



Get Active-Stay Active

Children and Young People

 **SPORT**
Northern Ireland
LOTTERY FUNDED

The lead agency for developing sport in Northern Ireland

Sport Northern Ireland is keen to promote the message that sport and physical activity are for everyone and that the benefits of an active lifestyle should be fully embraced and enjoyed by all.

It is widely recognised that there are differences in participation rates in sport and physical activity among certain groups within the population. We know generally that:

- Boys participate more than girls;
- Young people without a disability participate more than young people with a disability; and
- Younger people participate more than older people.

Being physically active throughout life depends on the ability to feel competent in the sport or physical activity setting. This competence and confidence normally comes from having developed physical literacy skills as a child. We all therefore need to do more to provide additional opportunities for young people to develop their physical literacy skills and encourage their lifelong participation in sport and physical activity.

Did you know that in Northern Ireland...? ^{1,2,3,4,5.}

- In 2009-10, 89 minutes was the average time allocated to curricular PE in primary schools.
- 51% of post primary schools reported that they spent two hours or more per week doing games.
- 44% of boys and 34% of girls think that they don't get enough PE at primary schools.
- Boys would prefer more football, rugby, tennis or basketball.
- Girls would prefer more netball, gymnastics, football or tennis.
- Teenage girls drop out of sport at a faster rate than boys.
- For girls, being fit and healthy is the most popular reason for taking part in PE/sport. Other motivations include working as a team, making friends, being considerate, and helping them to think about others.
- Children and young people should be moderately or vigorously physically active for 60 minutes a day.
- The 60 minutes does not have to be done all at once but can be broken up throughout the day into bursts of at least 10 minutes which add up to that all important 60 minutes
- 82% of parents believe their child is getting the recommended daily amount or more of physical activity, but the reality is that less than a quarter (24%) of 9-11 year olds take part in the recommended 60 minutes physical activity, 7 days a week.

¹ 'A Baseline Survey of Timetabled PE in Primary Schools in NI (SNI, 2009)

² 'What Kids Think – Issue 3'. Kids Life and Times Survey (ARK, 2010)

³ 'Teenage Girls and Dropout' Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (2008)

⁴ 'Young Women and Girls Physical Activity' Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation (2010)

⁵ <http://www.publichealth.hscni.net/news/children-focus-new-physical-activity-campaign>

Getting Active:

About the Sport in Our Community Programme

Sport Northern Ireland invested £3.6 million to deliver the Sport in Our Community Investment Programme from 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2010⁶.

Among the aims of the programme was a desire to support and deliver creative and innovative projects resulting in an increased number of physically literate young people.

121,171 people took part in Sport in Our Community projects. 74% of the total participants were young people, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Total Number of Programme Participants

	SPORT IN OUR COMMUNITY PROGRAMME PARTICIPANTS					TOTAL
	2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	2009/2010	2010/2011	
Total number of participants	15,226	24,295	37,162	40,224	4,264	121,171
Total number of young participants (16 and under)	12,009	19,407	26,742	27,104	3,989	89,251
% of reported young participants	79%	80%	72%	67%	94%	74%

A comparison of gender of these reported young people revealed that over two years from 2008-09 and 2009-10, 56% of participants were boys and 44% girls. Figure 1 shows the annual percentage breakdown of girls and boys.

Figure 1: Annual Percentage of Reported Children and Young Participants by Gender



What is Physical Literacy⁷?

Physical literacy is:

“The ability to use body management, locomotor and object control skills in a competent manner with the capacity to apply them with confidence in settings which may lead to sustained involvement in sport and physical recreation⁷.”

Physically literate children will be able to perform a range of skills e.g. hop, climb or catch at levels of agility, balance and coordination appropriate to their capabilities for their age.

Physically literate young people will have the knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes that will enable them to:

- Make active and healthy choices throughout their life that will be beneficial to themselves, others, society and the environment; and
- Assist others in acquiring similar knowledge, skills, understanding and attitudes.

⁶ Investments made to the Education and Library Boards were extended through to 30 June 2010, to coincide with the end of the school year. These three months are included as 2010-11.

⁷ Developing Children's Physical Literacy' (Sport Northern Ireland, 2009)

Staying Active:

At home and in your community

Sport Northern Ireland's investment in 34 Sport in Our Community projects enabled the development of specific programmes aimed at getting people active, and helping them to stay active.



Fit for Play - PlayBoard NI

PlayBoard recognised the need for a project focusing on young people's health and well-being. Fit for Play aimed to increase the number of physical play opportunities and instil healthy eating habits for 4-14 year olds by:

1. Supporting playworkers to develop good practice in terms of play, physical activity and diet;
2. Providing a training programme for playworkers; and
3. Providing the 'Fit for Play Quality Award Scheme' for community based play projects.

All groups accredited with the Fit for Play Award provide children with:

- At least 30 minutes of physical play/activity per session;
- At least one out of five sessions delivered outdoors; and
- Healthy snacks and drinks (milk and water only) with children being involved in the preparation of food in at least one out of five sessions.

As a result of the Fit for Play Award:

- 89% of play settings now only provide milk and water;
- 75% of children now play outdoors every day;
- 83% of children are now more physically active; and
- Over 50% of workers said their understanding of children's physical activity needs had increased.

Delivering Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) Physical Literacy Coordinator, Education and Library Boards

Fundamental Movement Skills (FMS) are taught as a means of developing physical literacy in children. Endorsed by the Education and Library Boards, FMS improves balance, coordination, object control and movement.

With the help of Sport Northern Ireland funding and advice, Physical Literacy Coordinators were employed by the North Eastern Education and Library Board, South Eastern Education and Library Board and Southern Education and Library Board to provide a wide range of support and help to teachers in schools.

Each Physical Literacy Coordinator worked with the school's PE coordinator to produce a whole school plan for developing FMS. Their aim was to ensure that every child was equipped with essential movement skills that would enable them to participate and enjoy lifelong involvement in a range of sports and physical activities.

The Physical Literacy Coordinators provided opportunities to a total of 28,858 participants, and delivered training to 1,918 teachers and support staff through these Sport in Our Community projects.

Wildcats Activ8 Ballymoney Borough Council and Coleraine Borough Council

The Wildcats Activ8 Multi-Skills Clubs were developed to improve young people's coordination, body movement, team skills and individual skills. They also aim to develop confidence in sport, enjoyment of sport and the ability to adapt multi-skills to specific sports skills.

Whilst the core aims of the curriculum are based on physical skills, it is also aimed at increasing self-confidence, self-esteem, and teamwork in a fun, non-competitive, safe and challenging way.

By September 2010 there were 40 Wildcats Activ8 Multi-Skills Clubs across the whole of Northern Ireland; they now also incorporate a strong emphasis on healthy eating and nutrition, reinforced by the school based Activ8 Eatwell Programme.

The Wildcats Activ8 Clubs have seen the progression of children through all levels, some of whom have then moved on to join sports clubs that include cricket, hockey, junior football clubs, rugby, and table tennis.

The healthy eating messages of Wildcats Activ8 appear to have been absorbed and children now bring water and a healthy snack with them to the clubs instead of fizzy drinks or sweets.

The number of children taking part in Wildcats Activ8 has grown every year and its popularity is evidenced by sufficient numbers going on from one cohort to the next to maintain each level in the programme.



A Teacher's Story

Jacqueline is a teacher in Garvagh who attended the two-day FMS training course and became PE coordinator for the school. Working with the Physical Literacy Coordinator gave Jacqueline a great lift in terms of her professional development and her relationships with other teachers in the school.

Dance and gymnastics were chosen as the focus of FMS and, along with other teachers, Jacqueline observed the Physical Literacy Coordinator work with the children for five weeks. Jacqueline and the other teachers put together a vision for the development of physical literacy.

Jacqueline felt that it was important to try to pick out the most essential activities for the pupil catchment in her particular school, which is situated in a country area where many children have an active outdoor life.

Jacqueline feels that her work on FMS has given her a worthwhile role within the school and has quickened the pace at which she has been able to achieve a value added impact into school activities. Commenting on how her support seems to have helped other teachers, she said: *"Some teachers looked a bit aghast at first at the gymnastics and dance movements that we were asking them to teach. But they have changed their minds now and those who liked the idea have become very enthusiastic."*

Clearly, Jacqueline's own enthusiasm and hard work has helped her colleagues to embrace FMS, to enjoy it and to pass it on successfully to their pupils.

Jacqueline has also gained a great deal of confidence from working with her colleagues and supporting them in their implementation of FMS and feels that her new role in the school will help with her professional performance.

A Pupil's Story

Claire disliked PE, and when presented with exercises refused point blank at first to attempt any kind of activity. She was overweight for her age and never seemed to have her PE kit with her. She was self-conscious at her perceived lack of ability.

Claire's teacher attended a two-day FMS course provided by the local Physical Literacy Coordinator; encouraged and supported by her teacher Claire began to realise that she could do the movements and was actually quite good at them. Now she brings her PE kit with her every day, she looks forward to PE and has started to play netball.

What we know now

Five key learning points:

1. Physical literacy for young people is best delivered through a variety of settings.
2. Coaches and teachers require continual professional development opportunities to support the delivery of physical literacy.
3. Physically literate young people are more likely to join sports clubs.
4. Programme planners need to develop a better understanding of how and why boys and girls participate in sport and physical activity.
5. Combining sport and physical activity programmes with messages on healthy eating, nutrition and hydration are successful in delivering the message home.

About Sport Northern Ireland

Sport Northern Ireland is the leading public body for the development of sport in Northern Ireland. Its corporate vision is: *"a culture of lifelong enjoyment and success in sport which contributes to a peaceful, fair and prosperous society"*.

Sport Northern Ireland promotes the benefits of lifelong participation in sport and physical activity and the value of an active lifestyle for all – especially among young people.

The full report *Get Active-Stay Active: Impact of the Sport in Our Community Programme* is available to download at: www.sportni.net

This document is available in other accessible formats on request, and online at www.sportni.net

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