



Active Kids are Active Adolescents

Fundamental Movement Skills

By Lindsay, Anne and Byington, Teresa

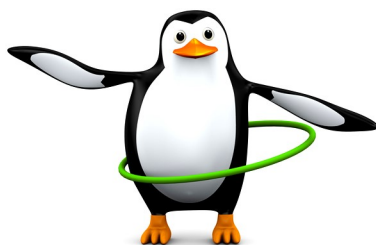
Being physically active can improve a child's overall health and reduce their risk of obesity and chronic disease as they grow older.

Providing more physical activity simply by increasing playtime alone may not be enough.¹ For many children playing sports and being physically active doesn't come naturally, isn't easy, and many activities may not be seen as fun! For these children especially, more time won't change the way they use that time. They need more guidance and encouragement to become physically active.

SKILL MASTERY

Physical *activity* answers the question, how much activity does a child get.

Physical *fitness* tells us how strong his heart, muscle and bones are. *Skill mastery*, a very important component of physical activity, addresses children's level of physical skill and ability. Some children may have developmental delays or impairments that need professional attention, caregivers should see their healthcare provider to address these concerns. Other children may simply lack the skills necessary to live an active lifestyle. Children should be provided opportunities to master both fundamental movement skills such as hop on one foot, balance, jump, spin and skip and perceptual motor skills, those that connect the five senses (brain) with motor skills (body) like crossing the feet or moving in slow motion.²



Provide an environment that is fun, educational and promotes physical literacy through helping children build the necessary skills to be active!

WHAT ARE FUNDAMENTAL MOVEMENT SKILLS

Fundamental movement skills are a specific set of skills that involve using different parts of the child's body and form the "building blocks" for more complex and specialized skills they will need throughout their lives.³ Many of these fundamental movement skills are specified in state pre-kindergarten standards and describe what children should be able to do before they start kindergarten. Examples include hop on one foot, spin on one foot, step forward and back, and balance on one foot for 5 seconds.



"Maturation is not a miracle!" - Jane Clark - ⁴

Gaining confidence and skill development doesn't happen overnight. Therefore, just relying on natural maturation is not enough, engage children in fundamental movement skills.



Confidence NOW = Success LATER!

A child who is confident in their movement skills at an early age is more likely to be physically active in Later years.⁵



BUILDING SELF-EFFICACY

Teaching and practicing physical skills in early childhood years is the key to helping children master these fundamental skills. Waiting until elementary school to teach these skills when specific sports and other physical activities are introduced, contributes to a child's lack of self-efficacy.⁶ Famous psychologist Albert Bandura defines self-efficacy as a child's self-belief in their competence or chances of successfully accomplishing a task. For example, if children are confident in their ability to throw, catch and hit a ball, they are more willing to try baseball with their friends believing that they will succeed. If children can do a forward roll, spin on one foot, and jump high they are more enthusiastic to try dance, cheerleading or gymnastics.

On the other hand, children, who are *not* skilled, will gravitate away from active sports, games and dance and move towards less threatening sedentary hobbies.⁷ This is especially noticeable as children move from childhood to adolescence in what's known as the "physical activity divide". Low-skilled, inactive children suddenly perceive themselves as poorly skilled and may withdraw, unlike their higher skilled, more active friends who find physical activity rewarding and fun.⁷

Children should learn and practice 3 types of Fundamental Movement Skills:

LOCOMOTOR

Activities that move children from one place to the next (locomotion) including:

- Running
- Walking
- Marching
- Hopping
- Jumping
- Skipping
- Stepping (Forward, Backward, Sideways)



NON-LOCOMOTOR

Activities that require the child to stay in one spot (stationary) such as:

- Bending
- Stretching
- Swinging
- Spinning
- Twisting



OBJECT CONTROL

Activities that involve small muscle groups that allow for the handling of an object (e.g. a ball) such as:

- Throwing
- Catching
- Bouncing
- Dribbling
- Kicking



REFERENCES

1. Cardon, G. M., & De Bourdeaudhuij, I., M.M. (2008). Are preschool children active enough? objectively measured physical activity levels. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 79(3), 326-32.
2. McDonald, Cheryl (2011). California Dept. Of Education, "Preschool Curriculum Framework" Vol. 2
3. Whitehead, M. (2013). What is physical literacy and how does it impact on physical education. *Debates in physical education*, 37-52.
4. Clark, J. E. (2007). On the problem of motor skill development. *Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance*, 78(5), 39-44. doi:10.1080/07303084.2007. 10598023
5. Barnett, Lisa M., et al. "Childhood Motor Skill Proficiency as a Predictor of Adolescent Physical Activity." *Journal of Adolescent Health*, vol. 44, no. 3, 2009, pp. 252-259., doi:10.1016/j.jadohealth.2008.07.004.
6. Cairney, J., Hay, J. A., Faght, B. E., Wade, T. J., Corna, L., & Flouris, A. (2005). Developmental coordination disorder, generalized self-efficacy toward physical activity, and participation in organized and free play activities. *The Journal of pediatrics*, 147(4), 515-520.
7. Stodden, David F., et al. "A Developmental Perspective on the Role of Motor Skill Competence in Physical Activity: An Emergent Relationship." *Quest*, vol. 60, no. 2, 2008, pp. 290-306., doi:10.1080/00336297.2008.10483582.
8. Haibach-Beach, Pamela S., et al. *Motor Learning and Development*. Human Kinetics, 2011