, 300 or 400 metres according to age and the type of relay. The athletes carry a baton which must be passed to the next runner within a specific 20m change box.

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

In the Swedish Relay there are 4 athletes in a team, each competing a different distance. The first runner runs 100m, the second runner runs 300m, the third runner runs 200m and the last runner runs 400m.



### How You Can Help:

- \*Marshall runners and escort them to their starting positions.
- \*Learn the rules and become a box judge.
- \*Complete the same jobs as sprints and distance races.

## Race Walking

Race Walking is a technical event. It's 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 distance races.
- Learn to walk judge by completing a judging seminar. Contact your Centre for details.



## 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 (Under 6 — Under 10) or board (mat may be used if no board is available) (Under 11 — 17), 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.

### How You Can Help:

- Watch the athlete's foot doesn't 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.
- Measure 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 athletes distance.





## Triple Jump

Triple jump requires the same venue as long jump, is measured the same way and has the same basic rules. Athletes under 11—17 take off from a board. (Mat may be used if no board is available.) The mat or board is placed at five, seven or nine metres depending on the age and ability of the athlete. The athlete chooses which of these will be their take off mark.

### Triple Jump has three distinct stages:

1. HOP - Take off from the mat/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 job as Long Jump.
- Moving the mat from one mark to another.
- Check the athlete is actually performing the correct sequence of hop, step and jump.



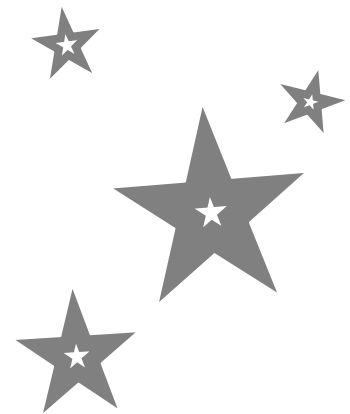
## High Jump

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 achieve it on the first or second attempt they wait until the bar is raised before having another jump.

Athletes in the U8 to U10 age group can only clear the bar using the scissors technique.

### 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.



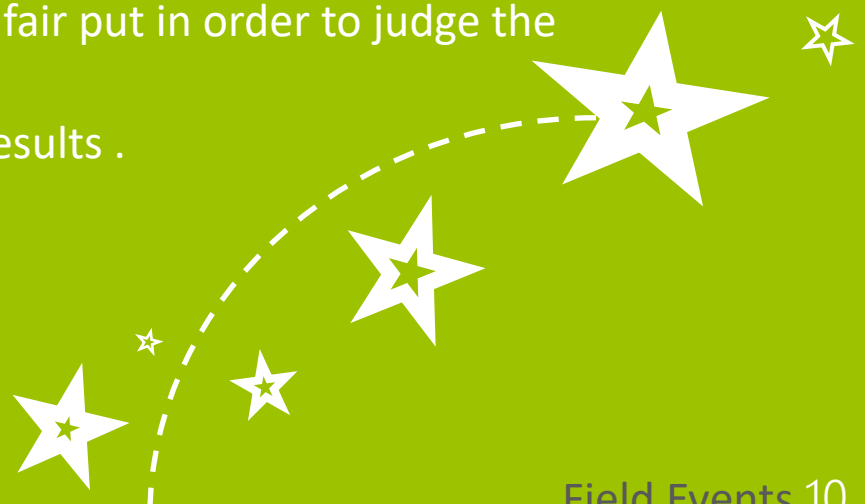
## Shot Put

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 and the shot shall touch or be in close proximity to the neck or chin. The shot is pushed forward 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 not touch the top of the stop board and must wait until the shot has landed before leaving by 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 judge the event.
- Recording the athletes results .



### Discus

A discus is a rubber, wooden or synthetic disc which 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 launching it into the sector. For safety reasons the discus ring is surrounded by a cage when someone is throwing. Common throwing rules apply for the discus however any style can be used when throwing the discus.

#### You Can Help By:

- Doing the same jobs as Shot Put.



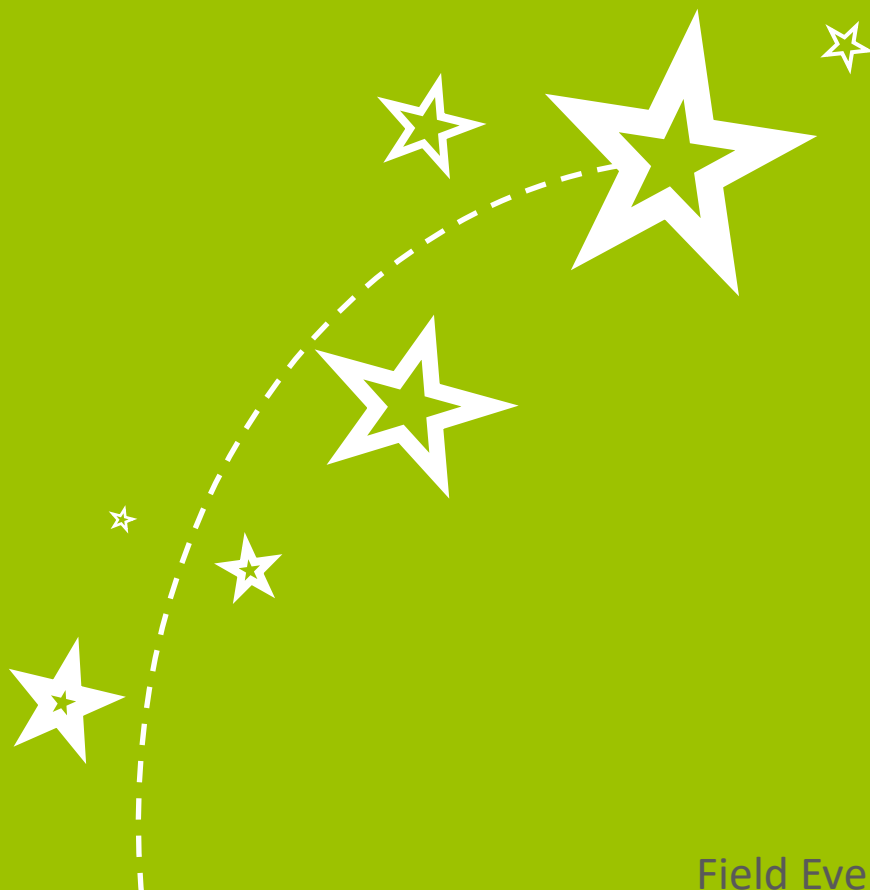


## Javelin

Athletes don't start Javelin until Under 11. The thrower holds the javelin in one hand and pulls the implement back, turns side on and throws the javelin into the sector. The javelin must land metal head first but doesn't have to stick into the ground. Athletes cannot cross or touch the front throwing line. The throw is measured similarly to the other throws events. As the javelin is a dangerous spear-like implement, all athletes and officials should keep well away from the runway and the sector.

### You Can Help By:

- Doing the same jobs as Shot Put.
- Watching the athlete doesn't cross or touch the throwing line.
- The most important aspect for Javelin is the safety of athletes, officials and spectators.





On Track is a program for U6 — U8 athletes aimed at developing the fundamental motor skills of athletics in sequential components. **On Trackers** participate in small groups, using modified equipment in a variety of fun activities. There are no winners or losers, just development of individual skills.

On Track is run by parents. You don't need to have a coaching background to assist. On Track encourages parents to share the experience with their children.

### You Can Help By:

- Setting up the modified equipment.
- Organising the athletes into their groups.
- Assisting On Track Coordinators.



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 in and enjoyment of sport. By taking a considered, 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 an official, raise the issue through the appropriate channels rather than questioning the official's judgement and honesty in public, remembering that most officials give their time and effort freely for the children's involvement in Little Athletics.
- Recognise the value and importance of being a volunteer official or coach, as they give their time, resources and knowledge to provide an enjoyable and safe environment for your children and deserve your support.

To contact your local Centre  
visit [www.actlaa.org.au](http://www.actlaa.org.au)



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