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.

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**ACTIVE HEALTH ENVIRONMENT**

Creating active opportunities for children can help them start the physical activity journey for you create for movement. Think about creating spaces and places that encourage movement and not sitting. Here are some ideas that make best use of time spent indoors, toys, equipment, furniture, sounds and colours to encourage children to move more and sitting less and developing the skills and characteristics required of the EFSS framework.

- Opportunities to be physically active increase as the ages are maximised when possible (including for babies and young children)
- Babies playing actively in floor-based play
- Protects is provided from the sun
- Suitable clothing and footwear is provided to enable outdoor play in all weather
- An environment is provided that encourages children to meet their activity needs
- Spaces/objects are placed in different spaces to stimulate exploration at eye level, on the floor, above, to the side, upwards and downwards
- 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 steadily and supports anxious children to put themselves to standing if ready
- Necessary equipment is removed from spaces
- Consideration is given to reducing over dominance of space by trikes and bikes
- Opportunities for a range of play types and interaction, such as rough & tumble, exploratory, social and deep play
- Active role models 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 that is e.g. car seats, high chairs, bouncers and seats is limited as much as possible. As children develop through the first year it is vital to assist them to explore the environment. Building spaces that support movement 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.

As they continue to gain physical control they will be able to be assisted to increase their movement vocabulary and their imagination memory and enrich the quality of their movement.

Some children will have additional physical and/or emotional needs which will impact on their play and play opportunities. Consideration should be made as 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, 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, tick arms)
  - Babies being played with and interacting freely with adults and other children
  - Rolling over, sitting and crawling being encouraged for those ready, by providing space and encouragement
  - Play with shapes, textures and sounds to develop movement and senses
  - Babies reaching for, wiping at, grasping and moving towards objects
  - Movement stimulated through music, story, songs and nursery rhymes (away, 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 encouraging:
  - 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 and encouragement
  - 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 encouraging:
  - Opportunities to be physically active frequently, independently, with other children and adults
  - Structured play and games to stimulate exploring, balancing, travelling, climbing
  - Ways of travelling (marching, toddling, jumping, jumping, stepping, climbing up and down steps, sliding down hill, on hands and knees and feet)
  - Movement at different speeds, on different levels and in a variety of surfaces and spaces
  - Activities supporting balanced behaviour (climbing, reaching, on two feet, on one foot, tum, twist, balance on one leg, whilst climbing)
  - Whole of body movement (drops, turns, jumps, large movements of arms and legs, bending, flexing, sticking, stepping, kicking)
  - Object and equipment play (dropping, placing and picking up, pushing, bouncing, kicking, aiming and throwing) with a range of objects
  - Development balance and linked balance skills (support, moving on varied surfaces, lower and higher surfaces, balance, climbing, descending)
  - Increase variety of adult led water based play leading to swimming on back and front and under water
  - Increase variety of actions and sequences of actions, stimulated through music, story and rhyme

**22-36 MONTHS**

- To encourage active travel to and from the setting.
  - Enable a balance of child and adult initiated physical activity and also child and adult led activities
  - Listen and respond to children who 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
  - Restrain and sitting is minimised

**30-50 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 for a variety of body parts, upside-down, stationary and moving
  - Increase in speeds and directions of travel on feel (running, tracing, skipping, hop scotch, leaping, building short low sequences)
  - Active outdoor travel (on feet, on balance bike, to and from school and outdoor areas)
  - Object control and competitive activities (carrying, rolling, pushing, steering, throwing, passing, aiming, kicking, striking, receiving)
  - Explore new movements and unfamiliar objects and equipment creating imaginative activities
  - Repeating, echoing and refining skill with a variety of large and small equipment including bean bags, balloons, 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 play and activities that push them outdoors and perform better when not sitting down.

**0-11 MONTHS**

- Sensitively encourage and support children to be physically active through space, verbal and non-verbal communication.
- Restrain 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
- Listen and respond to children who 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
- Restrain and sitting is minimised

**16-26 MONTHS**

- Enable a balance of child and adult initiated physical activity and also child and adult led activities
- Listen and respond to children who 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
- Restrain and sitting is minimised

**22-36 MONTHS**

- Join in, model active play and dress appropriately for physical activity and also child and adult led activities
- 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 active play in an active, fun and playful way
- Restrain and sitting is minimised

**30-50 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 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
- Restrain and sitting is minimised