

Physical Literacy: Part 4

Physical Literacy supports Healthy Development of the Whole Person:

Physical literacy supports the overall development of children in a variety of ways including: Physical, social emotional, cognitive, and language development. These developmental domains are interconnected, including creative, esthetic, and spiritual dimensions of experiences; linking to the four foundations (Belonging, Wellbeing, Engagement, and Expression) of How Does Learning Happen? – Ontario Ministry of Education Early Year.



How physical literacy contributes to the healthy development of the whole person?

When children’s physical literacy development is encouraged and supported with a variety of resources from the early years, they are provided with opportunities to reach their full potential. Let’s explore further on how Physical Literacy contributes to the healthy development of the whole child in each area of development:

1. **Physical development:** Physical development is a combination of Gross Motor (larger muscles: arms, legs, and core) and Fine Motor (smaller muscles: hands, finger, and eyes muscles). By engaging in a variety of physical movement activities through appropriate ages and stages of development, children’s gross and fine motor skills are developed and refined overtime.
2. **Social and emotional development:** Social emotional development refers to children’s interaction with others from infancy. This would include their thoughts and feelings of who they are. Parent’s primary support, response, and encouragement of their children with physical literacy development from infancy enable the bonding and attachment of the relationship. This impacts the child’s social and emotional development. They begin to feel secure and develop a positive sense of self. Being physically literate also helps children to be confident to



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participate in group activities which help to support an increased social interaction with peers, developing healthy social emotional development.

3. **Cognitive development:** Cognitive development is the foundation for building knowledge, processing that knowledge and working on problem solving skills, which supports brain development. Children are learning about their world every day from others through interaction, trial and error, and the environments around them. Their exploration and experience through a variety of physical activities and environments helps to increase their understanding of the world around. It allows them to develop an understanding of themselves in relation to their surroundings, and the ability to problem solve. Therefore, physical literacy plays an important role to the development of cognition.

4. **Language and communication development:** There are three components of language and communication: none-verbal (body language), receptive (recognize, understand), and expressive (sound, word). Like other developmental areas; physical literacy benefits a great deal of language and communication skills. Children practice and gather communication skills through activities and interaction by gesture and word, reading symbols and sign, following instructions and rules, and using words to express themselves. These are beneficial to the language and communication development.



Physical Literacy contributes to a great deal physical, social emotional, cognitive, and language development which is the core of a healthy development of the whole person. However, other areas such as the creative, aesthetic, and spiritual dimensions of experience must also be considered. The Ontario Ministry of Education release the document: How Does Learning Happen? with four foundations that are important for children to grow and flourish:

Belonging: Every child has a sense of belonging when he or she is connected to others and contributes to their world.

Well-being: Every child is developing a sense of self, health, and well-being

Engagement: Every child is an active and engaged learner who explores the world with body, mind, and senses

Expression: Every child is a capable communicator who expresses himself or herself in many ways

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When children are nurtured and supported as they learn and develop, they also learn to have a sense of belonging. Their health and well-being is being fostered, opportunities are being provided to be active and engage learners, and they become capable to express themselves in many ways. The physical literacy journey in the early year plays a crucial role in supporting a healthy development of the whole person.

Sources:

- Early Learning for Every Child Today: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/ExcerptsFromELECT.pdf>
- How Does Learning Happen? Ontario's Pedagogy for the Early Year: <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/childcare/howlearninghappens.pdf>