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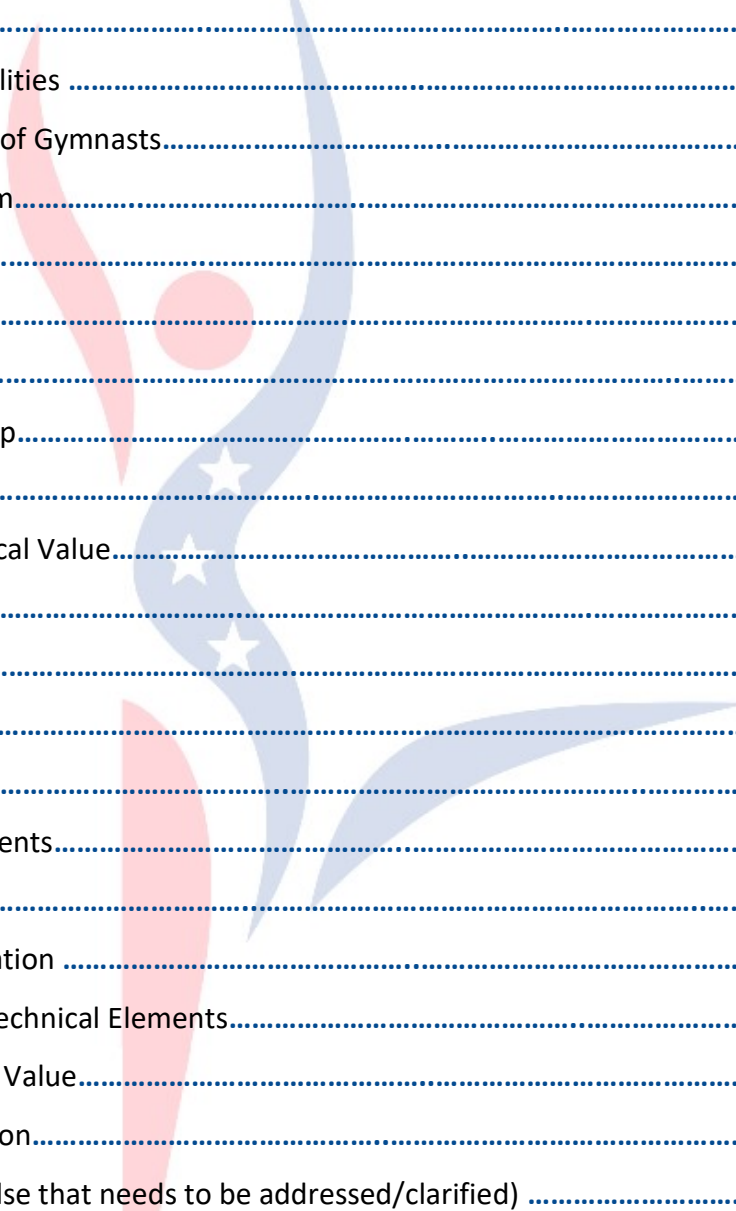
# 4-6 CHILDREN CATEGORY FREE PROGRAM RULES

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# Preamble

As of the beginning of 2024, the International Federation of Aesthetic Group Gymnastics has published rules for age categories beginning with the age of 8. In an effort to expand the sport of Aesthetic Group Gymnastics within the United States, AGGUSA has added two additional age categories to be recognized at the national level: Ages 4-6 and Ages 6-8. Teams that will be competing in these age categories may not be able to compete internationally, however they are free to compete within the United States at AGGUSA competitions, as well as participate in exhibitions and other events.

The main idea behind the rules of both the 4-6 and 6-8 age categories is to ensure the existence of AGG technique, physical capabilities, and bilateral muscle development in all participating gymnasts. IFAGG requirements of older age categories were taken into consideration when creating these rules. In order to guarantee AGG technique, physical capabilities, healthy aspects, and bilateral muscle development, there will be required elements that must be included in the AGG programs, all of which will be included below. When the routines are shown to the public at either a competition or showcase, the routines may be evaluated by a judge or judge panel at the request of the team. Scores of teams in these age categories will not be publicly shown, and no award placements will be given for teams competing in these age categories. Participation awards and/or gifts will be given to the teams in these age categories at AGGUSA events.

If there are any questions or concerns regarding these rules, please direct them to [aggusafederationoffice@yahoo.com](mailto:aggusafederationoffice@yahoo.com).

# Free Program Generalities

## Age and Number of Gymnasts

A 4-6 Free Program group consists of anywhere between 3-15 gymnasts. The standard accepted ages for gymnasts in this age category are 4, 5, and 6. Exceptions can be made in order to allow the formation of that would otherwise not be able to exist. These exceptions must abide by the following criteria:

Number of Gymnasts in the Group	Exceptions and Explanation
4 gymnasts	<p>There may be up to two exceptions in this group. One may differ from the standard ages by two years (an 8-year-old), and the other by one year (either a 3-year-old or a 7-year-old).</p>
5 gymnasts	<p>There may be up to two exceptions in this group. One may differ from the standard ages by two years (an 8-year-old), and the other by one year (either a 3-year-old or a 7-year-old).</p>
6 gymnasts or more	<p>There may be up to three exceptions in these groups.</p> <p>If there are only two exceptions, one may differ from the standard ages by two years (an 8-year-old), and the other by one year (a 3-year-old or a 7-year-old).</p> <p>If there are three exceptions, two of the exceptions may differ from the standard ages by two years (8-year-olds), as long as the third exception only differs from the standard ages by one year and is on the other side of the age category limitations (a 3-year-old).</p> <p>If two of the exceptions differ from the standard ages by one year, the third exception may differ from the standard ages by at most two years.</p> <p>It is acceptable if all exceptions only differ from the standard ages by one year.</p>

## Length of Program

The permitted length of the program is anywhere between **1 minute and 1 minute 30 seconds**. This timing starts with the beginning of the first movement of the program after the group takes its starting position and ends when all gymnasts are motionless.

## Music

There is no set musical theme for the 4-6 free program. Please ensure that the music choice is appropriate for the age category. Voice(s) and words are permitted in the music selection, as long as it remains appropriate for the age category. A short signal or beep may be included prior to the beginning of the music. A short musical introduction that is not more than five seconds and that is also not accompanied by movement from the gymnasts is permitted and will not be included in the time considered for the length of the program. Gymnasts are not permitted to make vocal sounds during their program, with the exception of single claps (or another equivalent).

When submitting music to a competition or event organizer please have the following information on the music file (in English):

- Club name.
- Team name
- Age Category
- Length of Music

The entire program's physical composition must have musical accompaniment (i.e. if gymnasts are moving during the program, music must be playing). If the wrong music is played the group is responsible for stopping the program immediately (at this age it is permitted for the coach or club representative to step up and inform the proper individuals to stop the program).

## Competition Area

The size of the competition carpet must be 13 meters by 13 meters including the borderline. This is the same for rhythmic gymnastics requirements. The borderline must be marked clearly (preferably in red tape) and must be at least 5 centimeters wide.

## Dress

The competition dress must be either a leotard or a unitard, with or without a skirt. The dress must be in the same in material, design, and color for all members of the group. Slight differences to conform to different body shapes and sizes are acceptable. Competition dress must not change during the program. It is preferred that gymnasts perform in skin-toned toe shoes.

The neckline of the dress must not be lower than the top of the breasts in the front or lower than the bottom of the shoulder blades in the back. Competition dress must not be distracting or hindering either the proper performance or viewing of the routine. Excessive decorations including hats, jewelry, lights, etc. are not permitted.

At this age simple, one-color, traditional leotards are acceptable. Tutus that are not excessive and go out from the waist while maintaining their shape are acceptable. Skirts longer than the mid-thigh are too long.

## Hair and Make-Up

All hair, unless it does not reach the base of the neck, must be tied for the safety of gymnasts. Small decorations are allowed if all gymnasts have the same decorations, and if they are secured to the scalp (NOT the bun or updo). Hair dyes that may transfer to the carpet are not permitted.

For this age only light make-up is acceptable. Blush, mascara, lip-gloss, and light eyeshadow is acceptable. Excessively dark colors, eyeliner, false eyelashes, and lipstick are not acceptable.

## Discipline

For all AGGUSA doping policy please refer to the General Regulatory Manual. All teams and coaches must respect the competing team and must not disturb them in any way. Any disrespectful behavior will be documented and sent to the Ethical Committee for further investigation and penalties such as membership suspension may ensue.

# Free Program Technical Value

## Balances

All static balances must have a fixed and well-defined shape and must show good body control before and after the balance. All pivots (also known as turns or dynamic balances) must have a rotation of 360° and are to be completed with a fixed shape.

## Leaps/Jumps

All jumps and leaps must show a fixed and well-defined shape in flight, show good elevation, show good body control before and after the element, and must show a safe and soft landing.

## Body Movements

All body movements must be natural and show the hips as the primary movement center. All body movements starting with one part of the body must be reflected in the remainder of the body. Body movements may be performed using different arm movements and leg movements, which provide different variations to the same body movements. The same body movement using different variations will be counted as separate body movements depending on how many styles of variations are present in the program.

## Waves

All waves are expected to show a movement stemming from the tilting or moving of the hips, which creates a wave or ripple effect throughout the entire upper body. All waves are also expected to gather speed throughout the movement, and as a result end in an extension of the upper body, as in arm(s) are reaching upwards and the gymnast is on relevé. A relaxation of the upper body is also expected either at the beginning of the wave (such as for forward and side waves) or at the end (for backwards waves).

A proper forward wave begins by relaxing the upper body and tilting the hips slightly forward. By continuing to push the hips forward, a wave pattern continues all the way up the spine. The wave must end with an extension and in relevé.

A proper backwards wave begins with the body in an extended position, on relevé. As the body's hips move forwards, the neck and upper body begins to naturally arch backwards. As the hips begin to move backwards again, the spine curves so that the upper body bends forwards, with the head following last. The wave is not counted until the body exits this relaxed position to end in an extension.

A proper side wave begins with feet apart and all weight on one leg, with the upper body slightly relaxed. As the hips move towards the leg carrying the body weight, the other leg begins to possess a transfer of weight. The hips continue to naturally move until all weight is transferred to the second leg. As this is occurring, the upper body and head relax and follow the movement pattern created by the hips. A wave-like pattern is then clearly visible in the upper body, and the head follows last. The wave must end with an extension.

## Swings

A swing must possess a gathering of speed throughout the movement, a swinging motion when the upper body is relaxed, and must end in an extension.

## Leans and Lunges

All leans and lunges require the leaning of the upper body while maintaining a straight spine. In a traditional standing lean, weight is equally distributed on both legs, and the lean with a straight spine must be between 45° and 90°. In a traditional lunge, weight is distributed mostly on one leg, and the lean with a straight spine must be a minimum of 45°.

## A-Body Movement Series

All A-Body Movement Series require two consecutive body movements. All A-body movement series must be demonstrated as if the first movement creates the second. There is no pause permitted, and no more than one step may be taken in between the two body movements.

## Dance Steps, Skips, and Hops

These additional rhythmic steps in the program are meant to demonstrate the agility of gymnasts. They must show good technique and coordination. One series of dance steps, skips, and hops must last a minimum of six counts.

## Arm Movement Series

Arm movement series must contain at least three different types of movements, and both arms are to be equally involved. They must clearly show variance in planes, directions, relaxations, or strengthening via the whole length of the arm. These may be accomplished at the same time as dance steps, skips, or hops, or during any other connected series in the program.



## Acrobatic Movements

Acrobatic Movements in AGG are generally classified by movements in which the gymnast's body rotates over its vertical position upside down with the support of the gymnast's hands, head, chest, or elbows.\* In acrobatic movements, gymnasts must show good muscle control, coordination, and agility. They must fit into the composition fluidly and must be reflective of the gymnasts' abilities.

\*Somersaults without airtime (front and back rolls) only count as acrobatic elements in this age category. In all other age categories, it is classified as a body movement.

## Flexibility

Demonstration of flexibility in the gymnasts must be displayed during the routine. This should be done with an emphasis on demonstrating good technical skills and healthy aspects, which includes demonstrating strength that supports the gymnasts' flexibility. Flexibility may be demonstrated on its own, such as in a split, or in an element, such as a front leg balance. For right, left, and middle split, the goal is to achieve a line of amplitude between the legs of 180°.

## Partner Collaboration

An instance in the program in which all gymnasts are in some way performing a physical connection between themselves. THIS IS NOT A LIFT. Examples may include linking arms, hugs, high-fives, etc. The partner collaboration may be done in pairs, trios, or as a team. Each child must participate in the collaboration, there can not be a child left alone on the carpet during the partner collaboration.

## List of Required Elements

TECHNICAL ELEMENT	Explanation
1 Wave	Any wave meeting the criteria.
1 Swing	Any swing meeting the criteria.
1 Lean	Any lean meeting the criteria.
1 Lunge	Any lunge meeting the criteria.
1 A-Body Movement Series	Any two body movements in quick succession, without more than one step in between.
1 Balance	Any balance performed on one leg without relevé.
1 Pivot	Any dynamic balance performed on one leg with a clear 360° rotation.
1 Jump	Any jump from two legs, with or without assamblé.
Right Front-Line Flexibility	Any demonstration of 180° amplitude between the legs with the right leg in front.
Left Front-Line Flexibility	Any demonstration of 180° amplitude between the legs with the left leg in front.
Middle Line Flexibility	Any demonstration of 180° amplitude between the legs in a straddle-like position.
2 Acrobatic Elements	1 forward roll and 1 bridge performed from the starting position of laying down.
2 Arm Movement Series	2 instances in which the arm movement series criteria are met.
2 Dance Step, Skip, Hop Series	2 instances in which the dance steps, skip, hop movement series criteria are met.
1 Partner Collaboration	1 instance in which the partner collaboration criteria are met.

# Free Program Artistic Value

## AGG Technique

The composition of the routine must encompass AGG ideals and philosophy. This is done by ensuring that the following elements are prevalent throughout the entire composition:

- Harmonious, rhythmic, and dynamic movements that are performed in a natural, fluid manner that emphasizes breathing and muscle control.
- Hips are shown to be the basic movement center of the body.
- Body movements and body movement series must be prevalent and equally distributed throughout the composition.

## Unity and Continuity

In both the music and choreography, the program must be fluid. There should not be any abrupt changes or cuts that would break the natural flow of the program.

## Variety

There must be a constant variety in the composition of the routine. This requirement of variety must be shown in each of the following:

- Directions, Planes, and Levels
- Use of Space (Formations)
- Travelling
- Body Movements
- Tempo and Dynamics
- Music

# Free Program Execution

1. The execution of the program must aim to be unified and synchronized.
2. All team members must strive to perform elements either at the same time or within a few counts of one another.
3. AGG technique must be clearly attempted by all gymnasts.
4. The execution must show good posture, coordination, balance, and rhythm.
5. All elements must be executed while keeping in mind the ideals of healthy aspects: particularly with the shoulders and hips being in line with one another.



# Appendix

## Example Balances

1. Pasé balance on flat
2. Pasé balance on relevé
3. Pasé pivot
4. Pivot on one leg, free leg amplitude below 90°
5. Front leg 90° balance on flat, holding front leg.
6. T-balance
7. Front leg 135° balance on flat, holding front leg.
8. Side leg 135° balance on flat, with hand support.

## Example Leaps/Jumps

1. Pencil jump with straight legs, rotation of 360°.
2. Pencil jump with straight legs and a body movement (with arch).
3. Cabriole
4. Scissor Leap with straight or bent legs.
5. Pasé jump with arch.
6. Pasé jump with 360° rotation.
7. Stag leap.
8. Cossack jump
9. Cat Leap
10. Split Leap, 135° amplitude between legs.
11. Straddle jump, 135° amplitude between legs.