



## USA Gymnastics University

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### Preschool FUNDamentals:

USA Gymnastics University provides two great learning opportunities for recreational coaches and more specifically preschool instructors. R101 Preschool Fundamentals Theory and R102 Preschool Fundamentals: Hands-on Training (HOTPS) are great opportunities to earn credits in USA Gymnastics University: School of Recreational Gymnastics and to gain additional teaching knowledge. The more you know the better you are prepared to coach and teach.



### R101 Preschool FUNDamentals THEORY

is an online course that addresses the theoretical aspects of a preschool age child and how to best work with that aged child. The course is interactive and loaded with great information that will make your job as an instructor easier. In order to maximize opportunities for gymnastics clubs and coaches to obtain this information, USA Gymnastics University has recently LOWERED the online price to \$39. Learn at your own pace with this online course by logging on to usagymnasticsuniversity.org and registering for R101.



### R102 Preschool FUNDamentals:

**Hands-on Training (HOTPS)** is a live 4-hour interactive experience. Participants apply theoretical aspects learned in R101 as well as learn new games, activities and tips to work with the preschool age child. To embrace these fantastic, educational opportunities, USA Gymnastics University is NOW offering **Member Club pricing** for R102. This allows Member Clubs to send ALL of their staff at discounted pricing. The best investment a club owner can make is in the education and training of their staff.



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R102 is offered at all regional and national congresses as well as offered at various locations throughout the U.S. Log on to view the most up to date live course schedule at

[www.usagymnasticsuniversity.org](http://www.usagymnasticsuniversity.org).

Let's get to know some of National Instructors who teach the R102 Preschool Fundamentals courses as they share additional gymnastics tips.

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# Preschool fundamentals



Preschool Coaches Find Friends Home ▾



## Beth Gardner

National Instructor for R102 Preschool Fundamentals: Hands-on Training (HOTPS) and R103 School Age: Hands-on Training (HOTSA)

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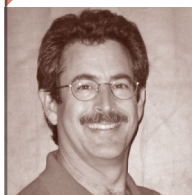
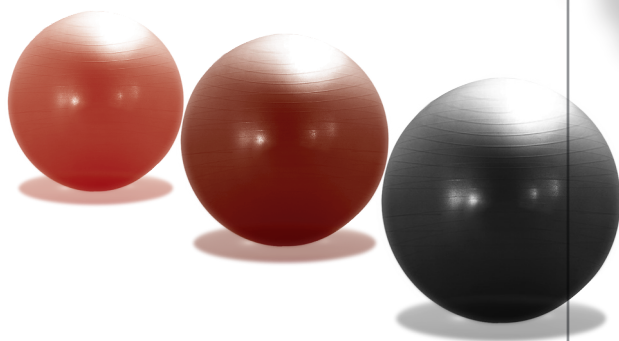
Never limit your imagination. Allow children to express their own imagination as well. Make sure to keep lesson plans fresh and new, adding new props, themes or games. Look outside of the gym, and think outside of the box.

Challenge yourself to find new things to add to class. Our most recent purchase, for example, was a group of small stuffed animals shaped like Angry Birds characters. We let the kids build mat structures, put the pigs into the structures and toss the birds at them to knock the pigs out of the structures. It's a spatial awareness drill the kids love because it's different and it includes pop culture to which they can relate. It accomplishes the same spatial awareness as other tossing games and challenges them to use their spatial awareness in constructing various structures.

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USA Gymnastics So creative! Great tips, Beth.



## Jeff Lulla

National Instructor for R102 Preschool Fundamentals: Hands-on Training (HOTPS) and R103 School Age: Hands-on Training (HOTSA) U101 Safety & Risk Management

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After years of teaching I have learned one thing – that you cannot CONTROL children (or anyone for that matter). The only person any of us has control over is ourselves. However, you can LEAD, ENCOURAGE and ENTICE a child to make desirable choices.

Let me give you an example; a class of six 5 year olds is asked to stand on a line while the teacher adjusts the bar. A moment later the teacher notices four of the kids standing on the line and two kids playing in the chalk bucket.

The most common "reaction" to this situation – the teacher addresses the two kids in the chalk about their inappropriate behavior. Of course, when this happens, those kids who chose the wrong behavior get the ATTENTION that is often what they are seeking. This frequently leads them to misbehave again since any attention is better than none.

A more effective response would have been for the teacher to "act" (instead of react) by NOTICING AND ACKNOWLEDGING THE FOUR KIDS WHO LINED UP! For instance, "Lisa, Mark, Sue and Jim – I love how you lined up. Thank you for being good listeners. Give me a 'High Five'! I have a good listener stamp for you."

Now what do you think those two kids in the chalk will do when they see the attention good listeners get? In most cases

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they will leave the chalk bucket and line up too. And when they do, how should the teacher respond? *"Thank you for listening Bill and Bob. I love it when you chose to listen. Give me five!"*



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When bad behavior gets ignored it often disappears. Of course you can't ignore dangerous behavior.

Instructors should be trained not only to teach skills, but more importantly, how to help children choose behaviors that they can be proud of so they can see themselves as successful, capable and worthy of praise. That's how we help build their self-esteem.

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USA Gymnastics This works!



**Sandi McGee**

National Instructor for R102 Preschool Fundamentals: Hands-on Training (HOTPS) and R103 School Age: Hands-on Training (HOTSA)

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Always be prepared to offset a child's lack of confidence by being on guard with our dialog, so as to discourage failure in their minds before they have the opportunity

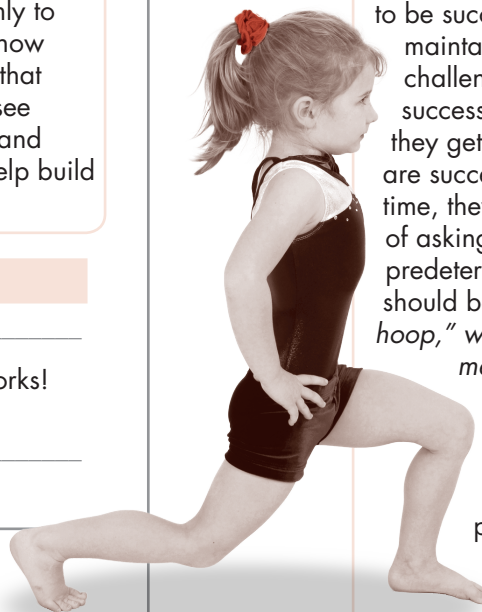
to think it. Commonly around the ages of 4 to 5 some children will begin to see "Fun in the Gym" as "Challenges in the Gym," challenges that under the growth of "preschool reasoning," seem unattainable more or less because of the lack of self-confidence. We should never give them the opportunity to make a choice to fail, we should always and only give them the opportunity to try.

Make sure your curriculum is mapped out in "true progression" and that it promotes a "positive self concept." Each progression should be mastered, which naturally dictates progression to the next level. Children need to be successful most of the time, not only in order to feel and be confident, but to just plain want to continue. In the Movement Education & Lesson Plan Development Workbook developed by USA Gymnastics, it talks of the "80% Rule." Young children need to be successful 80% of the time to

maintain a sense of competence and challenge (Graham, 1992). If they are successful less than 80% of the time, they get frustrated or anxious, If they are successful more than 80% of the time, they get board. Examples: Instead of asking a child to do something and predetermining what his/her success should be such as "Jump and touch the hoop," we should instead say "Show me how high you can jump!"

If they didn't reach the hoop it's okay because, we just simply ask them to jump! Another example would be working with progressions. Setting up a variety of cartwheel stations and allowing the student to work at his or her own pace, only to advance to a more challenging station once they feel confident and ready. Our dialog should be nurturing, positive, and always focused on elaborating, keeping the student informed of what is going on with empowering dialog.

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### Cindy Furman

National Instructor for R102 Preschool Fundamentals: Hands-on Training (HOTPS)

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Every instructor should reach out and take advantage of the many new educational programs offered through USA Gymnastics and stay current on what are the most effective ways to teach kids of all ages to be their personal best. My challenge for instructors is to become informed and sensitive coaches that form a collective effort to set the direction for our youth. Keeping in mind that all kids are unique, we must learn what learning style is most productive in building long lasting self-esteem.



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There are many different learning styles. Some children use different styles, but there is normally one style of learning that is dominant. Examples of learning styles and different teaching tips for them are:

**Auditory learners** are typically good at absorbing the information from spoken words or sounds. Strategies that work well include:

- Talking to the kids about what they are doing
- Set information to a tune or a rhythm to help the kids remember (singing can demonstrate when/where a foot or hand is placed during a skill)

-Having the kids repeat what you say

-Voice inflection from the instructor to encourage fast or slow rhythm

**Visual learners** benefit from seeing information or an illustration and may grow impatient listening for long periods of time. Strategies for visual learners include:

-Use of color to show where a hand or a foot needs to be placed in a skill

-Using a mat or a prop to demonstrate skills or how the body should move in



relationship to the fixed objects (cartwheel over a mat, etc.)

-Showing the kids a video or photo of the skill they are attempting

-Having the kids watch the instructor demonstrate

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### Annette Thomas

National Instructor for R102 Preschool Fundamentals: Hands-on Training (HOTPS) and R103 School Age: Hands on Training (HOTSA)

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Try out some old warm-up music favorites on the balance beam to help your preschoolers with their balance.

Try doing ...  
*Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes, ...*

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# Preschool fundamentals



Preschool Coaches

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*Hokey Pokey, or Simon Says.*

It makes beam time totally different!

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**USA Gymnastics** Always looking for beam ideas!



## Cindy Morano

National Instructor for R102 Preschool Fundamentals: Hands-on Training (HOTPS)

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It's always a safety concern moving students from one event to another while other classes are in progress in the gym. Here is what I do:

I have the preschoolers take a bus ride to each new event. During this ride, I incorporate daily life lessons such as: "counting," "right side," "left side," "stop sign," "fast," "slow," "buckle your seat belt," "stoplight: red means stop, yellow means caution, green means go."

In the beginning of the session, the teacher is the bus driver and the children ride the bus. The children must pay their fare (high five's) to ride the bus. They count as they give their fare (high five's) to the bus driver. Once everyone is on the bus (in line), they buckle up their pretend seat belts. Prior to leaving to the next event, everyone looks and points to the "right" then "left" to see if it is safe to proceed. They look and become aware of gymnasts in other classes. When moving, the teacher utilizes a "stop sign" and/or "red light" when they need to cross an area that gymnasts from the other class are using. "Green light" means it is safe to cross and proceed.

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Later into the session and aware of gym safety, the children take turns being the bus driver.

Children have fun and always stay in line.

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## Brant Lutska

National Instructor for R102 Preschool Fundamentals: Hands-on Training (HOTPS)

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What does your body language say as a teacher?

Many of us teach classes behind a glass wall where parents are watching. Make sure your body language is showing positive movement. Parents cannot always hear what we are saying, so your body is telling what is happening on the floor. It is said that when talking to a person the information that we receive can be broken down as:

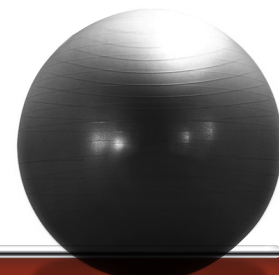
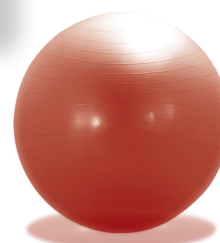
10% from what the person actually says

40% from the person's tone and speed of voice

50% from the person's body language.

It's a great idea to video tape your teaching and view how you are perceived.

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### Linda Thorberg

National Instructor for R102 Preschool Fundamentals: Hands-on Training (HOTPS)

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"Life Skills" of jumping, landing on two feet, rolling, and safety falling are one of the most important actions we can teach in gymnastics class. We need to incorporate landing skills and safety falls in every class.

Make Safety Rolling/Falling an automatic reaction by repeating this many times. We know that the natural reaction when falling backwards is to reach behind with the arms. This can result in injury to an arm, shoulder, or head. Children need to practice "Safety Rolling" by holding arms overhead or in front of their bodies when falling. Good instructors will find ways to make this a game to practice every class.

Safety falls can be practiced forwards, sideways and backwards to reinforce rolling when falling. These will keep children safe at the playground, at home riding their bikes as well as at gymnastics!

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To learn more about the Preschool Child, as well as gain additional teaching tips and ideas, register for R101 Preschool FUNDamentals Theory Online or a live course: R102 Preschool FUNDamentals: Hands-on Training (HOTPS).

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## LIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

### U101 – SAFETY CERTIFICATION (LIVE)

- March 4 El Paso, TX
- June 7 St. Louis, MO
- June 28 San Jose, CA
- July 13 Centerville, OH
- Aug. 9 Nashville, TN
- Aug. 9 Providence, RI
- Aug. 16 Baltimore, MD

### NEW – W200 – DEVELOPMENT COACHES COURSE: HANDS ON TRAINING (HOTD)

- March 17 Everett, WA  
Purchase a Pac Rim Ticket and you can attend this course for free!
- April 22 Longwood, FL  
Purchase a World Acro Championships Ticket and you can attend this course for free!

- June 3 Camarillo, CA
- June 28 San Jose, CA

### T200/T201 – TRAMPOLINE & TUMBLING DEVELOPMENT COACHES COURSE: LEVEL 1 AND HANDS ON TRAINING

- March 16 Everett, WA  
Purchase a Pac Rim Ticket and you can attend this course for free!
- April 27 Fort Worth, TX
- June 28 San Jose, CA

### R102 – PRESCHOOL FUNDAMENTALS: HANDS ON TRAINING (HOTPS)

- March 16 Tampa, FL
- March 24 San Jose, CA
- April 15 Manteca, CA

- June 10 St. Louis, MO
- June 28 San Jose, CA
- Aug. 9 Nashville, TN
- Aug. 12 Providence, RI
- Aug. 19 Baltimore, MD
- Aug. 26 Everett, WA
- Sept. 16 Indianapolis, IN

### NEW – R103 – SCHOOL AGE/RECREATIONAL: HANDS ON TRAINING (HOTSA)

- March 17 Tampa, FL

### W300 – JUNIOR OLYMPIC TEAM COACHES COURSE

- Aug. 22-25 Huntsville, TX

To register for a course, visit the USA Gymnastics website at [www.usagymnasticsuniversity.org](http://www.usagymnasticsuniversity.org). | Register online or download the registration form. | \*\*Save \$5 by registering online!\*\*