

PE in Early Years

A guide to this subject in
our school



1 - Introduction

Young children are naturally physical. They learn through the sensory feedback they receive when physically interacting with their environment. Good physical strength, coordination, balance and bodily awareness in young children are required for them to be physically ready for other curriculum demands as they move through the school, such as writing, listening and attention.



Physical education in the Early Years occurs as a consequence as children's natural desire to move. Physical education predominantly comes through the Physical Development area of learning as well as through the Characteristics of Effective Learning.



Physical Education Early Learning Goals

Being Imaginative and Expressive

- Perform songs, rhymes, stories and poems with others and when appropriate try and move in time with music

Gross Motor Skills

- Negotiate space and obstacles safely, with consideration for themselves and others
- Demonstrate strength, balance and coordination while playing
- Move energetically such as running, jumping, dancing, hopping, skipping and climbing

Listening, Attention and Understanding

- Listen attentively and respond to what they hear with relevant questions, comments and actions when being read to during whole class discussions and small group interactions
- Make comments about what they have heard and ask questions to clarify their understanding

Managing Self

- Be confident to try new activities and show independence, resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge
- Manage their own personal and hygiene needs, including dressing, going to the toilet and understanding the importance of healthy food choices

Physical Development

Physical activity is vital in children's all round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy and active lives. Gross and fine motor skills develop incrementally throughout childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child's strength, coordination and spatial awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movements with objects and adults. By creating games and providing opportunities for play, both indoors and outdoors, adults can support children to develop their core strength, stability, balance, spatial awareness, coordination and agility.

Gross motor skills help with the development of healthy bodies and social and emotional wellbeing. Fine motor control and precision helps with hand-eye coordination which is later linked to early literacy. Repeated and varied opportunities to explore and play with small world, puzzles, arts and crafts and the use of small tools, with feedback and support from adults, allow children to develop proficiency, control and confidence.



2 - Child Initiated Learning

We know that there are key indicators and examples of effective practice that can be seen when monitoring PE in the Early Years, in relation to child initiated learning in an enabling environment. We know what we want to see children doing.



Sand

- * Digging using tools
- * Lifting
- * Drawing using hands, tools and other materials
- * Manipulating by scooping, patting and pressing
- * Transporting sand from one place to another

Water

- Lifting buckets, containers and trays
- Spraying
- Painting
- Manipulating the movement of water with hands or containers
- Transporting water from one place to another





Block and Construction

- * Lifting, carrying, pushing, pulling and balancing large blocks
- * Building and moving around obstacle courses, jumping over low obstacles and standing on tiptoe to adjust the position of blocks
- * Picking up blocks using one or two hands, manoeuvring the position of blocks, crouching or standing on tiptoes to connect them

Small World

- * Holding and manipulating characters, placing objects to create scenes, balancing objects to stack them
- * Using different body positions while playing—lying on front, crouching, stretching, balancing





Dough

- Manipulating dough—pushing, rolling using one or two hands, pulling, patting, pressing, nipping, squeezing, lifting, using fingers and whole hand to shape
- Using tools for cutting, rolling, mark making





Art and Design

- Using tools on small and large scales
 - Using hands and feet for printing
 - Junk modelling
 - Cutting



Woodwork

- Holding wood in place when using tools
- Twisting a vice closed
- Using tools
- Holding nails and screws in position



Outdoors

- Playing and riding on toys such as scooters, bikes, tricycles
- Climbing over, under and through equipment
- Moving in different ways such as running, jumping, skipping, hopping, crawling, hanging, spinning, swinging
- Moving at speed, avoiding obstacles
- Completing obstacle courses showing balance and coordination



Adults scaffolding learning during child initiated play

Adults will be

- * Observing children and responding to their fascinations
 - * Responding to the physical skills presented
- * Suggesting possibilities to extend their ideas and provide physical challenge
 - * Offering other instruments and resources when appropriate
 - * Playing alongside children to take learning forwards, modelling small and large movements
- * Play alongside or in small groups to model, correct and extend vocabulary
 - * Modelling how to use equipment and resources
- * Introducing and using language and vocabulary linked to key learning
 - * Providing daily outdoor opportunities



3. Adult led Learning

We know that there are key indicators of effective practise when monitoring PE in the Early Years, in relation to adult led learning.

- * Adults setting an intention for learning that is well matched to the developmental stages of the children, building on the physical skills children already have
- * Adults guiding learning through playful, experiential activities which are presented in imaginative ways, are hands on and require participation from the children
- * Activities and experiences that are as open ended as possible to allow for children to respond in different ways, following their own ideas
- * Activities that are delivered to individual children, small groups of children depending on the activity and the age of the children.
- * Adults using resources and materials that the children are familiar with and have access to in child initiated play
- * Sensitive interaction through open questioning and the modelling of physical skills