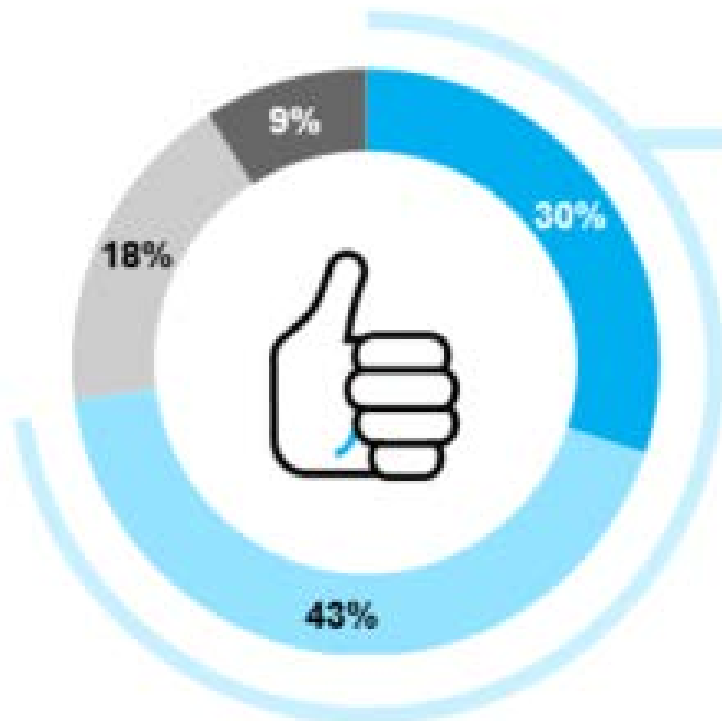


Cross Country Running For Children





- Don't like it very much
- Like it heaps
- Hate it
- Like it a bit

Nearly three-quarters (73%) like school cross-country 'a bit' or 'heaps'.

Overall, there is fairly high level of enjoyment of school cross-country with three-quarters (73%) of children aged six to thirteen indicating they like it 'a bit' or 'heaps'.

Those from Waikato are significantly more likely to like it 'heaps' (38% cf. 30%), while Aucklanders are significantly less likely to like it 'heaps' (24%).

Research



73%

Like school cross-country 'a bit' or 'heaps'



37%

Indicate someone in their family/ whānau helped them to practise or train



+30%

The difference in percentage points in the proportion who liked it 'heaps' for those who had family who helped them train and those who didn't

The Run Jump Throw Approach

RUN JUMP THROW

3 Key Philosophies

- **The environment we create (Good Sports)**
- **Understanding the participant. Their needs and motivations (Physical Literacy)**
- **Maximising participation through modified activity (STEP)**

RUN JUMP THROW

Performance vs Development

Climate of Performance Attitudes & Behaviours	Children's Needs	Climate of Development Attitudes & Behaviours
Winning & Losing Focus on results Mistakes to be avoided Recognise ability	Inspiration Growth Mindset Process Focus Coping Skills	Effort & Improvement Focus on getting better Mistakes necessary for growth Recognise effort and trying
Only the Best Matter Playing favourites Selective support Encouraging gossip and rumour	Connection Support Sense of Belonging Trust & Fairness	Everyone Matters Including everyone Unconditional support Encourage friendship and care
Strict Adult Control Adults make all decisions Mistakes immediately corrected Dismiss children's ideas	Empowerment Ownership Self-direction	Kids Share Control Children involved in decisions Time to correct own mistakes Recognise children's ideas
Performance Training Repetitive drilling Direct instruction Punishment & Reward	Play Opportunity Imagination Fundamental movement skills	Learning Through Play Modified games Discovery approach Smart questioning
Early Specialisation Single sport focus Year round training Pressure to select one sport	Variety Sampling Appropriate structure	Late Specialisation Trying out multiple sports Balance with school and friends Waiting to select one sport

How can we maximise participation for all children in Cross Country?

In groups:

1. Think about what you currently offer at your club?
2. Where does it sit in the Performance vs Development Spine?
3. What can your club do to shift from Performance to Development?



RJT Cross Country

This section has been designed to help schools and clubs develop fun and varied cross country or distance running sessions for children. Some children find running difficult and often don't enjoy the annual school cross country. This section pulls together fun games and activities that enable kids to practise the skills of running in a way that builds endurance while having fun.

The Run Jump Throw philosophy that children should be able to learn skills in a fun, non-threatening environment is applied here. All games in this section are fully inclusive and can be modified to meet the needs of the whole group. All children should be able to achieve success and individual effort should be recognised. The emphasis should be learning and building endurance through fun and play rather than drills and long repetitive runs.

Setting up a Cross Country Course

A good cross country course is:

- ▶ Easy to follow and interesting.
- ▶ Has obstacles or hurdles.
- ▶ Has hills but not too long or steep.
- ▶ A bit of water or mud is also fun.

Recommended Distances

Distances should be long enough so that children are not tempted to sprint the whole way and short enough so they don't stress participants. The effort should be aerobic which means that the children should be able to talk to each other while running.

Recommended distances for timed runs

- ▶ 6-7 year olds – 1000m.
- ▶ 8-9 year olds – 1000-1500.
- ▶ 10-11 year olds – 1000-2000m.

Recommended time on task in activities to develop Endurance

- ▶ 6-7 year olds – 3-8 minutes.
- ▶ 8-9 year olds – 4-10 minutes.
- ▶ 10-11 year olds – 5-15 minutes.



Games and Activities

Enjoyment and variety are the keys to any successful running/walking programme.

The objective in cross country related sessions is to have children running, jogging or walking continuously for around 10 mins. A great way to do this is through fun games.

Exploring Space and Direction

Equipment

- ▶ Cones/markers.
- ▶ Hall, grass area or hard surface.

Instructions

Children to run in the following ways

- ▶ Forwards.
- ▶ Backwards.
- ▶ Sideways.
- ▶ Curved.
- ▶ Zig Zag.
- ▶ Around objects.

In pairs, explore a path, one child copying/following the other. Then change. As you run, make shapes, letters etc.

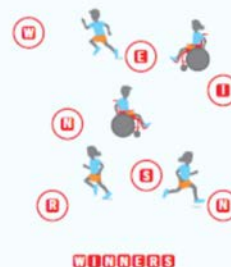
Break the Code

EQUIPMENT

- Cards with letters on them.

INSTRUCTIONS

- Set up up to 7 stations, 150-300m apart.
- Split group into smaller groups, 3-4 people per group.
- At each station have either a person who writes a letter from a pre-selected word on the participant's card, or a big card with the letter on it and the participant writes it down.
- Participants run to each station to get the letter for that station.
- Remind people to run at a comfortable pace, it is not a race.
- At the end, participants unscramble the letters to make the word – e.g. fitness.
- Groups can go to the stations in any order, but will need to collect ALL letters before heading back to the start to unscramble their word.



Q: Where should your eyes look when running towards a target?

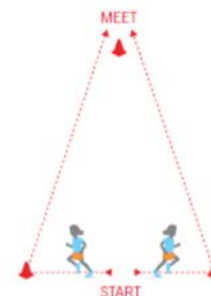
Opposite Pairs Run

EQUIPMENT

- Cones / Markers

INSTRUCTIONS

- Mark out a circuit of about 500m with the midway point marked.
- Divide group into pairs.
- Each pair runs in the opposite direction around the circuit and attempts to pass their partner at the halfway point – if they don't meet, they wait at the midway mark, then complete the lap.
- On the second lap they meet halfway again, waiting if necessary, then run for home to gain a point against their partner.
- The first lap and half the second lap should be run at a comfortable pace.



Q: How can you and your partner work better together?



RUN JUMP THROW

Media

<https://www.newshub.co.nz/home/new-zealand/2018/05/kiwi-kids-growing-dislike-of-school-cross-country-revealed.html>

<http://www.radionz.co.nz/national/programmes/ninetonoon/audio/2018645784/why-do-so-many-kids-dread-cross-country>

RUN
JUMP
THROW