

EARLY YEARS PHYSICAL LITERACY FRAMEWORK

In 2011 the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) set out the recommended levels of physical activity for 0-5 years:

- Physical activity should be encouraged from birth, particularly through floor-based play and water-based activities in safe environments.
- Children of pre-school age who are capable of walking unaided should be physically active daily for at least 180 minutes (3 hours), spread throughout the day.
- All under fives should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (being restrained or sitting) for extended periods (except time spent sleeping).

Recently, as part of the Childhood Obesity Plan (2016) these CMO guidelines will be embedded in the Early Years Foundation Stage Inspection Framework for OfSTED.

What is Physical Literacy?

Physical literacy can be described as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding that provides children with the movement foundation for lifelong participation in physical activity. Enabling them to be physically literate supports children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development and creates healthy, active movers.

How will this framework help you?

This framework has been designed to support all early years settings to consider how best they can create active, healthy environments. This will ensure they develop the physical literacy of all their children providing opportunities to move more and sit less.

What should you do?

Physical literacy is fostered through active play provision and structured physical activity in an appropriate range of age and stage related opportunities. You should consider what those age and stage opportunities look like in your context in order to maximise progress in physical literacy.

Acknowledgements

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- Public Health England
- Active Cumbria
- Outdoor Play and Learning

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ACTIVE HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT

Creating active opportunities for children starts with the environment you create for movement. Think about creating stimulating spaces that encourage movement and not sitting.

Here are some ideas that make best use of the space, toys, equipment, furniture, sounds and colours to ensure children are moving more and sitting less and developing the skills and characteristics required of the EYFS framework.

- Opportunities to be physically active outdoors and indoors are maximised when possible (including for babies and non-walkers)
- Protection is provided from the sun
- Suitable clothing and footwear is provided to enable outdoor play in all weathers
- An environment is provided that excites the senses and movement is created with colour, textures, sounds
- Music, songs and nursery rhymes and speech are used to stimulate physical activity
- Objects/images are placed in different spaces to stimulate exploration (at eye level, on the floor, above, to the side, walls, windows, fences)
- A range of resources are available for children to choose from when they are ready and able to do so
- Space enables children to move freely and sturdy structures enable children to pull themselves to standing if ready
- Unnecessary furniture is removed from spaces
- Consideration is given to reducing over dominance of space by trikes and bikes
- Opportunities for a range of play types are provided for all e.g. rough & tumble, exploratory, social and deep play. Best Play objectives are inherent in provision
- Encourage active travel to and from the setting.

ACTIVE CHILDREN

It is vital from birth that all children are provided with the freedom to move and that constraint in e.g. car seats, high chairs, bouncers and seats is kept to a minimum.

As children develop through the first year it is vital to assist them to transition from lying to weight bearing activities (e.g. rolling, pushing up from front lying, sitting, crawling, standing) and to enable them to engage in enjoyable and energetic movements. Provision should be made for the development of balance, travel and manipulative skills, so that variety and complexity of activity can be achieved.

In preparation for more structured education, creative and imaginative activities should be included so that children can find out what their bodies can do.

As they continue to gain physical competence children should be assisted to increase their movement vocabulary, extend their movement memory and enrich the quality of their movement.

Some children will have additional physical and/or emotional needs when accessing activity and play opportunities. Consideration should be given to how these children should be supported to become physically literate through a child centred approach.

0-11 MONTHS

Early movement development and physical literacy are based on:

- Tummy time to encourage pushing up from front lie, to assist development of neck, shoulder and core muscle strength, little and often (whilst awake and supervised)
- Babies engaging frequently in floor based play
- Babies being able to move freely (stretch, bend, kick legs, flick arms)
- Babies being played with and interacting frequently with adults and other children
- Rolling over, sitting and crawling being nurtured for those ready, by providing space and encouragement
- Play with shapes, textures, colours and sounds to develop movement and senses
- Babies reaching for, swiping at, grasping and moving towards objects
- Movement stimulated through music, story, songs and nursery rhymes (sway, rock and kick)
- Non-restrictive clothing to enable comfortable, free movement
- Supervised water play at bath-time.

8-20 MONTHS

To enable transition to weight bearing activities encourage:

- Large movements of arms and legs to assist gross motor skill development
- Frequent independent physically active play as well as active play with adults and other children
- Imaginative and creative active play
- Play with colourful, audible and textured toys to stimulate movement
- Development of weight bearing (sitting, crawling, pulling up to standing, walking) for those ready, by providing space, encouragement and assistance
- Play with push and pull along toys to enhance balance and travel, indoors and outdoors
- Play with objects of varying sizes, shapes, textures and weights to promote manipulative ability (grasping, grabbing, squeezing, dropping, placing and picking up)
- Supervised water based play (splashing, wetting face, kicking legs, floating toys)
- Stimulating physical activity through the use of music, story, rhyme and songs.

16-26 MONTHS

To develop balance, travel and manipulative skills encourage:

- Opportunities to be physically active frequently, independently, with other children and adults
- Unstructured play and games to stimulate exploring, balancing, travelling, climbing
- Ways of travelling (marching, toddling, jogging, jumping, stair climbing up and down)
- Activities to stimulate balance (travel and stop, dancing, balance whilst making shapes with arms and legs, balance on feet, and on hands and feet)
- Movement at different speeds, on different levels and in different directions
- Play with toys and equipment of varying colour, shape, size and weight to develop object control (drop and pick up, place, pass from hand to hand, roll)
- Supervised water based play, travelling, leading to floating and swimming (wading, jumping, underwater activity)
- Stimulating actions, dance and imaginative movement through the use of music, story, rhyme and songs.

22-36 MONTHS

Develop increased complexity and challenge through facilitating:

- Increased opportunities to be active independently, with other children and adults
- Unstructured play (active creative and imaginative play, exploring the environment)
- Increase in ways of travelling (marching, tiptoeing, running, jumping, hopping, sliding down slides, climbing up and down steps, stairs, on hands and knees and feet)
- Movement at different speeds, directions and on a variety of levels and surfaces
- Activities supporting controlled balance (stillness, reaching, on two feet, on one foot, turn, twist, balance on varied surfaces and levels)
- Wide choice of toys of different shape, sizes, textures and weights to increase manipulative control (picking up, patting, carrying and placing, rolling, bouncing and retrieving, throwing, chasing and collecting, striking, kicking)
- Adult led water play leading to floating on back and front and propulsion through water
- Physical activity stimulated through use of music, story, rhyme and song.

30-50 MONTHS

To enhance exploration, creativity and imagination, provide opportunities for children to:

- Try new activities, new movements and unfamiliar toys and equipment, alone, with adults and other children, to increase movement vocabulary
- Learn to follow instructions
- Increase ways of travelling (galloping, jumping and landing, rolling, climbing)
- Repeat and practise activities, to enhance movement memory
- Manipulate, balance and control objects with hands and feet (passing hand to hand around body, rolling, dropping and picking up, bouncing, kicking, aiming and retrieving) with a range of objects
- Develop balance and linked balances (on wide and narrower surfaces, lower and higher surfaces, dancing, climbing)
- Increase variety of adult led water based play leading to swimming on back and front and underwater
- Increase variety of actions and sequences of actions, stimulated through music, story and rhyme

40-60 MONTHS

Encourage children to enhance physical competence by increasing movement vocabulary, developing movement memory and enriching movement quality through:

- Balance activities and sequences of balances (on feet, foot, a variety of body parts, upside-down, stationary and moving)
- Increase in speeds and directions of travel on feet (running, rope skipping, hop scotch, leaping, building short liked sequences)
- Active outdoor travel (on foot, on balance bike, to and from school and outdoor areas)
- Object control and competitive activities (carrying, rolling, pushing, steering, bouncing, throwing, passing, aiming, kicking, striking, receiving)
- Explore new movements and unfamiliar objects, and developing imaginative activities
- Repeating sequences and refining skill with a variety of large and small equipment including bean bags, balloon balls, hoops, sticks, climbing frames and parachutes
- Adult led swimming and water management activities
- Using music, story and rhyme to create complex actions and sequences

ACTIVE ROLE MODELS

Adults, peers and siblings all have a part to play in role modelling positive behaviours and encouraging children to move more and sit less. Children connect with adults that join in with playing and activity. They thrive when outdoors and perform better when not sitting for long periods.

There are some fundamental aspects to get right:

- All adults are aware of the Chief Medical Officer's recommendations for physical activity for 0-5 years.
- Adults role modelling moving more and sitting less including during traditionally sedentary times e.g. story time.
- Think about non-verbal and verbal communication and how your clothing promotes being active.
- Remember, children will pick up on any negative behaviour or attitudes towards being active from those that influence them the most - you!

Here are some specific things a good role model needs to consider:

0-11 MONTHS

- Sensitively encourage and support children to be physically active through actions, verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Restraint and sitting is minimised.
- Remember to communicate and play at the child's level which for non-walkers will mean getting down on the floor with them.

8-20 MONTHS

- Enable a balance of child and adult initiated physical activity and also child and adult led activities.
- Restraint and sitting is minimised.
- Remember to communicate and play at the child's level which for non-walkers will mean getting down on the floor with them.

16-26 MONTHS

- Listen and respond to children to meet their activity needs. They observe and provide key vocabulary for the movements made and toys used.
- Support is provided for anxious children to enable access to activities in a safe, secure environment.
- Restraint and sitting is minimised.

22-36 MONTHS

- Enable a balance of child and adult initiated physical activity and also child and adult led activities. Adults listen and respond to children to meet their activity needs. They observe and provide key vocabulary for movements made to develop movement vocabulary.
- Physical activities are modelled to help children engage with support provided for anxious children to enable access to activities in a safe, secure environment.
- Restraint and sitting is minimised.

30-50 MONTHS

- Join in, model active play and dress appropriately for physical activity and enable a balance of child and adult initiated physical activity.
- Encourage, support and engage children in physical activity through action and verbal and non-verbal communication. They communicate with children about physical activity, use movement vocabulary, ask questions, and respond to children's answers.
- Restraint and sitting is minimised.

40-60 MONTHS

- Enable a balance of adult initiated physical activity and child led activities. Adults are enthusiastic and sensitive to the needs of the physical activity needs and preferences of children.
- Encourage, support and engage children in physical activity through action and verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Communicate with children about physical activity, use movement vocabulary, ask questions, and respond to children's answers.
- Restraint and sitting is minimised.

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