

Canada's Physical Literacy Consensus Statement



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In recent years, various stakeholders have engaged in activities to promote and develop physical literacy. Excitement around the concept has also led to a variety of definitions, and sometimes a misuse of the term by using it interchangeably with “physical activity”, “physical education”, “fundamental movement skills” or “motor skill development”. In a broad consultation, sector leaders in Canada suggested that a common definition with consistent language was needed to provide clarity for the development of policy, practice and research.

The purpose of this Statement is to:

- **promote** the value of physical literacy and preserve the integrity of the concept
- **advocate** for the use of a common definition of physical literacy, as defined by the International Physical Literacy Association
- **facilitate** alignment within and between the multiple sectors in the physical literacy community
- **improve** the consistency and clarity of communications relating to physical literacy
- **inform** the consistent and co-ordinated development of physical literacy tools and resources created by various stakeholders.

Definition of 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.

International Physical Literacy Association, May, 2014

The Elements of Physical Literacy

The definition of physical literacy includes four essential and interconnected elements whose relative importance may change throughout life.



Motivation and confidence (Affective)

Motivation and confidence refers to an individual's enthusiasm for, enjoyment of, and self-assurance in adopting physical activity as an integral part of life.



Physical competence (Physical)

Physical competence refers to an individual's ability to develop movement skills and patterns, and the capacity to experience a variety of movement intensities and durations. Enhanced physical competence enables an individual to participate in a wide range of physical activities and settings.



Knowledge and understanding (Cognitive)

Knowledge and understanding includes the ability to identify and express the essential qualities that influence movement, understand the health benefits of an active lifestyle, and appreciate appropriate safety features associated with physical activity in a variety of settings and physical environments.



Engagement in physical activities for life (Behavioural)

Engagement in physical activities for life refers to an individual taking personal responsibility for physical literacy by freely choosing to be active on a regular basis. This involves prioritizing and sustaining involvement in a range of meaningful and personally challenging activities, as an integral part of one's lifestyle.

Core Principles

Five core principles underlie the definition in this Statement.

Physical literacy:

- is an inclusive concept accessible to all
- represents a unique journey for each individual
- can be cultivated and enjoyed through a range of experiences in different environments and contexts
- needs to be valued and nurtured throughout life
- contributes to the development of the whole person.



Authors of this Statement

Canada's Physical Literacy Consensus Statement is the result of a collaborative process among ParticipACTION, Sport for Life Society, the Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario Research Institute, Physical and Health Education Canada, Canadian Parks and Recreation Association, and the Ontario Society of Physical Activity Promoters in Public Health. Representatives from the International Physical Literacy Association also contributed in an advisory capacity.



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