



Irish Primary PE Association

Cumann Corpoideachais Bunscoile na hÉireann

Physical activity and fitness in children during physical education lessons

Our role as educators is to deliver a broad and balanced physical education curriculum to children, which encourages them to be physically active, within the context of a health promoting school. We should supplement our 60 minutes of quality physical education per week by maximising physical activity opportunities throughout the school day. We believe that all schools should be committed to this practice. Physical activity opportunities in schools should complement physical activity accumulation in physical education lessons.

There are six strands in the physical education curriculum. It is expected that children's experiences in physical education lessons should promote a feeling of physical well-being contributing towards health. Lessons alone will not make children fit however they should contribute to children's physical activity levels. Different 'types' of PE lessons have been shown to stimulate different levels of physical activity. Physical education has many educational objectives to meet including promoting physical activity, developing knowledge, developing social, emotional and physical skills. To achieve lesson objectives the teacher will demonstrate, organise, manage, and assess. Literature recognises that 50% of physical education should be a reasonable target to have children physical active in any physical education lesson.

What is physical activity?

Physical activity is the process of engaging in bodily movement that results in energy expenditure, and it is essential for good health.

What are the physical activity guidelines for Irish children?

Children should be active at a moderate to vigorous level for at least 60 minutes every day. Children should carry out activities which involve muscle strengthening, flexibility and bone strengthening exercises 3 times a week.

The IPPEA are planning a series of five short articles over the coming school year based on aspects of components that contribute towards children being physically healthy. Ideas to reflect upon and perhaps plan into some of your physical education lessons will be outlined. The information sheets will be uploaded onto the IPPEA website members section 'Information' tab. The following will be the focus of each article: endurance, strength, flexibility, co-ordination and speed.