

# Juggling for Success

with Nels Ross

*Juggling for Success* (JFS) is a one- to five-day program for elementary schools\* that teaches juggling and life skills, and promotes positive decision making. It can include one or more assembly programs, age-appropriate "playshops" with a variety of juggling instruments, and an optional evening program or *Family Juggling Night* to involve the entire school community.

Juggling develops tracking, motor, and sequencing skills used in reading, writing, math, and science. It also develops confidence, patience, persistence, self-control, and other life skills. Students, teachers, and parents throughout the United States have experienced the benefits of juggling through the JFS program.

Working with Dave Finnigan, originator of JFS, Nels Ross has developed his own unique presentation of this program. Here are the basic ingredients:



## Teacher Orientation

The program typically begins with a fun orientation where teachers and other staff meet Nels, get an overview of JFS, and learn how to juggle!

## Assembly Program(s)

Nels can provide one or more opening assembly programs to kick off the program and motivate the students, or you can have a closing assembly where selected students are guest stars in the show.

## Juggling Playshops

Students come to the gym by classes or grade levels to learn age-appropriate skills with feathers, scarves, and beanbags. (Depending on the length of the program and your needs, other props such as rings, clubs, boxes, spinning plates, juggling sticks, and Chinese yo-yos may also be introduced.) These "playshops" reinforce principles for success.

## Family Juggling Night (optional)

Want to involve the entire school community? Host *Family Juggling Night* where students, teachers, and their families have a blast juggling and enjoy a closing performance with Nels that is guaranteed to amaze and amuse.

## Juggling Resources

After the program, Nels can provide resources for your Physical Education program and for classroom teachers who are interested in juggling as an ongoing activity that helps students achieve academic and behavioral goals.

In summary, *Juggling for Success* is an exciting one-day to five-day program with benefits that last long after the program. For more information, contact the person or organization providing this packet or call Nels at (716) 575-5378.

\*Nels also offers Juggling & Life Skills Playshops for secondary students, faculty, and others.

# Testimonials from Schools and Others

"Nels is a talented, caring person who has done great things to motivate our students for many years now. **His workshops and assemblies are the highlight of our school year.**"

Tyler Eichas  
Plank Road South School

**"Your residency was one of the most successful programs at our school.** Through juggling, you offer the students a chance to gain self confidence, improve their overall physical fitness, and truly be winners!"

Kim Ormsby  
Neil Armstrong Elementary

"I would be pleased to recommend your residency. **You taught not only juggling but character development and life skills...** Your artistry and sincerity captivated everyone, and I personally relished the upbeat effect you had on the entire school."

Deborah Rose  
Washington Irving School

"An energetic and entertaining program. Each student took an active part in their learning... **Words can't begin to describe the value of the message you shared.**"

Chris Wachtler  
Perry Elementary

**"Challenging and innovative.** The classes were obvious favorites with the students, and the presentations on the final day delighted the audience."

Sharon Kane  
Sheldon Institute Gifted & Talented Program

*Nels also offers Juggling & Life Skills Playshops for secondary students, faculty, and others.
---

**"I am still hearing rave reviews about the assembly and workshops.** Both faculty and students have had only great things to say about your amazing skills and delightful humor."

Kristin Malone  
Our Lady of Mercy High School

"The workshops went fantastically well. **We had 100% participation of the students.** Even the medical excuse students wanted to be involved. **And the lessons about success were well received.**"

Deb Glisson  
Marcellus High School

"We did not realize just how meaningful your presence would be... Everyone participated with enthusiasm and laughter. The staff training and resources you provided have also proven to be valuable... **Thank you for touching our lives (all 250 of us)!**"

Libby Hammecker, Activities Director  
Schoharie County ARC

# Benefits of Juggling

*Juggling is a fun and safe activity that develops eye-hand coordination, fitness, balance, ambidexterity, rhythm, and reflexes. For these reasons, many schools include juggling in their physical education program. Juggling also has many benefits that reach beyond the physical education realm...*

## Boosts self-esteem and self-confidence

Self-esteem and self-confidence can dramatically increase through the successful completion of movement goals. In juggling, each new accomplishment provides the participant with immediate internal reinforcement. Also, recognition for achievements from peers and teachers provides external reinforcement. This leads to positive decision-making and positive risk-taking.

## A model for step by step learning

Learning to juggle is a series of challenges. The process of learning new juggling skills teaches students how to set goals and attain them through a progression of steps. Students can apply this model to learning in other contexts.

## Enhances learning skills

In order to learn juggling skills, participants need to accept challenges, pay attention, listen analytically, observe critically, plan a learning strategy, go step by step, focus on task, and learn from mistakes. This process develops patience, persistence, and self-discipline.

## Reinforces the open-ended nature of learning

As with academic subjects, juggling provides endless opportunities for exploration and growth. If you can toss and catch scarves, you can learn new patterns or try other objects. Besides toss juggling, there are many other forms of juggling to explore.

## Appeals to different intelligences

Juggling provides a "right brain break in a left brain day" and stimulates the learning process in many ways. Those with strong spatial intelligence love to visualize juggling patterns. The rhythmic nature of juggling appeals to those with musical intelligence. Moving around, throwing, and catching develop kinesthetic intelligence. And it is certainly noteworthy that logical and mathematical thinkers dominate the ranks of jugglers; this may be due to the experimental nature of the art, where practitioners explore patterns and relationships.

## Improves skills used in reading, writing, math, and science

Juggling develops tracking, crossing the mid line, and fine motor skills that help improve *reading* and *handwriting*. (*Teaching Elementary Physical Education* featured an in depth article about this.) Learning to juggle also improves sequencing skills used in *math* and *science*. Research in these areas reinforces the work of Maria Montessori and Jean Piaget who theorized that motor movements and tactile sensation increase cognitive learning.

# Juggling in the Classroom?!

*In addition to the benefits already mentioned, teachers may be interested in the benefits of an ongoing classroom based juggling program...*

## **A great break in routine**

During extensive academic work periods, physically active study breaks help students learn better. In a growing number of classrooms throughout the country, students have access to feathers, scarves, or beanbags so they can take "juggling breaks" when the teacher allows. Then they can return to work refreshed and more productive.

## **Therapy for certain learning disabilities**

It has long been thought that juggling has therapeutic value for children with disabilities such as dyslexia, attention deficit disorders, and hyperactivity. Many parents of children with these disabilities have reported improved behavior as a result of learning to juggle. There is substantial evidence to support these claims. Juggling supports the recommendations made by Russell Barkeley, PhD in his book Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder:

"Increasing the novelty and interest level of tasks through the use of increased stimulation (e.g. color, shape, texture) seems to reduce anxiety level, enhance attention, and improve overall performance... High interest or active tasks may help hyperactive children to channel their disruptive behaviors into constructive responses... Interspersing classroom lecture or academic periods with brief moments of physical exercise may also be helpful, so as to diminish the fatigue and monotony of extensive academic work periods."

## **Improves student behavior**

Many schools with juggling programs report improved student behavior, perhaps because students who enjoy juggling the most are sometimes those with whom teachers have difficulty. Thus, the privilege of "juggling breaks" becomes an incentive for these students to behave.

## **Improves interpersonal skills**

Schools with ongoing juggling programs find that a lot of peer teaching takes place as participants encourage one another to succeed at their own pace. They learn through experience that the key to success is practice, and they appreciate the achievements of others as a result. Also, juggling with one or more partners requires cooperative problem solving, and helps participants learn to work with others.

*The documentary video "Juggling for Success" describes how Larry Graves, a teacher from Hazel Dell School in Vancouver, WA, started using juggling in his classroom. Juggling then caught on in other classrooms and had a profound impact on school culture, discipline, and academics. For more info about this video, discount juggling supplies, or other classroom resources, contact Nels at (716) 575-5378.*

# Juggling for Success

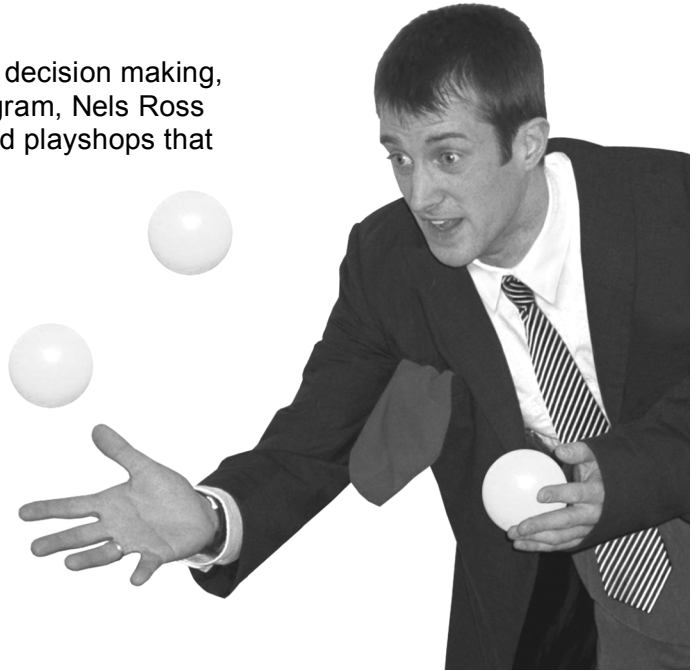
is coming to our school!

## What is Juggling for Success?

This exciting program teaches juggling, promotes positive decision making, and involves the entire school community. During the program, Nels Ross from In Jest will provide age-appropriate performances and playshops that reinforce principles for success. And then...

Join us \_\_\_\_\_  
at \_\_\_\_\_pm for Family Juggling Night!

At *Family Juggling Night*, everyone can try their hands at juggling, and Nels will provide a knock-your-socks-off, laugh-until-it-hurts comedy variety show! (To find out more about Nels, go to [www.InJest.com](http://www.InJest.com).)



## Why juggling?

- ✓ It develops coordination, balance, rhythm, and reflexes.
- ✓ Learning to juggle boosts confidence and self-esteem, and teaches patience and persistence.
- ✓ It improves tracking, crossing the midline, fine motor, and sequencing skills used in reading, writing, math, and science.
- ✓ It's FUN!

## The benefits can last a lifetime!

For those who want to continue juggling, discount supplies will be available at *Family Juggling Night*. Or check out the links at [www.InJest.com/fun](http://www.InJest.com/fun).

**Don't miss out. Mark your calendar and join us for this free fun family event!**

# School Coordinator's Checklist

Please use the checklist below to help you coordinate a successful program.

- Share your enthusiasm about JFS with your PE Department and principal. With their support, it will be easier to gain the support of others.
- At your school's next faculty meeting: (1) give an overview of the program, (2) pick several possible dates for the program, and (3) write down any questions that arise.
- Contact the agency that provided this packet or Nels at (716) 575-5378 for rates, availability, and other info.
- Reserve the gym for the entire program.
- Use the sample schedule below to work out a schedule for a one-day program at your school. A two- to five-day program can be adapted from your regular PE schedule.

*Note: Playshops can have up to 100 participants, but 25-50 is recommended. Mixed grade levels are okay, but they should be no more than one year apart. Also, you might consider having a closing assembly instead of an opening assembly depending on your needs.*

Time	Duration	Activity
8:30-8:50	20 min.	Teacher Meeting / Orientation
9:00-9:45	45 min.	Opening Assembly
10:00-10:30	30 min.	AM K / 1st Grade Playshop
10:30-11:00	30 min.	2nd Grade Playshop
11:00-11:45	45 min.	3rd Grade Playshop
11:45-12:30	45 min.	Lunch break for Nels
12:30-1:00	30 min.	PM K / 1st Grade Playshop
1:00-1:45	45 min.	4th Grade Playshop
1:45-2:30	45 min.	5th Grade Playshop
7:00-8:00	60 min.	Family Juggling Night (optional)

- Email your proposed schedule to [nels@injest.com](mailto:nels@injest.com) along with the number of students per playshop.
- About 7-14 days before the program, give teachers a copy of the schedule including the teacher meeting. If your school is hosting an evening program, send students home with the flyer (see previous page).
- Ask your custodian to clean the gym floor, and set up chairs for teachers before the assembly. If needed, it should be cleaned again before *Family Juggling Night* as most people will sit on the floor.
- Find out if there is someone who can take photographs during the program for your school newsletter, school yearbook, or local newspaper.
- When all of the above is done, be sure to relax and have fun!