

# Areas of Learning

## Let's Reflect –Physical



“Physical activity is vital in children’s all-round development, enabling them to pursue happy, healthy, and active lives. Gross and fine motor experiences develop incrementally throughout early childhood, starting with sensory explorations and the development of a child’s strength, co-ordination, and positional awareness through tummy time, crawling and play movement with both objects and adults”.

EYFS Statutory Framework 2023

As one of the prime areas, physical development and opportunities for physical activity and exercise are essential in the early years and beyond. It is important that this is not seen in isolation. Your provision should encompass opportunities for children to develop their physical skills throughout. Your curriculum, environment and routines should be well considered and demonstrate recognition of the value of physical development. Now more than, given the impact of the pandemic, we are seeing the need for a targeted approach to ensure that children’s physical skills are not falling behind. This is crucial in narrowing the gap.

## Task

Consider the questions below and reflect on how you can further develop Physical Development in your setting:

- Have staff engaged in any CPD to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of physical development?
- Do practitioners have a sound understanding of the physical development stages of the age group they work with?
- Are staff familiar with developmental norms, to enable them to make accurate assessments?
- Do staff enjoy being physical? Is this evident their practice? If not, what might the impact be? How might you support them to embrace physical elements of play and learning?
- Do staff demonstrate a holistic approach to physical development and activity e.g., is it present throughout your curriculum?
- How effective is your indoor and outdoor play space in promoting physical activity and development? Are there strategies in place, to enable staff to audit/evaluate this?
- Are resources and activities presented at different levels e.g., on tables with chairs, benches to stand at, on the floor etc.
- Is there adequate space for children to move and navigate?
- Is the routine flexible, ensuring you meet the physical needs of the children? E.g., space and time to sit and share a story, space in the outdoors when the mood strikes to jump and

spin etc.

- Are staff confident in supporting children to assess and take physical risk? What might be the obstacles in this? How can they be overcome?
- Are staff skilled in creating opportunities for children to use and practice a variety of large movements to support vestibular development?
- Does your curriculum recognise and promote the development of dexterity skills and the stages that lead to this?
- What opportunities do you provide that stimulate and challenge children's sensory play and development?
- Are parents supported to recognise and value the importance of physical development? Are you familiar with local or national projects and initiatives that promote physical activity?
- How do you engage parents in the child's play and learning, to develop their physical skills?
- Do you seek out opportunities within the community to promote physical play and its value? E.g., local parks, soft play groups, playing fields, swimming baths etc. and development? How might these support you to develop your provision?

Useful links for you to explore:

- [Physical activity guidelines for children \(under 5 years\) - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)
- <https://child-development-training.education.gov.uk/>
- [Activematters - Dedicated to children's early years physical development and activity](http://www.activematters.org.uk)
- <https://creativeplayuk.com/importance-of-physical-education-in-early-years/>