

About the Book

This is the first book that explains why spotting is valuable, how spotting can be developed methodically and how children spotting each other is supposed to look.

Spotting and securing are two essential safety constituents when it comes to teaching and training gymnastics.

Teaching Children's Gymnastics takes a close look at what spotting and securing really means and how it must be done. It is a new, revolutionary teaching idea, which gets even the youngest children to learn how to spot each other safely.

Containing step-by-step instructions for teaching children to spot each other, as well as hundreds of examples and suggestions for interactive and spotting gymnastic exercises, *Teaching Children's Gymnastics* is an invaluable resource for all teachers, coaches, day camp leaders and others who work with children.

About the Author



Ilona E. Gerling is a university lecturer at the German Sports University in Cologne. She has worked in gymnastics for many years as a teacher and as a club coach. She is the National Chairperson for General Gymnastics in the German Gymnastic Federation and regularly speaks at international gymnastics congresses and forums. Furthermore, she is the author of a number of articles and books on both adult and children's gymnastics.

ISBN 978-1-84126-276-5



9 781841 262765
\$ 17.95 US/£ 12.95/€ 16.95

www.m-m-sports.com



Teaching Children's Gymnastics

Ilona E. Gerling

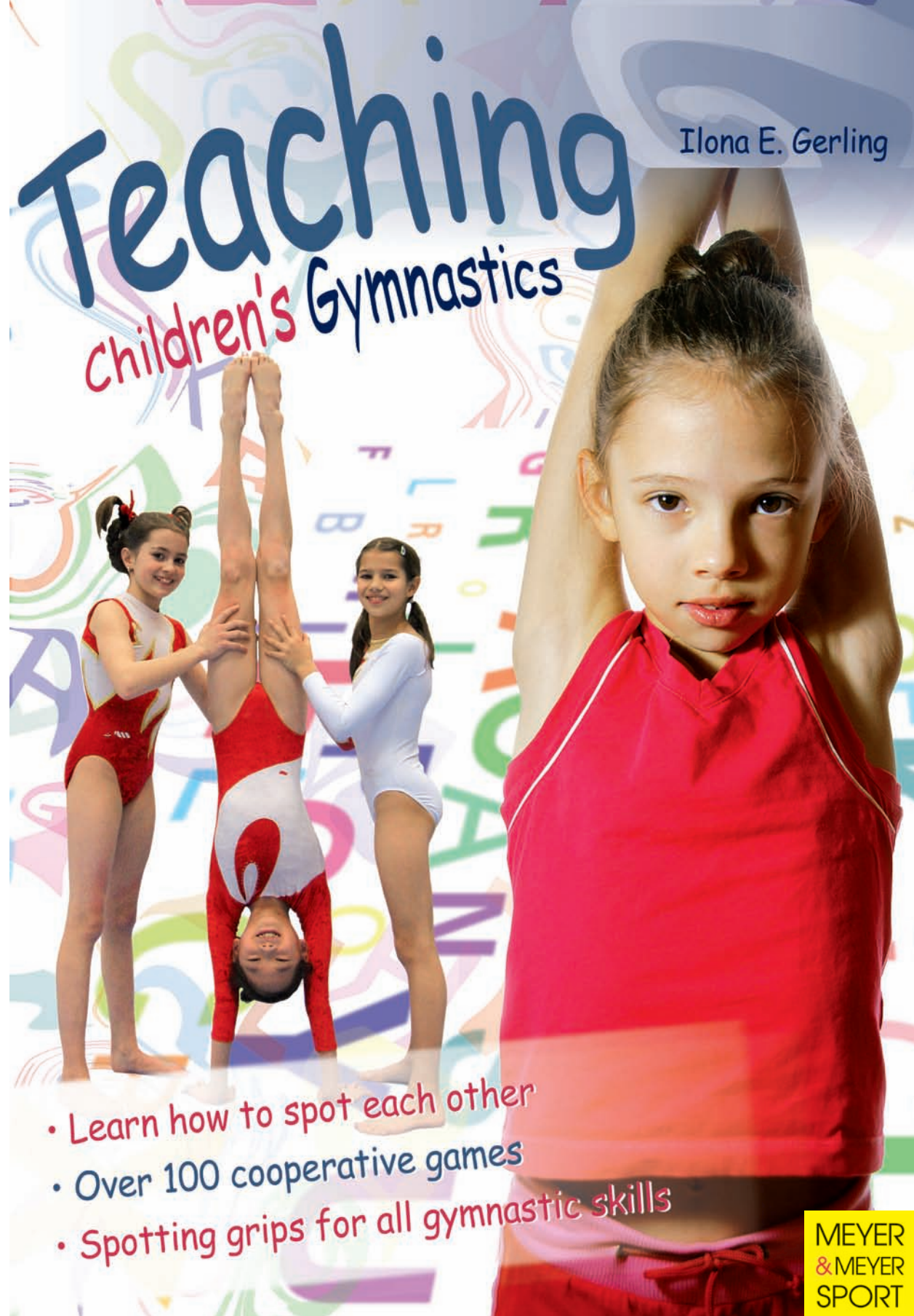
Teaching Children's Gymnastics

Ilona E. Gerling

- Learn how to spot each other
- Over 100 cooperative games
- Spotting grips for all gymnastic skills



MEYER
& MEYER
SPORT



Teaching Children's Gymnastics

Dedications

I would like to dedicate this book to my college teacher Mrs. Irma Nikolai, born Lenzing. Mrs. Irma Nikolai was a member of the Mettmanner Gymnastics Club since the age of seven. She was German Gymnastics Champion in the all-around competition and was a member of the 1936 Olympic Team. Since 1938, she was coached by Hermann Ohnesorg at the Reichs Academy for Physical Education in Berlin. He is considered the father of children's gymnastics. With the foundation of the German College of Sports in 1947 she was called to Cologne by Carl Diem as one of the first to serve as college professor. Until 1978, the year of her retirement, she trained thousands of sports students. Natural gymnastics, children performing gymnastics on apparatus and helping each other, cooperating with each other and humanity; her basic thoughts and lessons are contained in this book.

Dedicated to Kea, Jasper, Steffen and Henryk, representing all children of this world.

Above all dedicated to my parents Emmi and Werner Busse, who unselfishly did everything for us children in order to give us the best foundation and prerequisites for our lives. They helped wherever they could. They participated in our lives and always gave us the security of a parental home, which we wish for all children.

Thanks

I would like to thank my colleague Jürgen Engler very much for his unending support in the foundation phase of this book, and Mariette Mahkorn who was a big help during the final stage. Last but not least, I would like to thank my friend of many years, Achim Fassbender, very much for the translation of this book. He accepted, as a graduate from the German College of Sports, based on his experiences as gymnastics coach in Germany and the United States, the difficult task of translating subject specific literature from German into English. Thank you, finally, to Michelle Meyer, who read and corrected the book again in 2009.

Cologne, Ilona E. Gerling

Ilona E. Gerling

Teaching Children's Gymnastics

Spotting and Securing

Step by step with thousands of ideas
for children to spot each other



Meyer & Meyer Sport


Please observe: The author and the publisher do not assume any responsibility for injuries that might occur when putting exercises or spotting grips, which are listed in this book, into practice.

Original title: Kinder Turnen – Helfen und Sichern
– Aachen: Meyer und Meyer Verlag, 1997
Translation by Achim Fassbender

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

Teaching Children's Gymnastics
Ilona E. Gerling
Maidenhead: Meyer & Meyer Sport (UK) Ltd., 1998
2nd, revised edition 2009
ISBN: 978-1-84126-587-2

All rights reserved. Except for use in a review, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means now known or hereafter invented without the prior written permission of the publisher. This book may not be lent, resold, hired out or otherwise disposed of by way of trade in any form, binding or cover other than that which is published, without the prior written consent of the publisher.

© 1998 by Meyer & Meyer Sport (UK) Ltd.
2nd, revised edition 2009
Aachen, Adelaide, Auckland, Budapest, Cape Town, Graz, Indianapolis,
Maidenhead, Olten (CH), Singapore, Toronto
Member of the World
 Sport Publishers' Association (WSPA)
www.w-s-p-a.org
ISBN: 978-1-84126-587-2
E-Mail: info@m-m-sports.com
www.m-m-sports.com



Contents

Dedications and Expressions of Thanks	2
How to Use This Book	12
Preface: Spotting and Securing is More!	13
Introduction: From the Jahn-ish “Help” to Children Spotting	14

A THEORY: Spotting Means... ..19

I. Aspects of the Subject Matter	19
1 Definition of Terms:	
Spotting – Movement Accompaniment – Securing	19
2 Explanations and Practice Examples	21
3 Prerequisites	25
3.1 Conditioning and Coordination Abilities	25
Condition: Strength and Speed	25
Coordination: Regulated Strength Input, Agility, Adaptation	
Connecting, Combination and Rhythmic Ability	28
3.2 Knowledge: About the Technique of Spotting	35
Spotting and Movement Characteristics of a Skill	35
Spotting and Problem Moments	
During the Course of a Movement	37
Onset of Spotting Grips	38
Body Posture While Lifting and Carrying	40
Function of the Spotter Grips	41
Spotter Conduct	42
Choice of Location of the Spotter	43
Time Aspects of Spotter Actions	46
Transferability of Spotting Grips and Actions	47
“Game Rules” Between Spotters and Gymnasts	50



II. Pedagogical, Psychological and Sociological Aspects 53

1 Children Spot and Secure Each Other 53

1.1 Motivated and Fear-free Gymnastics 53

1.2 Social Field of Action 55

2 Attitude 55

3 Communication and Cooperation Abilities 56

4 Self-acting and Self-sufficiency 57

5 We-feeling 58

III. Instructional Aspects 59

1 Instructors in Gymnastics 59

1.1 Spotting and Securing Performed by Children 59

1.2 Care and Supervision Duties 60

2 Method – Learning Paths for Qualified Spotting,
Accompanying and Securing: Explanations 62

2.1 First Level: Fundamentals and Prerequisites 63

 Longterm Fundamental Work 63

 Creating Prerequisites Before Start of the Lesson 64

2.2 Second Level: Learning Simple Spotting 65

2.3 Third and Fourth Level: Spotter Grips and Actions 65

 Introduction to Spotter Grips 65

 Application of the Technique 66

 Learning How to Execute Complex Spotter Actions 66

2.4 Fifth Level: Executing Movement Accompaniment 67

2.5 Sixth Level: Ability to Secure 69

B PRACTICE ... for Consultation 71

I. Teaching and Learning 71

1 First Step: Creation of Basics and Prerequisites 71

1.1 More than 100 Games and Exercise Forms
for Encouraging Cooperation 72

 Age Sections and Game Types 72



Getting to Know Each Other and Contact Games	73
Eye Contact	75
Body Contact	76
Adaptation to the Partner	82
Adapting to Movements	84
Getting Acquainted with the Body Weight	89
Responsibility and Trust	94
Exercises with Eyes Closed	95
Carry Exercises	96
Communication and Cooperation	98
Cooperative Catching Games	103
Learn to Listen	104
1.2 Reaction Games and Games to Awaken Alertness	105
1.3 Partner and Group Acrobatics	111
Fundamentals	111
Basic “Bench” Position	113
Double Bench Pyramids and More	115
Bench Positions with Kneeling Upper Person	117
Bench Positions with Standing Upper Person	118
Push-up Acrobatics	121
Bottom Lying Position	122
Climber onto the “Chair”	124
Mounting onto the Thighs: Galleons Figure	126
Mounting to Shoulder Sit and Standing on Top of Each Other	128
2 Second Level: Simple Spotting	131
Balance Apparatus	131
Hang and Support Apparatus	132
Vaulting Apparatus	134
Floor and Gymnastics Skills	134
Partner and Group Acrobatics	136
3 Third and Fourth Level:	
Introduction to the Technique of Spotter Grips	139
3.1 With Regard to the Methodical Procedure	139
General Methodical Course Within a Lesson	139



3.2 Practical Lesson Examples for the Introduction of Spotter Grips 141

 First Example: From Handstand Against the Wall to Handstand Forward Roll in Movement Connection 142

 Second Example: Pullover on the Bars 146

 Third Example: Support Grip for a Squat Vault Over a Box 149

 Application in the Apparatus Circuit “Low Bar – Floor – Vault” 156

4 Securing 160

 Games 160

 Balance Apparatus 161

 Different Apparatus 162

II. Spotter Grips and Conduct 165

1 Floor Exercise 166

 Straight Jump 166

 Cat, Scissor, Stride and Split Leap 167

 Forward Roll 167

 Backward Roll 168

 Headstand 169

 Kick Up to Handstand 169

 Handstand Forward Roll 170

 Backward Roll to Handstand 170

 Cartwheel 171

 Round-off 171

 Front Handspring Including Front Walk-over and Front Handspring Step-out 172

 Back Handspring: Flic-Flac and Back Handspring Step-out, Back Walk-over and Valdez 174

 Side Aerial 176

 Front Aerial 177

 Salto Forward/Somersault (Front Flip) 178

 Salto Backward (Back Flip) 179



2	Vaulting Apparatus for Supported Vaults	181
	Kneel On, Squat On, Squat Vault	181
	Straddle On, Straddle Vault and Pike Vault	182
	Tucked Wende Onto and Over the Box	183
	Fencer Vaults	183
	Neck Kip, Head Kip and Piked Front Handspring (Yamashita) . . .	184
	Front Handspring	187
3	Mini-tramp	191
	Straight Jumps	191
	Jumps Onto and Over a Box (Panel Mats)	191
	Securing the Landing	191
	Salto Forward/Somersault (Front Flip)	192
	Turn-over Forward Tucked and Turn Grip Forward	192
	Salto Backward (Back Flip)	196
	Turn-over Backward Tucked with Spotter Grip:	
	Turn Grip Backward	196
	Back Handspring (Back Flip/Flic-Flac)	199
4	Hang and Support Apparatus	
	(Including Climbing Poles and Ropes)	201
	Hanging and Swinging	201
	Chin-up on Hang Apparatus	201
	Climbing Up the Rope	201
	Front Support	202
	Jump to Front Support	202
	Swinging in Front Support on Parallel Bars	202
	Kehre on Parallel Bars	203
	Wende on Parallel Bars	203
	Circular Tuck Wende on Parallel Bars	203
	Slide Down Forward from Front Support into Hang (-stand)	204
	Turn-over Backward	204
	Turn-over Backward on High Hang Apparatus	
	(High Bar, Rings, Trapeze)	204
	Turn-over Forward	205
	Turn-over Forward from an Elevation into a (Brief)	
	Piked, Inverted Kip Hang on Rings	205



»» TEACHING CHILDREN'S GYMNASTICS

Pullover	205
Pullover on the Trapeze	206
Long-hang Pullover on High Bar and High Trapeze	206
Clear Hip Circle to Support, Hang and Handstand on a Bar at Head Height	207
Back Hip Circle	208
Front Hip Circle	208
Swinging in Knee Hang on a Bar	209
Seat Up-swing from a Knee Hang	209
Seat Circle	209
Front Stride Circle/"Mill Circle"	210
Knee Up-swing	210
Knee Hang	211
Swinging in Knee Hang	211
Knee Hang Swing Dismount "Napoleon"	211
Knee Hang Swing Dismount off the Low Bar on the Uneven Bars, with Grip on the High Bar	212
Knee Hang Swing Dismount off the Trapeze	213
Under-swing from Standing Position, on the Uneven Bars over the Low Bar and from Front Support	213
Sole Circle Dismount	214
Leg Lift over the Bar to a Sit	216
One or Two Legged Stem Rise on Uneven Bars	216
Stem Rise from a Long Hang Sit on the Low Bar with Grip on the High Bar	216
Lowering Backward into Inverted Kip Hang and Reverse Kip to a Sit on Uneven Bars	217
Kip Up to Straddle Sit, Upper Arm Kip and Upper Arm Roll on Parallel Bars	217
Elgrip Kip	217
Kehre with 1/4 Turn from Inverted Hang	218
Kip-up from Inverted Hang or Drop Kip from Front Support back to Front Support	218
Suspension and Long Hang Kip on Uneven Bars	218
Glide and Long Hang Kip on High Bar, Uneven Bars and Parallel Bars	219



Upper Arm Stand on Parallel Bars and Forward Roll 219

Back Swing to Handstand on Parallel Bars 220

Dislocate from an Inverted Piked Hang/Kip Hang
to Long Hang on Swinging Rings 220

5 Balance Apparatus 223

Gymnastics Elements on the Beam 223

- Forward Roll 223
- Free Forward Roll 224
- Scissor Handstand and Handstand 224
- Cartwheel 225

Mounts from a Side Stand 226

- Front Support and Lifting of One Leg
Over with a Turn to Cross Sit 226
- Tuck Wende onto the Beam 226

Mounts from Cross Stand 226

- Squat On, Straddle On, Squat Through to Sit,
One Legged Squat Through to Sit 226
- Squat On from Cross Stand at the End of the Beam 227
- Squat On from Cross Stand without Support of the Hands 227
- Run On from Cross Stand 227

Mounts from Diagonal Stand: 228

- Run On with Support of One Hand from Diagonal Stand 228
- Unsupported Run On from a Diagonal Stand 228

Dismounts: 228

- Jump Downs 228
- Round-off 228
- Front Handspring 229
- Front Flip 230
- Back Flip 230
- Side Aerial to Landing with Legs Together 230
- Front Aerial Off Beam 230

Appendix 231

Spotting and Securing for School Gymnastics 231

Picture Legend to Page 17 239

Literature References 241



How to Use This Book

This book not only contains the descriptions and illustrations of spotting grips, but it also tries to make this vast and important subject matter more clear for those who are involved with spotting in gymnastics. It's my wish with this book to give practical aid for better comprehension and transfer into practice to those who would like to gain further knowledge in gymnastics, as well as those who carry out the instruction.

I hope you will not allow yourself to be scared away by so much theory in order to put the theory of children spotting each other into action. Even though the idea of spotting each other might be quite unusual for the children at first effort is worthwhile. Once this form of teaching is tried and put into practice, every participant will recognize that it's very easy and lots of fun.

Aspects of the subject matter at the beginning of this book will inform the teacher WHAT "spotting" is, and HOW it is done well. The pedagogical, psychological and sociological aspects try to explain WHY "spotting" of the children amongst themselves is so valuable. In theory you will find hundreds of suggestions for lessons/practices that improve the idea of children spotting each other, as well as practical examples that show the children step by step how to spot each other, all well explained with pictures.

The last part of the book is the representation and illustration of spotting grips for immediate consultation for instructional preparation. For coaches, as well as for teachers at school, this book is equally valuable for the directors of day camps or circus projects because it also informs through examples – including trick skills from acrobatics, tumbling, balancing or trapeze – all these fields.

It's up to you where and how you start to read this book; it's certainly a valuable partner for your gymnastics lessons.

Lots of fun in gymnastics!
Yours, Ilona Gerling

Ilona Gerling!



Preface: Spotting and Securing is More!

“Spotting and Securing” is without a doubt a decisive prerequisite for danger free and successful gymnastics on equipment. Therefore, it is a “means to an end” for facilitating movement learning and reducing possible fears.

But couldn’t “Spotting and Securing” be more?! I think so! Let’s take a look at what is going on here. Someone entrusts his body and life confidently into someone else’s while trying a new artistic trick. And this person responds to this act of trust with unrestricted responsibility, to first prevent severe damage to that person, and beyond that to facilitate a moment of success.

What’s happening here on a psycho-social level is more than a technical procedure. This requires an attitude of mutual give and take, a challenge to act responsibly, which promotes interaction and cooperation, it strengthens the perception of togetherness and the experience of unity.

This all relates to social virtues that, in a materialistic world, where people are on an EGO trip and insatiably need to satisfy their hunger under the motto ‘immediate gratification’, need to be revitalized. The social impulses that are generated through ‘Spotting and Securing’ can contribute here.

This is why I, as sports educator and President of the German Gymnastics Federation (Deutscher Turner Bund = DTB) welcome this book. It links well with the efforts of the DTB to, on the one hand make the meaning and possibilities of social aspects increasingly visible, and on the other to give practical help for social interaction.

The author Ilona Gerling, who is the Federal Chairperson for Gymnastics in the DTB and an instructor at the German College of Sports in Cologne (Deutsche Sporthochschule = DSHS Köln), has, based on her tremendous foundation of knowledge and vast experience, written this book that exemplifies that ‘Spotting and Securing’ is more. I wish this book success, especially since it addresses the subject of children and because our world of tomorrow needs more social responsibility.

Prof. Dr. Jürgen Dieckert
President of the German
Gymnastics Federation (DTB)

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jürgen Dieckert". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.



Introduction: From the Jahn-ish "Help" to Children Spotting

Through helping
one wins friends.
To allow being helped
is a proof of friendship.

Spotting and securing – who in gymnastics doesn't know these two terms that are mentioned in one breath and simply belong to this sport? Most people though still associate these terms exclusively as requirements to be used with the learning and successful execution of a new skill, such as a pullover, or front and back handspring.

Looking back into history, spotting and securing was primarily seen as a purpose for movement support and securing. After the "Deutsche Turnkunst" (German Artistic Gymnastics) was published by Ludwig Jahn and Ernst Eiselen in 1816, "the usefulness of good illustrations should not be taken for granted" and it "was mutually accepted, that this row of illustrations be updated significantly and put in order, and be set into a more decisive accord and relationship with the new edition of the 'Deutsche Turnkunst'" (Eiselen 1889).

The idea of the first published "Illustrations of Gymnastics Exercises" in 1848, edited by E. Eiselen, was thus born. It not only contained 400 illustrations of gymnastics poses and exercises, but there were also many impressive illustrations about "spotting", spotting grips, and safety positions. Many of today's spotting grips resemble those from the past. We find the securing of the wrists for hip circles, the fixation of the knee bend and lifting of the body's center of gravity when swinging in a knee hang, the support grip, turn grips, push-turn assistance and even illustrations for safety positions (see Fig. I-IX, p. 17 and picture legend, p. 239). The book is still, to this day, a treasure chest for every coach. Skills like neck kip, seat circle und knee hang swing that have been ousted from modern gymnastics, belong then and today to the artistic gymnastics tricks of the children and thus in the gymnastics class.

These tricks that can be demonstrated develop naturally out of the children's unrestricted movement. Here the children not only give