



PHYSICAL LITERACY - A parent's guide

WHAT IS PHYSICAL LITERACY?

PHYSICAL LITERACY LIFE CYCLE

Physical literacy is when kids have developed the skills, confidence, and love of movement to be physically active for life.



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HOW IS PHYSICAL LITERACY DEVELOPED?

Kids develop physical literacy gradually through a variety of structured and unstructured activities. The nature of these activities changes as kids grow in age and ability.



0-3 years

Encourage early movement.



3-5 years

Expand on play, and keep it fun.



5-8 years

Increase the focus on fundamental movement skills.



8-12 years

Introduce more complex skills as kids are ready.



Learn more at: ActiveForLife.com

Physical literacy is the development of fundamental movement skills that permit a child to move confidently and with control, in a wide range of physical activity and sport situations.

To become physically literate, children need to master **fundamental movement skills**. Fundamental movement skills include catching, hitting, jumping, running, and throwing – the building blocks of many sports.

Physical literacy is developed from birth to age 11 years (girls) or 12 years (boys). Almost all children learn their fundamental movement skills in the same sequence and go through the same phases. For every skill, there is a “best” time for the child to learn. If a child goes too long without learning a skill then learning it may become more difficult.

While it is true that many children develop these skills on their own, many do not. Developing physical literacy in our children takes the combined efforts of parents, day-care providers, schools and community sport organisations. We all have a role to play in creating opportunities for children to learn fundamental movement skills.

Why is Physical Literacy important for my child?

- Being physically active is more important to health than just about any other part of life over which we have control. Children need to develop the knowledge, skills and attitudes that give them the best chance of staying active throughout their lives.
- When a child has confidence in his or her ability to take part in sport without fear of making a mistake, the probability that they will join in is high; and if they enjoy the activity they will likely continue with it. Physically literate children know that they move well, and this confidence encourages them to try new and different activities without fear.
- For children to have success in sport – either recreationally or competitively – it is important that they master fundamental movement skills before learning fundamental sport skills and techniques. Missing out on fundamental movement skills means a child is unlikely to choose a sport activity that requires proficiency in that skill. Children tell us that not having the skills to play is one major reason they drop out of physical activity and organised sport.

Physical Literacy at 6-12 years

These are critical years for the development of physical literacy and fundamental movement skills. During this time the foundations of many advanced skills are laid down. Skill development is best achieved through a combination of unstructured play and quality instruction. Skill development should be well-structured, positive and FUN, and should focus on developing the ABC's of Agility, Balance, Coordination and Speed.

What can parents do to help?

- ✓ Encourage your child to engage in unstructured physical play with their friends every day
- ✓ Play catching, throwing, hitting and other physically demanding games with your child
- ✓ Let your child try as many different activities and sports as possible. Enroll children in minor sport programs each season and have them try different positions or events
- ✓ Try to have children take part in some land-based, some water-based and some snow/ice-based activities
- ✓ Don't be concerned with the score – put the focus on learning and having fun
- ✓ Talk to your day care providers, schools and sport organisations to find out how they teach fundamental movement skills
- ✓ Do not focus on one sport – although they may have a preferred sport, kids should take part in other activities at least 3-4 times per week.
- ✓ Keep sport and physical activity fun!

What is WVFHC doing to promote physical literacy & fundamental movement skills?

- ✓ We incorporate broad physical literacy skills in our programs, especially for warm-ups and small-game activities
- ✓ Our focus in Spring League is teaching age-appropriate field hockey skills with an emphasis on learning and skill more than winning. We also promote equal playing time and trying out different positions
- ✓ We offer courses and support to our parent and club coaches to enable them to promote fundamental movement skills in our U6-U12 age groups
- ✓ We collaborate with other sport organisations to offer multi-sport experiences and to coordinate scheduling to enable our players to participate in more than one sport
- ✓ We are working with the Physical Literacy For You (PL4U) network to develop ways to promote physical literacy within sport organisations

If you have other suggestions, we would like to hear them!
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Where can I find out more?

www.pl4u.ca – a network of organisations promoting physical literacy in North Vancouver
www.physicalliteracy.ca – information from Sport for Life and Physical Literacy For Life
www.activeforlife.ca – a parent guide for raising physically literate kids