



ACTIVE START

Physical Literacy

What is physical literacy?

Physical literacy is the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to value and take responsibility for engagement in physical activities for life.

Canada's Physical Literacy Consensus Statement, June 2015



What are the ABCs of physical literacy?

Three critical movement skills to develop are known as the ABCs of physical literacy:

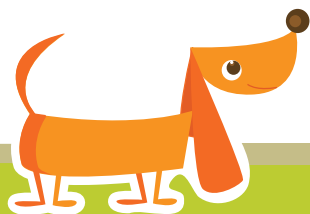
- Agility
- Balance
- Coordination

Agility

Agility is about being able to change the body's position quickly and efficiently, and being able to do so in a wide range of different situations. This process should start as soon as your child can crawl by providing multiple occasions to crawl on different surfaces, and to crawl on and around different obstacles.



Once your child can walk and then run, continue in the same way. Chasing and dodging games, as well as kicking and chasing a ball are good and simple ways to develop agility, particularly if the surface is a bit rough and makes the ball bounce in different directions.



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Balance

Balance, like agility, takes a long time to develop, and there are two types of balance that children should master.

Stationary balance is when your child is able to balance when standing still. It can be developed by simple activities, such as standing on one foot, balancing on both knees, or balancing without moving on a narrow line.

Dynamic balance is used when moving around. It is developed along with agility as your child learns to walk and run. This moving type of balance is developed with learning new skills such as riding a scooter, tricycle or bike, or learning to skate, ski, or ride a toboggan.



Coordination

Coordination is about controlling all of your body parts while doing different activities. For example, if your child is old enough to play with balloons safely, have them try and keep 1, then 2, then 3 balloons in the air at the same time using both their hands and their feet to keep the balloons up. Also, any activities that require your child to hit any object with their hand or a bat are great for coordination.

What are Fundamental Movement Skills?

Fundamental movement skills form the building block for the overall development of physical literacy. Examples of movement skills are catching, throwing, jumping, and swimming. Just like learning the alphabet and phonics are fundamental skills needed to read, write, and become literate, the development of fundamental movement skills is critical for your child to participate in a number of physical activities.

For more information about physical literacy and the ABCs visit www.activeforlife.ca and www.cs4l.ca.

Adapted from "Canadian Sport for Life Active Start: The Importance of physical activity in the first six years of life: Developing Ability, Balance and Coordination". (2008) www.canadiansportforlife.ca

