

Does Your School Get The Green Light? PE Provision in Primary Education

The Irish Primary Physical Education Association (IPPEA) executive has developed a guide on quality PE in primary schools for principals and teachers to use as a reference point. The IPPEA ask you to reflect on this guide in relation to the quality of PE planning, teaching and practice across all classes in your school.

As a subject, physical education provides children with learning opportunities through the medium of movement and contributes to their overall development by helping them to lead full, active and healthy lives. The outcomes of a quality PE programme can be seen in children who have the knowledge, competence and confidence in a variety of movement experiences which in turn influences their physical activity choices in the short and long term. In the light of the lifelong contribution of PE to involvement in physical activity, (Get Ireland Active, 2010) and the increase in overweight and obese children in Ireland (National Taskforce on Obesity, 2005; Growing Up in Ireland, 2010), quality PE programmes, which are broad and balanced, are necessary at primary level. The IPPEA recognises that quality PE programmes should be supported by physical activity and sports opportunities in co-curricular, community and family based settings.

The class teacher is the principle teacher of the children in the class in all subject areas including PE. The IPPEA has developed this guide to challenge current thinking and practices in primary PE teaching by provoking discussion amongst your staff on issues such as:

- The role of the class teacher in teaching PE
- The one- hour time allocation per week given to PE
- The importance of developmentally appropriate and progressive plans of work
- The need to provide a variety of activities across the strands in PE
- The role of assessment in evaluating PE lessons, the PE school programme and the progress of individual children
- The role of the external provider

The IPPEA acknowledges the variations in access to resources and facilities to teach quality physical education. However despite constraints ***'Is your personal and school PE programme a programme of quality planning, teaching and assessment with positive experiences for the children being taught'?*** To help answer this question the guide can be used to examine if minor changes can be implemented to adjust or enhance your PE teaching.

Part 1: Pinpoint the zone where your school is at present: *Do you and your school get the 'green light'? Could you target to proceed further along the zones (left to right)? How could this happen?*

Part 2: Features of a quality physical education programme: *Can you and your colleagues identify the features of your programme? Could your programme be enhanced?*

Part 3: The outcomes of a quality physical education programme in children: *Are the children in your class or school assisted in achieving these outcomes?*

Part 4: Features of a quality physical education experience: *Can the principal, PE coordinators and all staff work towards such a quality experience?*

References

Growing Up in Ireland, (2010) Retrieved October 20, 2010, from <http://www.growingup.ie/index.php?id=62>

Get Ireland Active, (2010) Retrieved October 20, 2010 from <http://www.getirelandactive.ie/>

National Taskforce on Obesity, (2005). Obesity: the policy challenge. The report of the national taskforce on obesity. Retrieved March 20, 2008, from

http://www.dohc.ie/publications/report_taskforce_on_obesity.html

IPPEA Executive Committee. <http://www.irishprimarype.com/index.php>