

# PHYSICAL LITERACY

The WHAT, WHY and HOW



# Table of Contents

## Section 1 – Background of Physical Literacy

- a) What is Physical Literacy?
- b) Definitions
- c) Literacy Model
- d) A message from Prairie Mountain Health
- e) Why Physical Literacy?

## Section 2 – Ready to get moving?!

- a) No Equipment Necessary
- b) Additional Resources
- c) Physical Literacy Assessment
- d) References

# Section 1 – Background of Physical Literacy

## What is Physical Literacy?

*Physical literacy can be described as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.*

Whitehead, M. 2014.



**Literacy** is the ability to identify, understand, interpret, create, communicate, compute and use printed and written materials associated with varying contexts.

**Is the ability to read and write.**

**Is the ability to use vocabulary to participate in society.**

**Physical literacy** can be described as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.

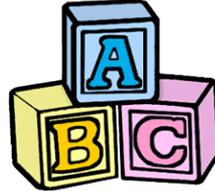
**Is the ability to move.**

**Is the ability to use movement vocabulary to participate in activity.**

# Literacy Model

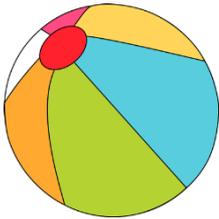
## “Skill Based Literacies”

LITERACY – ABC’s, words,  
sentences



**123** NUMERACY – 123’s,  
fractions, equations

MUSICAL – do-re-mi’s, scale,  
score



PHYSICAL LITERACY –  
run/jump/throw, balance,  
striking a ball with a bat

## **A message from Prairie Mountain Health's Health Promotion Team:**

Accept this booklet with a challenge. We challenge you to be active every day at every age. Think you can do it?! We will help support you with resources and encouragement in hopes that you will look to the means around you to better your health through physical literacy.

Physical literacy sometimes gets mixed up with the terms “workout” or “exercise”. Being physically literate means to be confident and competent in your movements; try something new, practice what you already know and share joy with your loved ones through movement!

We hope that you will take this booklet and run; maybe in the literal sense to actually “run” around but also to inspire yourself and others to value movement in your lifestyle!

# Why Physical Literacy?

## Here are the facts:

**9% of 5-17-year-olds meet the daily recommendation** of at least 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity (14% of 5-11 year-olds and 5% of 12-17 year-olds).

*This percentage has remained stable since the 2007-2009*

**Canadian Health Measures Survey** when 7% of 5-17 year-olds met the daily recommendation.

**2012-13 Manitoba Youth Health Survey** showed that 46% of students, grades 7-12, reported that they participate in the recommended amount of daily physical activity. Although still a low percentage, when self-reported, students felt they were much more active than actuality as seen when compared to the findings in the ParticipACTION Report Card.

Some key points from the **ParticipACTION Report Card** on Physical Activity for Children and Youth:

- When children are outside, they move more, sit less and play longer
- The odds of total stranger abduction are about 1/14 million based on RCMP reports
- Outdoor play that occurs in minimally structured, free and accessible environments facilitates socialization with peers, the community, and the environment, reduces feelings of isolation, builds inter-personal skills and facilitates healthy development

- Hyper-parenting limits physical activity and can harm mental health
- We need to recognize the difference between danger and risk. Moreover, we need to value long-term health and fun as much as we value safety

## **Prairie Mountain Health Community Health Assessment states:**

“Appropriate levels of physical activity have been demonstrated to promote normal growth and bone development, foster psychological well-being, self-esteem, and social development, to help maintain a healthy body weight, and to reduce the risk of several chronic diseases including diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease, and cancer.”

### **Current evidence from Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology Position Stand:**

There is overwhelming evidence of the physical, mental, emotion, and social health benefits of regular physical activity among children and youth. Meeting or exceeding physical activity guidelines can contribute to:

- present and future health and wellness by imprinting healthy behaviour habits
- reducing the risk of future chronic disease
- improving fitness
- reducing the risk of obesity
- facilitating healthy growth and development

- developing fundamental motor skills
- augmenting bone health
- improving mental health, attention, concentration, mood, academic achievement and socialization with peers

There is growing evidence that excess sedentary time is an independent negative health risk, separate and distinct from a failure to meet physical activity guidelines.

## What's the Connection?

**Physical literacy can increase physical activity levels.**

As we know, many Canadians do not reach the recommended daily amount of physical activity; and the percentage of those who do decreases with age.

Physical literacy helps children to learn at a young age how to move and continue to develop their movement vocabulary as they grow up. With a tool box of fundamental movement skills, our children are better equipped to incorporate movement into daily living and recognize its importance. They will also be better prepared to integrate and contribute to society.

Movement is valuable throughout the life span; let us support our children to begin their physical literacy journey today.

***Note:** see references on page 28 to find more information on the statements found in this section.*

## Section 2 – Ready to Get Moving?!

“Children are born loving their bodies, curious about them and inclined to be active. Good parenting with activity preserves those qualities. Parents provide *structure, safety, and opportunities*. Children choose *how much* and *whether* to move and the *manner* of moving.”

Ellyn Satter

### No Equipment? No Problem!

On the following pages are some ideas to develop children’s movement skills without equipment or just using what you have around the house, be creative!

## **Toddlers**

### **Push me, pull you**

If your toddler is pulling himself up and trying to walk, help him practice with a pushing and pulling game. Use a moveable object such as a child-size chair or plastic stacking box filled with soft toys. While he holds the edges for support, you can hold the other side and keep it steady. Then slowly pull the box toward you to encourage him to step forward. Soon he'll start to push while you gently pull. This will build his confidence for the day he finally walks on his own.

### **Clap happy**

By now your toddler can hold her hands open, but it may be a while before she claps independently. For now, clap them together for her, or let her hold your hands while you pat them together. Sit her facing you on the floor or on your lap and sing clapping songs like patty-cake. These will boost her language skills as well as her hand-eye coordination.

### **Tea party**

On a sunny day, take a child-size plastic tea set outside (or whatever kids' cups you have) and fill a large plastic bowl with water. Pretend you've "come to tea" and have your toddler fill the teapot and pour the tea. Don't expect a dainty tea party – it is likely to be a watery mess. However, this fun game will challenge their coordination.

## **Roll it to me**

Balls are popular toys for toddlers. The best ball game to start playing with your toddler is an easy version of "catch." Both of you sit on the ground facing each other with your legs apart and toes touching; you can now roll the ball back and forth to each other without it going out of bounds. This is fun for building muscle strength and hand-eye coordination.

## **Young collector**

Go for a walk together and take a bucket with you. Collect small objects that interest your toddler, like stones, leaves, and pinecones. Your toddler will want to carry the bucket, but don't be surprised if they also dump its contents and start again. Toddlers this age love to fill containers so that they can empty them again. Meanwhile, they are practicing hand movements, developing dexterity and engaging in physical activity outdoors.

## **Tube Ball**

Tie a large cardboard tube to a stair railing, making the end of the tube even with the end of the railing. Place a basket or box at the end of the tube. Your toddler will enjoy placing the ball in one end and watching it shoot out the other end into the basket.

## Beanbag Races

Place a beanbag on your child's back while they are in a crawling position. Have them crawl around the room until the beanbag falls off. Two toddlers will enjoy playing this game, with one crawling and the other picking up the beanbag when it falls. Older children can play with a friend or sibling, seeing who can keep the beanbag on her back the longest

## Indoor Baseball

Play baseball with an inflated balloon and an empty gift-wrap roll. Take turns hitting, throwing, and running bases. Due to the extreme choking hazard posed by pieces of broken balloon, remember always to supervise carefully when young children are playing with balloons.

## Toddler Bowling

Line up three or four (or more) empty plastic soda bottles or unopened paper towel rolls. Show your toddler how to roll a large rubber ball to knock them over.

## Big Mouth Game

Draw a happy face on the side of a closed cardboard box. Make sure to draw a big, smiling, open mouth. Cut out the mouth. Add hair to the top of the box by gluing strips of newspaper or tissue paper so they hang down the sides. Stand back a suitable distance and see how many balls can be thrown into the mouth.

Or try throwing any balls/bean bags/stuffed animals/etc. to whatever you have around home!

## Chair Maze

This activity will work well outdoors as well as in. Place chairs in a maze around the room. Let your child crawl among them or walk over them, or use them as a train for stuffed animals.

### **Note:**

*As your child gets older, you can make some of the activities more challenging and start to introduce some of the school-aged activities (start with games that have minimal rules).*

# School-aged children

## **Fox and Rabbit**

1. Designate one child to be the fox and one child to be the rabbit.
2. Have the rest of the children join hands and make a circle.
3. The rabbit will start in the circle and the fox outside of it.
4. When the game starts, the fox will attempt to catch the rabbit by tagging him or her.
5. The rest of the children will try to protect the rabbit from the fox by moving close together to block the fox, or by moving apart to let the rabbit in and out of the circle.

Make sure to designate at least 10 minutes for this game as the children will all want a turn. Try to give each child a turn to be either the fox or the rabbit.

Ask the children about their strategy when being the fox, the rabbit, or being part of the circle. This will get them thinking about working together to defend the rabbit.

## Create an Obstacle Course

Children love to tumble over pillows, crawl through open boxes and jump into hula hoops.

Choose smaller items for kids to jump over such as a shoe box.

Fill 4-litre milk jugs and run with them to fill a small storage tub.

Hurdles from Rolled up Beach towels or a broom stick placed on 2 overturned pails.

Beanbags could be thrown into a laundry basket.

Lay a board down as a balance beam.

Take a loop on a tricycle.

Zigzag through a slalom course of shoes, hats or stuffed animals.

Use a local playground as your next obstacle course, with kids setting up the route and activities to be performed at each play area that is available

# One Behind

Everyone gathers in a circle.

The leader, after explaining what will happen, starts making a simple movement (such as pumping one arm in the air). The kids do nothing as s/he does this. The leader does it about 5 times and then starts doing a different movement (such as hopping on one foot). The kids then start doing the previous action.

In this example, that would be pumping one arm in the air, while the leader is hopping on one foot. Then the leader does a new action, and the kids move on to the second one, thus being “one behind” the leader.

Keep going until someone messes up, and then pick a new leader!

## Kick the Can

Kick the Can is a classic! All you need are some players, big space for hiding, and a can! Depending on how many people you have, pick one, two or three people to be it. Stand a can at home base, a place where everyone knows where it is and in the centre of your playing area. Make sure it is in an open area and not hidden at all.

Those who are 'it' count to 100 or a number of your choice, and once finished counting, go to find the hiding players.

To get caught, the 'it' person must see them and yell "1, 2, 3 on [name]" then race them to the can; if the 'it' person touches the can first, then the player is out; if the player touches the can first and kicks it, then s/he is free to hide again, PLUS everyone else who was caught is free as well.

Players can kick the can whenever they want, as long as they do not get caught before doing so! Those who are 'it' cannot stand guarding the can. The game ends when the 'it' players have caught everyone (or when they get tired of looking and want new people to be it)!

# Scavenger Hunt

Who does not love a scavenger hunt?

You can play this kid's running game in the park or a playground. Get between 10 and 20 buckets or pails. Place the buckets randomly, but in plain view, around the park or playground. Place the buckets upside down over the top of the items in your scavenger hunt.

Divide your kids into two even teams. Give each team member a specific item that they need to find. The kids will then run from bucket to bucket trying to find their item. When they find their item, they return to the starting point. The first team to find all their items wins.

## Create an Outdoor Active Basket

Include things like:

- Pool Noodles
- Balls
- Scarves
- Skipping Ropes
- Buckets
- Milk jugs
- Water shooters
- Chalk
- Large cardboard boxes
- Balloons
- Bubbles
- Hula Hoops

## Sardines

This is just like hide-and-go-seek, except reversed!

One player is selected to go and hide within an agreed-on area. While the person goes off to hide, the others count, and then head off to find that person.

Everyone should look individually so that the game lasts a bit longer.

When someone finds the person hiding, she or he joins them in their hiding spot.

## 7- UP Game

To play the 7-Up game, all you need is a smooth, flat surface (a wall or a floor) and a bouncy ball, such as a tennis ball. Kids can play the 7-Up game alone—no need to recruit an opponent or teammate.

Here's how: Find a safe space to play. Outside, you need a flat area where you can safely bounce a small ball, such as a tennis ball or a rubber ball. The object of the game is to bounce the ball against the wall a set number of times while performing a skill in between bounces.

The skills are as follows:

Sevensies: Bounce the ball against the wall seven times. Catch it on the seventh time. No-wall version: Bounce the ball against the ground seven times.

Sixies: Bounce the ball against the wall and then allow it to bounce once on the ground before you catch it and throw it again. Repeat six times. No-wall version: Throw the ball up in the air 6 times (no bounces).

Fivesies: Bounce the ball on the wall five times. No-wall version: Bounce the ball on the ground 5 times, but throw it hard enough, so it bounces up over your head. Catch on the way down.

Foursies: Bounce the ball from the ground to the wall and then back to you (this is the opposite of what you do for Sixies). Repeat four times. No-wall version: Throw the ball up, let bounce, then catch. Repeat 4 times.

Threesies: Bounce the ball on the ground first, then use your palm to bat the ball against the wall, then catch it before it bounces on the floor again. Repeat three times. No-wall version: Bounce the ball, then hit it down again before catching. Repeat 3 times.

Twosies: Toss the ball under your leg and bounce off the wall, then catch. Repeat. No-wall version: Bounce the ball under your leg, twice.

Onesies: Throw the ball against the wall, spin around completely (360 degrees), then catch the ball before it bounces. No-wall version: Throw the ball up in the air, do your spin while it falls and bounces, then catch.

## Additional Resources

Check out these websites for more information and activity ideas!



Active for Life is the place to learn about how to make a difference in the health and happiness of your children. A social enterprise founded by B2ten, Active for Life is a national movement about physical literacy. The target is parents who want to raise active and successful kids, and Active for Life benefits not just them but communities across Canada.

Visit the link below for resources, lesson plans, tips and news!

**[www.activeforlife.com](http://www.activeforlife.com)**



Fit Kids Healthy Kids is a Physical Literacy program founded as a partnership between Doctors Manitoba and Sport Manitoba. The goal of the program is fit, healthy kids that are active for life.

Visit the link below for basic skills, games, and tools for parents and leaders or to get more information!

**[www.fitkidshealthykids.ca](http://www.fitkidshealthykids.ca)**

# Physical Literacy Assessment

Measurement is an important part of physical literacy for many reasons. Two tools exist in Canada for the purpose of assessing physical literacy. You are encouraged to visit the sites below for full details on using these tools.

## 1. Canadian Assessment of Physical Literacy (CAPL)

Developed by Healthy Living and Obesity Research Group 2014: [www.capl-ecsf.ca](http://www.capl-ecsf.ca)

## 2. Physical Literacy Assessment for Youth (PLAY)

Developed by Canadian Sport for Life:  
[www.physicalliteracy.ca](http://www.physicalliteracy.ca) or  
[www.canadiansportforlife.ca](http://www.canadiansportforlife.ca)



# References

Canadian Health Measures Survey

[www.statcan.gc.ca](http://www.statcan.gc.ca)

Community Health Assessment 2015

[www.prairiemountainhealth.ca](http://www.prairiemountainhealth.ca)

Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology

[www.csep.ca](http://www.csep.ca)

Participation Report Card

[www.participation.com](http://www.participation.com)

Manitoba Youth Health Survey

[www.partners.healthincommon.ca](http://www.partners.healthincommon.ca)