Family Literacy

Life in Motion

Government of Northwest Territories
Gouvernement des Territoires du Nord-Ouest

NWTLC
NWT Literacy Council

Contact Information

The NWT Literacy Council is a not-for-profit organization with a mandate to support literacy development in all official languages of the Northwest Territories. For more information, please contact:

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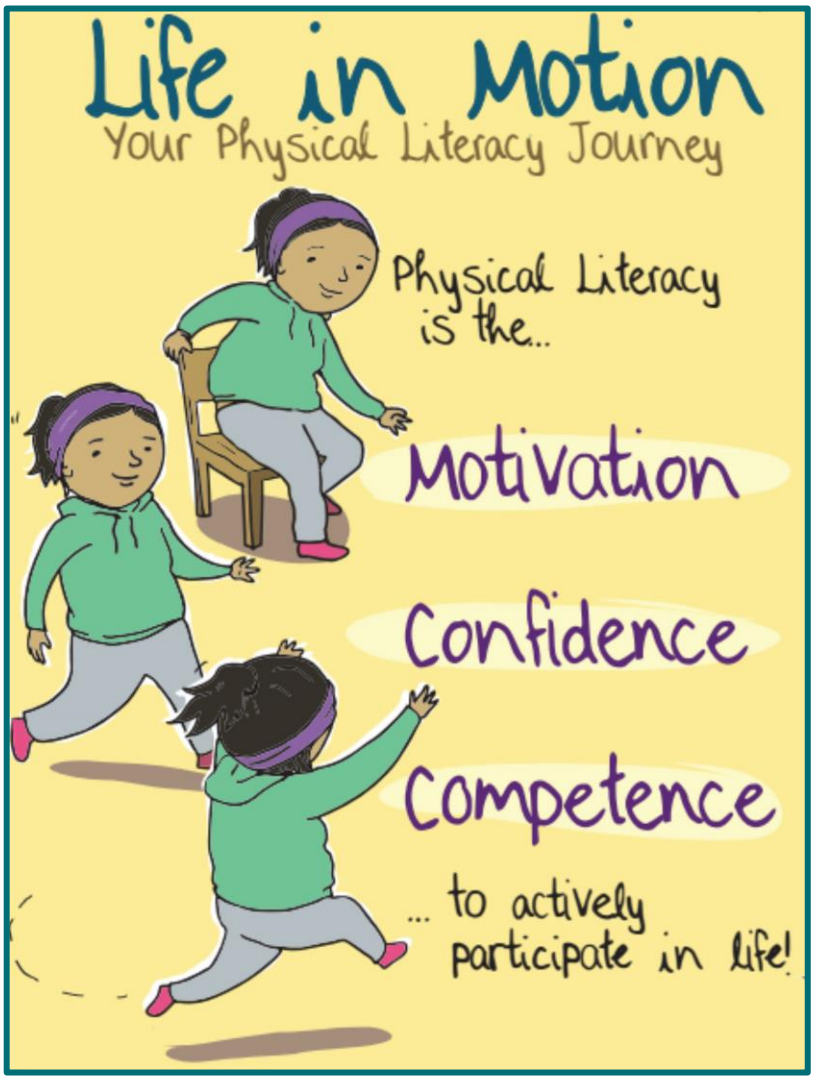
Physical Literacy How-to Kit

- Understand what is physical literacy—the lifelong approach
- Be aware of inclusive physical literacy
- Learn why physical literacy is important
- Try sample activities for different age groups



Physical Literacy

Physical literacy is having the motivation, confidence, and competence to be physically active for life.

Motivation	Confidence	Competence
		
▪ Drive ▪ Enthusiasm ▪ Incentive ▪ Reason	▪ Self-reliance ▪ Poise ▪ Sureness ▪ Coolness	▪ Skills ▪ Ability ▪ Know-how ▪ Fitness

Life is an active event. Physical literacy is much more than physical activity and exercise.

Physical literacy is feeling skilled and comfortable as we move through our daily lives—at home, at work or school, at play, and in our community. Physical literacy helps us actively participate in life, and live happy and healthy lives.

Physical Literacy is Inclusive

Physical literacy is for everyone, of all abilities. We all need to help make physical literacy spaces and activities accessible and welcoming to everyone. We need to make sure that people with disabilities face no barriers to participating in different activities.

For example, we need:

- Accessible buildings
- Adaptive equipment
- Inclusive language in ads for activities, to welcome and accommodate a range of abilities
- Inclusive attitudes of program leaders and participants

When we offer physical literacy activities, we may need to adapt them to make them inclusive. Adaptations depend on the needs of individuals in a group. For example, with an activity that involves jumping, a participant in a wheelchair can 'jump' by raising and lowering themselves in their chair.

Inclusive physical literacy means finding a way that everyone can participate, in a way that offers benefits with a suitable challenge.

Physical Literacy is Important

Physical literacy is important to help us:

- Reach our potential
- Be independent
- Achieve our goals
- Develop social skills

Physical literacy gives us the basic skills to:

- Actively play with our children
- Connect with people and make friends
- Participate in sports
- Try new activities
- Succeed in active workplaces
- Manage day-to-day activities
- Spend time on the land
- Respond to an emergency
- Stay mobile and independent as we age

Physical Literacy—a Lifelong Journey

Each person has their own physical literacy journey. And like all kinds of literacy, physical literacy is a lifelong journey.

Physical literacy gives people the skills they need to be physically active at all stages of life and in many different environments. At different times along the journey, a person may find that their favourite physical literacy activities will change.

It is important to get children moving early in life. With an early start, they have a good chance to develop the basics—the motivation, confidence, and competence to be active throughout their life.

This section has some information to consider for different age groups, including some suggested physical literacy activities.

- Early years (0 – 6)
- Primary school years (6 – 12)
- Teenagers (12 – 18)
- Adults
- Seniors / Elders

Activities for Early Years (0 - 6)

Experience is the building block of a child's brain. Children learn by doing. Activities should focus on positive, fun experiences rather than doing things the 'right' way. Positive experiences encourage children to keep moving, to challenge themselves, and to develop their movement skills.

Focus on activities that expose children to different environments and objects through active play. Here are some examples.

Jump the River[1]

What you need

- Jump ropes, hoops, and/or tape
- Space to move—indoors or outdoors

How to play

1. Arrange the jump ropes, hoops, and/or tape around the play space.
2. Tell the children they are going for a walk. And on this walk they may have to cross a river.
3. Ask the children to walk or run around the space. Explain that when they come to a rope, hoop, or tape they need to jump over the river so that they don't get their feet wet.

[1] Adapted from http://www.pecentral.org/lessonideas/ViewLesson.asp?ID=2121#.WTmktOvyuUk

Balloon Games

We can adapt balloon games to a range of age and ability. Balloons are light, and easy to lift and hit. They don't move in predictable ways like a soccer ball or volleyball.

Substitute a balloon for any ball in games that children already know: soccer, tennis, floor hockey, volleyball, etc. For tiny hands, substitute a fly swatter for a tennis racquet. Or try this relay race.

What you need

- Balloons
- Space to move

How to play

1. Mark out a start and finish line.
2. Explain the rules. If anyone breaks a rule, they must go back to the start line and try again.
    - At the word "go", children work as a team to move the balloon from the start to the finish line.
    - Children can use hands, arms, feet, head, etc. to move the balloon.
    - The balloon should not hit the ground.
    - No one can hold or carry the balloon.
    - The same child cannot hit/touch the balloon two times in a row.

Walk the Line

What you need

- Tape, benches, or something else to make lines
- Space to move

How to play

1. Arrange the tape, benches, etc. in lines throughout the space.
2. Encourage children to move around the space following the lines.
    - Based on the ability of the group, invite the children to walk or hop along the lines.
    - Get creative. Pretend the lines are a tightrope in the air or a safe passage across the lava floor.

Activities for Primary School Years (6-12)

At this age, children benefit most with a mix of different types of activities—structure and unstructured.

They can follow instructions and benefit from organized sports or activities. At school or elsewhere, this is a good time for them to participate in structured programs like soccer, hockey, swimming, etc.

School-age children also benefit from unstructured activities such as street hockey, sledding, playing in the water, and exploring outside.

They should not specialize in one sport or activity. Research clearly shows that early specialization is not good for children. It increases their risk of injury and burnout. A variety of activities help children develop positive, lifelong physical literacy skills.

Focus on activities that explore many different types of movement. Here are some examples.

Active Jenga[2]

What you need

- Jenga set
- Markers
- Space to move

How to play

1. Use the marker to write a movement on each jenga block. Choose movements that everyone knows.

   Examples:

   - 10 hops
   - 10 jumps
   - 10 squats
   - Touch toes
   - Balance on one foot for 15 seconds
   - Run one lap
   - Fast feet for 15 seconds

2. Before starting, go through the movements and show the proper technique.

[2] Adapted from http://www.pecentral.org/lessonideas/ViewLesson.asp?ID=133170#.WXd_eYTyuUk

3. Set up the jenga game. Invite children to take turns to pull out a block without toppling the tower, and do the action.

   Children may do the action on their own or have everyone do it together. If needed, help children read the blocks.

4. End the game when the tower falls or the blocks are gone.

Moving Memory

What you need

- A group of people
- Room to move

How to play

1. Ask the children to stand in a circle.

2. Choose someone to start. Each child takes a turn to say their name and do a movement. They repeat the name and movement of the children who went before them.

   Example:

   - "Hi I'm Emily and I like to jump." (Emily jumps).
   - "Hi I'm Charlotte and I like to touch my toes." (Charlotte touches her toes). "This is Emily and she likes to jump." (Charlotte jumps).

3. Continue around the circle until everyone has a turn.

Arctic and Dene Sports

What you need

- Arctic or Dene sports athlete to demonstrate. Contact Aboriginal Sports Circle NWT for recommendations.

  http://www.ascnwt.ca/traditional-games/arctic-sports-dene-games

- Equipment—depends on the sport. Work with the athlete. Some sports such as finger pull do not need any equipment.

How to play

1. Ask the invited athlete to demonstrate one or more of the Arctic or Dene sports.

2. With the athlete's help, invite the children to try the sports.

   If possible, break down the skills needed for the sport. Have the children practice the skills individually before trying the sport as a whole.

Activities for Teenagers (12-18)

This is an important transitional stage of the physical literacy journey. We need to encourage and support teenagers to take responsibility for making physical activity a regular part of their life.

Going through puberty, teenagers experience physical changes that can make them more self-conscious and less coordinated than before. This can make them less confident and less motivated to participate in physical activities. They need positive experiences that teach them the value of physical literacy.

Educators, parents, mentors, and peers can play an important role in highlighting the importance of being active, to encourage teenagers to continue to be active.

We need to reinforce the idea that many different pathways lead to an active life—not just competitive sports. Physical literacy is for everyone, not just the most talented athletes.

Here are some ideas for non-sport, physical literacy activities for teenagers.

On The Land Activities

There are many ways to be active on the land—checking nets, canoeing, snowshoeing, picking berries, gathering firewood, etc.

What on the land skills are important in your community?

Decide on a skill to focus on. Invite a local knowledge holder to lead a youth-oriented session on this skill. Or invite skilled youth to share their skills with others.

Dance Fitness

If there is a dance fitness instructor in the community, invite them to lead a class. If not, use these instructions to organize a class. Dance fitness is a type of group exercise that combines one or more forms of dance in an aerobic workout. One example is Zumba.

What you need

- Internet connection
- Pre-selected instructional video
- Projector and screen
- Room to move

How to play

1. Ahead of time, search online for one or more suitable dance fitness instructional videos.

   Invite participants to look for videos and bring their favourite.

2. Set up the projector and screen at the front of the room. Make sure the Internet connection works.

3. Start the video and get dancing.

Yoga Class

If there is a yoga instructor in the community, invite them to lead a class. If not, use these instructions to organize a class. Yoga is a type of exercise where people move their body into various stretching positions to become more fit or flexible, to improve their breathing, and to relax their mind.

What you need

- Internet connection
- Pre-selected instructional videos
- Projector and screen
- Room to move

How to play

1. Ahead of time, search online for one or more suitable yoga videos.

   Invite participants to look for videos and bring their favourite.

2. Set up the projector and screen at the front of the room. Make sure the Internet connection works.

3. With the video as a guide, start the yoga class.

Activities for Adults

Adult physical literacy varies significantly from person to person and through the years. In early adulthood, many people change from competitive sports to recreational sports and activities.

Many important factors affect how adults include physical literacy in their lives.

- Individual lifestyle choices
- Lifelong attitudes to physical literacy
- Access to programs and facilities
- Community attitudes towards physical activity

These and similar physical literacy activities for adults can help contribute to a more active community environment.

Active Games at a Community Feast

Consider adding a few active games to the next community feast or celebration. Adults like to have fun too.

Silly Relays is an example of a fun game to play.

What you need

- Basket balls, hoola hoops, and badminton racquets and birdies
- At least two teams
- Room to move

How to play

1. Place two markers a few meters apart.
2. Divide the group into two teams. Ask each team to form a line at one of the markers.
3. Explain the rules.

   On 'go' and one at a time, each team member moves from the starting marker to the far marker and back. During that time they complete these three challenges:

   - Dribble the basket ball
   - Walk/run while spinning the hoola hoop on the hips
   - Walk/run while bouncing the badminton birdie on a racquet
4. End the game when each member of the team completes each activity and the whole teams sits down.

Be creative.

- Use different challenges.
- Offer prizes to the fastest and slowest team, or the most creative (without saying ahead of time).

Community Canoe Race

What you need

- Floats or buoys to make the course
- Canoes, paddles, and safety gear
- A rescue canoe or motor boat
- People to time the racer and decide who wins
- Prizes for the winners (optional)

How to play

1. Ahead of time, use the floats or buoys to mark the course.

   Set the course where non-competitors can watch the race and cheer the competitors.

2. Decide on race rules and competitor categories.

3. Decide on a plan of action in case someone needs rescuing.

4. Before the race:
   - Make sure everyone has the right safety gear, such as extra paddle, lifejacket, throw rope, bailer, whistle.
   - Make sure everyone understands the rules.

5. Start the race.

6. At the end, give out the prizes for the winners.

Community Activity Challenge

What you need

- Posters, radio ads, Facebook posts
- Someone to keep track of participants and the hours they log
- Prizes (optional)

How to play

1. Start a community activity challenge.

   Decide:

   - How long does the challenge last: one week, one month, etc.?
   - Do people compete in teams, pairs, as individuals?

2. Advertise the challenge on Facebook and the radio, and with posters. Get as many people to participate as possible. Offer prizes for the winner(s) to encourage people to participate.

3. Ask each team/pair/individual to log the number of hours per day they spend being active.

   Define what is means to be active. Examples: go to the gym, play with kids, garden, chop wood, walk to work, etc.

4. To encourage healthy competition, announce the progress for each team/pair/individual along the way.

5. When the challenge ends, announce the winner and give out prizes.

Activities for Seniors/Elders

Physical literacy is about motivation, competence, and confidence. For seniors/elders, confidence can be the hardest part of this equation. When we lack confidence, we tend to avoid physical activities. This makes it difficult to remain physically competent.

But just as in all other stages of life, physical literacy is important for seniors/elders. Physical literacy activities give them more independence and control over their lives. These activities can also be very social events.

At this stage of life, physical ability varies greatly from person to person. Even though this is not always true, we often associate 'old age' with mental and physical decline. Some seniors/elders may need adaptations to activities, to suit a reduced level of physical ability. Other seniors/elders have the same (or better) physical ability as people much younger.

These physical literacy activities can be modified for many different levels of abilities.

Bowling

Bowling is a great activity for all levels of ability. Depending on participants' strength, change the weight of the bowling ball and pins.

Follow these instructions for a homemade, plastic bottle bowling set.

What you need

- A ball
- Empty plastic bottles with caps
- Water
- Room to move
- Food colouring (optional)
- Glue or duct tape (optional)

How to play

1. Gather and clean the plastic bottles. Play with five pins/bottles, 10 pins/bottles, or any other number.
2. Fill each bottle about ¼ full with water.
   - Add more water to make the pins harder to knock over.
   - Use less water to make the pins easier to knock over.
   - For fun, add food colouring to the water.

3. Put the cap on the bottle. If needed, use glue or duct tape to prevent leaking.

4. Make a 'bowling alley'.
   - Set up the pins in a triangle.
   - Mark a start line a few meters away.
   - Change the distance to make the activity more or less difficult.
5. Invite participants to take turns 'bowling'.
   - Keep score based on how many pins they knock over at once.
   - Give prizes for the highest and lowest scores.

Elders in Motion Program

The *Elders in Motion* program aims to improve access to physical activities for NWT elders. The program offers training and support to develop recreation programs for elders.

The NWT Recreation and Parks Association (NWTRPA) runs the program. Contact them for more information.

- Website: http://www.nwtrpa.org/elders-in-motion.htm
- Phone: 867-669-8375
- Email: admin@nwtrpa.org

Sharing Traditional Skills

Many elders/seniors are traditional knowledge holders. They have a lifetime of experience being active in many ways.

Invite an elder/senior to lead a hands-on activity about a traditional skill.

This is a good way to celebrate elders' knowledge and encourage them to be confident in motion.