

How to promote the importance of sport at school

School Director

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Introduction

This toolkit is targeted at school directors to support them to promote the importance of sport at school. The steps we follow will help directors:

- to develop a plan for improvement of school's health and physical activity policies and programs;
- to address physical activity and nutrition;
- to set up a school health council;
- to improve total physical activity levels;
- to use a multi-component approach to promote physical activity;
- to involve the young people to determine appropriate provision and activities;
- to implement health education;
- to implement a comprehensive physical program;
- to make physical activity cross-curricula;
- to include a family or home based-element.

Assess the school's health and physical activity policies and programs and develop a plan for improvement

Self-assessment and planning provide structure to a coordinated school health program in the way that a map provides guidance to a driver. The self-assessment describes where the program is now, and the plan provides the destination and directions to make improvements. A school health plan is most likely to be effective when it is based on a systematic analysis of existing policies and practices, guided by insights from research, and developed by a team that includes teachers, parents, school administrators, students, and the community.

The overall analysis should be not only content analysis (of existing or not existing) materials and initiatives, but also should include opinions of all stakeholders in the process of developing and implementing PE programs – students, teachers and other school staff. For that purposes evaluation questionnaires might be developed. In terms of assessment criteria the analysis should point out the accuracy, acceptability, feasibility and affordability of the PE policies and programs.

The purpose of the assessment is to help schools conduct a clear, complete, and consistent analysis of their PE curricula and policy. The results can help schools enhance existing curricula, develop their own curricula, or select a published curriculum, to be appropriate and effective for the delivery of high quality physical education in schools. In turn, a high quality curriculum can improve the school's ability to positively influence motor skills and physical activity behaviors among students.

Learning Objective

The learning objective of this step is to give school directors knowledge of the importance of assessing school's health and physical activity policies and programs in order to work for their improvement

Online Resources

- [Creating a Physically Active School Year-Round](#)
This document is a guideline with simple steps of analysis, planning, designing physical activity initiatives.
- [Physical Education at School in Europe](#)
The document Provides information on national strategies, large scale initiatives in integrating sports in education, as well as curriculum analysis and suggestions on how a good PE curriculum to be built.
- [World-wide Survey of School Physical Education](#)
The Document shows findings on physical education curricula and programs around the world, with suggestions of how to integrate sports in the school curricula in a good way.
- [Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool \(PECAT\)](#)
As The name suggest this is an online tool that can help headmasters or teachers evaluate and analyze the physical education curriculum at school – it includes questionnaires, suggestions on how to conduct a special survey.

Address physical activity and nutrition

Adequate nutrition and physical activity are cornerstones of good health and need to be included in comprehensive school health programmes to complement each other. Nutrition provides fuel for physical activity. The World Health Organization has developed the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health which calls attention to the importance of a balance between nutrition and physical activity. Nutrition and physical activity are linked in several ways. The prevalence of overweight among children and adolescents has increased dramatically in some developing and most developed countries around the world. The primary cause of overweight and obesity is an imbalance between caloric intake from food and energy expenditure from physical activity. Thus, physical activity does not in itself guarantee good health. In fostering healthy physical activity, schools should also:

- enable and assist students to choose and consume healthy, nutritious foods;
- allow adequate time for eating as well as for recess;
- discourage students from eating junk foods
- not use food as a reward or as a punishment.

Poor diet and sedentary behaviours are among the major risk factors of chronic diseases which account for 59% of 56.5 million deaths annually and 46% of the global disease burden. Recognising this major public health problem, WHO has formulated a Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health to mobilise international, national and local action that encourages and helps people maintain a healthy diet and physically active lifestyles. There is clear and convincing evidence that high consumption of energy – sugar, starch and fat – in relation to physical inactivity is the fundamental determining factor of nutrition-related chronic diseases. Healthy diet and physical activity are key to good nutrition and necessary for a long and healthy life. Eating nutrient dense foods and balancing energy intake with the necessary physical activity to maintain health is essential at all stages of life. Consuming too much food high in energy and low in essential nutrients contributes to energy excess, overweight and obesity. The simple, but extremely important, recommendations of the global initiative are to eat less high caloric foods; especially foods in high saturated or trans fat and sugar; consume foods with unsaturated fat; use less salt; consume high amounts of fruits, vegetables and legumes; select foods of plant and marine origin; and be physically active for at least 30 minutes a day

Learning Objective

The learning objective of this step is to provide knowledge on how nutrition correlates with physical activity and how the promotion of adequate nutrition and physical activity can turn in cornerstones of good health policy the school can have.

Online Resources

[WHO information series on school health](#)

This document is part of the WHO Information Series on School Health prepared for WHO's Global School Health Initiative and the Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. Its purpose is to strengthen efforts to educate young people about the benefits of physical activity and to help schools provide opportunities for students and school personnel to be physically active.

[Dietary guidelines](#)

The Dietary Guidelines is source for nutrition advice. These recommendations can help people make healthy food and beverage choices and serve as the foundation for vital nutrition policies and programs.

Online Resources

[School health guidelines](#)

The page provides access to synthesized research and best practices related to promoting healthy eating and physical activity in schools, culminating in nine guidelines.

[Physical Activity and Nutrition for Health](#)

This book will help you promote fitness and nutrition among students and staff, and its nutrition services tools will help you garner support from parents and community members to enhance student success..

Establish a school health council

A network of relevant stakeholders (e.g. school staff, parents, local community groups, health organizations) and effective collaboration is necessary for implementing physical activity programmes in the specified settings (e.g. school, community) and to disseminate health messages on physical activity through relevant media. Such networking and building of partnerships requires shared values, mutual respect and skilful articulation of arguments among stakeholders. It also includes agreement on common objectives that bring value to all stakeholders.

A change of plan on physical activity requires leadership and multisectoral coordination. Where possible, this could draw on existing mechanisms or structures; otherwise, a coordinating team may be established with relevant stakeholders. Broad representation on the coordinating team is recommended. The appropriate roles for the coordinating team should be identified according to the local context and may include those suggested below: – to coordinate actions of different sectors and stakeholders; – to create an environment for stakeholders to pursue their strategies and actions; – to facilitate the development and implementation of a national action plan and programmes, including resource mobilization; – to monitor programme implementation; – take responsibility for developing coordination between different administrative levels (i.e. national, regional, local).

Learning Objective

The learning objective of this step is to give knowledge and skills on how to establish a school health council. Such council can include many different stakeholders and support the school in its policy to promote sports in school.

Online Resources

- [A guide how to set up a school health council](#)
The website provides step to step guide of setting up a school health council.
- [Establishing school health council](#)
Schools should take action to promote a healthy environment for their students, faculty and staff. One way to do this is to create a school health advisory council to assess the school's health status, make relevant policy recommendations and keep tabs on health-related issues. The council should include students, parents, teachers, administrators, other school staff and community representatives.
- [A guide for forming school health team](#)
The document Provides information on the people, who could be involved, actions to be taken, etc.
- [Promoting healthy youth, schools and communities](#)
A guidelines for health councils. It provides information on the approaches of how to set up a health council and how to manage it successfully.

Aim to improve total physical activity levels by fostering positive attitudes to physical activity

To date, most studies in schools which have focused on increasing physical activity levels have only been successful at increasing levels during the school day. Furthermore, a number of programmes promoting physical activity in schools have specifically focused on activities which increase fitness, such as timed runs. While both increases in physical activity and fitness are important for health, intensive fitness activities, such as timed runs, may not inspire positive attitudes towards physical activity or lifelong behaviour changes. This may be why programmes which focus solely on fitness are not successful at changing total physical activity levels. It may therefore be more important for programmes to focus on fostering children's positive attitudes towards physical activity in the hope of influencing overall physical activity levels, which may in turn impact on fitness.

Strategies :

- Create a physical activity experience that is fun and focuses on young people feeling good, gaining confidence and enjoying what they do.
- Create programmes which encourage young people to increase their physical activity levels throughout the whole day, not just at school.
- Promote a 'mastery climate', ie, an environment where young people are encouraged to develop their individual skill levels and personal best.
- Provide opportunities to try a wide variety of activities including some which are more likely to be attractive to those who are less sporty, such as creative activities like dance or cheerleading.
- Ensure activities are developmentally appropriate and use positive reinforcement to recognise effort and progress

Learning Objective

The learning objective is to give knowledge about improving the total physical activity levels of students in schools by fostering positive attitudes to physical activity. The step provides resources, which give many examples of how physical activity can be presented in an interesting way to kids.

Online Resources

- [Practical strategies for promoting physical activity](#)
Identifying and using strategies that are both effective and cost-effective is important to ensure efficient use of available resources and funding. This briefing brings together the available research evidence as well as practical strategies to outline recommended approaches and actions for effectively promoting physical activity in children up to 12 years.
- [Assessment in Physical Education](#)
This is the chapter 6 of the Physical Education Curriculum Framework and it states that assessment in PE serves many purposes and contributes to decision making. In order to support this thesis many factors, as for example the different forms of assessment, the teaching – learning – and evaluation process, are taken into account.

Online Resources

- [Practical strategies for promoting physical activity](#)
Identifying and using strategies that are both effective and cost-effective is important to ensure efficient use of available resources and funding. This briefing brings together the available research evidence as well as practical strategies to outline recommended approaches and actions for effectively promoting physical activity in children up to 18 years.
- [Ten Strategies for Schools to Promote Physical Activity and Healthy Eating](#)
The guidelines provide information on how schools can encourage pupils be more physically active

Use a multi-component approach to promote physical activity in young people

It is important to ensure physical activity programmes use a multi-component approach, such as changing the school environment, implementing changes to the curriculum and incorporating a family-based element. Successful programmes tend to use multi-component approaches, such as offering a combination of additional physical education lessons, behavioural modification lessons and adding activity breaks throughout the day. In contrast, programmes that have used an education only approach, have demonstrated no effect on physical activity levels in children. This may be because classroom-based lessons tend to focus on conveying information rather than offering children the opportunity to experience or practice the activities. Strategies:

- use a multi-component approach to promoting physical activity to support change and development.
- use strategies that combine educational, curricular and environmental elements, for example, additional PE lessons, cross curricular activities and playground markings.
- focus on increasing the variety of physical activity opportunities available throughout the day, for example, measures to increase active travel, daily activity sessions, active classroom breaks and physical activity homework.
- Include elements of behaviour change such as goal setting and self-monitoring alongside additional physical activity opportunities.

Learning Objective

The learning objective of this step is to show physical activity must be regarded on a broader aspect when it comes to introducing it in school. This step aims to show successful programmes tend to use multi-component approaches.

Online Resources

● [Effect of school-based interventions on physical activity and fitness in children and adolescents](#)

The document aims to summarize recent reviews with the aim of increasing PA or fitness in youth and carry out a systematic review of new intervention studies.

● [Promoting physical activity in schools](#)

The documents illustrate how selected health issues can serve as entry points in planning, implementing, and evaluating health interventions as part of the development of a health-promoting school.

Online Resources

● [Physical education framework](#)

The document shows PE education framework for classes from primary to secondary school. Focused on the model content standards and supported by current research, the framework emphasizes student learning with the goal of helping every student adopt a physically active lifestyle.

● [Social-ecological model to physical education](#)

The document is a guidelines to components of social-ecological models: (individual, social environment, physical environment and policy); the relationship between the multiple levels of influence and physical activity.

Involve the young people you are targeting to help determine appropriate provision and activities

It is important to promote independence and encourage young people to take responsibility for their own participation in physical activities. This could be done through offering young people a chance to choose the activities in which they wish to take part.

This element of choice seems particularly important for adolescent girls. By giving young people a voice, it can help to highlight their preferences, identify barriers to participation and suggest changes to increase and sustain activity levels.

Strategies:

- Give young people a voice by consulting with them on all aspects of provision.
- Work with the target group to help them develop independence and a sense of responsibility for their own physical activity levels.
- Work with the target group to identify what encourages them to be physically active.
- Carry out an audit of current provision and involve young people in the process to help with decision making and structuring of activities.
- Give young people a choice of what activities they would like to take part in.

Learning Objective

The learning objective of this step is to provide school directors with knowledge and skills to work and interact with students as the main stakeholders in the process of promoting sport in the school. After completing this step school directors will also get knowledge on different strategies and tools how to involve them to support the process of further promoting sport.

Online Resources

- [Physical activity and health in Europe: evidence for action](#)
The document shows factors and conditions influence physical activity, also strategies how to encourage physical activity.
- [Health – enhancing physical activity](#)
Recommendations to encourage physical education in schools, including motor skills
- [Physical activity questionnaires](#)
The purpose of this paper was to investigate physical activity questionnaires, and to examine studies of their reliability and validity.
- [Physical Activity Questionnaire for Children](#)
These are a self-administered, 7-day recall instrument. It was developed to assess general levels of physical activity throughout the elementary school year for students in grades 4 to 8 and approximately 8 to 14 years of age.

Implement health education that provides students with the knowledge, attitudes, skills, and experiences needed for lifelong healthy eating and physical activity.

Health education provides formal opportunities for students to acquire knowledge and learn essential life skills that can foster healthy behaviors, such as physical activity and healthy eating. Taught by qualified teachers, quality health education includes instruction on essential topics and skills that protect and promote physical, social, and emotional health and safety and provides students with ample opportunities to practice health enhancing behaviors. State-of-the-art health education features a sequential curriculum consistent with state or national standards, adequate instructional time, and assessment to improve students' knowledge and skills.

School health education aims to help students develop the knowledge and skills which are needed to make informed decisions, practice healthy behaviours and create conditions that are conducive to health. School health education can be delivered in a number of different ways, depending on a country's needs and available resources. It can be taught as a specific subject, as part of other subjects such as science, home economics, mathematics and agriculture, or ideally as a combination of both. Health education policies that focus on diet and physical activity ought to:

- provide knowledge and skills, and help to develop attitudes about the relationship between a good diet, physical activity, and health.
- address the safe preparation of food and its consumption as an essential positive and enjoyable aspect of life.
- allow students to have the opportunities to practice important skills, such as decision-making about food and physical activity.
- allow students to identify not only barriers to being physically active and making healthy food choices, but also solutions to overcome the identified barriers.
- provide media and marketing literacy to students, especially related to foods and non-alcoholic beverages. Involve teachers who have received the best possible training and are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively impart health messages to students.

Learning Objective

The learning objective of this step is to give knowledge and skills how school directors can implement approaches for developing health education in schools, which goes beyond simply increasing physical education activities.

Online Resources

● [Public health network](#)

The Networks are for all individuals, organisations and sectors with a role to play in improving nutrition and levels of physical activity in Wales. They support members by providing and improving access to information and by providing a forum for sharing knowledge and good practice, enabling members to learn from each other.

● [Skills for Health](#)

The document is guidelines on skills-based health education including life skills: an important component of a child-friendly/health-promoting school.

Online Resources

● [5 Approaches to Physical Education in Schools](#)

The website presents physical education in the context of schooling with different curriculum models. Health education in schools: the document gives the perspective of teacher training when it comes to providing quality health education in schools

● [Health education in schools](#)

From information to empowerment models: the article studies the different approaches in health education

Implement a comprehensive physical activity program with quality physical education as the cornerstone.

A comprehensive physical activity program describes what a physically educated student should know and be able to do. It emphasizes meaningful content, which includes:

- Instruction in a variety of motor skills designed to enhance child and adolescent development.
- Fitness education and assessment that allows for students to understand and improve their physical well-being.
- Development of cognitive concepts related to motor skills and fitness.
- Opportunities to improve social and cooperative skills.
- Opportunities to increase the value placed on physical activity for health, enjoyment, self-expression, and confidence.

Learning Objective

The learning objective of this step is to provide knowledge about what physical education curriculum content should include and about the importance of a sound physical education program for the understanding and adopting a healthier way of living of students.

Online Resources

- [Physical education lesson plans](#)
The website provides a number of examples for physical education lessons plans, which are free to use.
- [Expert Groups \(EU Work Plan for sport 2014-2017\)](#)
Health-enhancing physical activity
- [Example of an PE curriculum](#)
The document is an actual PE curriculum, designed so that it can be adjusted for grades 9 to 12.
- [Physical Education: "The future ain't what it used to be!"](#)
Analysis of PE development and curricula approaches.

Make physical activity cross-curricular

It is important to provide children with a variety of activities and times throughout the day when they can be active. Research has shown that children tend to have greater physical activity participation levels when they are encouraged to and provided with the opportunity to try different types of physical activity. By providing more opportunities, the children are more likely to find activities that they enjoy. This is important as preference for an activity may also be associated with changes in physical activity levels.

Learning Objective

The learning objective of this step is to give knowledge and skills to school directors how to promote sport in schools by implementing cross curricular activities.

Online Resources

- [Comprehensive School physical Activity programs: A guide for Schools](#)
This guide is for schools and school districts to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive physical activity programs. School-age youth should participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity every day; therefore, schools have a significant role to play in helping students achieve this recommendation. This guide will help schools identify how to establish more active school environments.
- [Crossing the Curriculum in Physical Education](#)
A teacher's view on how PE can be made cross curricular
- [A fresh approach to integrating core content in Physical Education](#)
An example lesson plan, which shows how different kind of knowledge can be integrated in PE activities.
- [Cross \(Curricular\) Fit](#)
The document provides information on different kinds of games that can be organized by teachers, integrating different knowledge from other subjects into the PE lessons.

Include a family or home-based element

Research demonstrates that programmes often do not sufficiently address the barriers hindering a child's activity level. For interventions to be successful, it is important that professionals use parent's and carer's views on what helps and hinders physical activity to inform programme design. For example, it has been noted that children are more likely to participate in physical activity if their parents or carers enjoy and are supportive of the activity. Research has shown that parents and carers are more supportive of an activity if it is easy to access, is provided in a safe environment and has activities for other members of the family available at the same time.

Strategies

- Involve parents and carers in the planning and delivery of activities for children.
- Work with parents and carers to identify what they think makes an environment a safe place for their child to play.
- Keep parents and carers informed of any physical activity initiatives or schemes available to their children.
- Provide parents and carers with information on local physical activity opportunities the whole family can take part in.

Learning Objective

The learning objective of this step is to give school directors knowledge on how to work with parents as stakeholders who can support the school in its activities to promote sports.

Online Resources

- [Parent engagement](#)
The document provides strategies for Involving parents in school health.
- [Getting Parents Involved in Physical Education](#)
An article providing a teacher's perspective on how parents can be involved in physical education lessons
- [A Coach's Guide to Parental Roles and Responsibilities in Sport](#)
The document analyses how trainers and parents can communicate and work together to encourage kids participate in sports activities.
- [How to involve hard-to-reach parents; encouraging meaningful parental involvement with schools](#)
The document is a guide how to effectively involve parents in school activities of different kind.