



EECEME

European Early Childhood
Education Movement Experts

EECEME

**05 – CONCEPTUALIZATION, PUBLICATION AND
PRESENTATION OF A POLICY PAPER/ RECOMMENDATIONS
ON THE IMPORTANCE OF THE STRENGTHENING
OF THE BASIC MOTOR SKILLS AND AN ACTIVE HEALTHY
LIFESTYLE OF THE CHILDREN WITH IN EARLY CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION**



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1. INTRODUCTION – PROJECT ACTIVITIES

European Early Childhood Education Movement Experts (EECEME) project will build upon on what is said here by contributing to better practices in the field of the strengthening of the basic motoric skills and of an active healthy lifestyle of children in early childhood education organizations and to a better encouragement of the professionals working in early childhood education institutions through better qualify them.

2. TRAINING MANUAL – RESUME

Inter-cultural collaboration and sharing of best practices will generate understanding of the importance of an active and healthy lifestyle for early childhood development and create a foundation for movement and activities with a range of physical, emotional and interpersonal benefits.

The handbook was created through the collaboration of participating organizations, with each organization contributing their experts to ensure that the needs of the target groups were addressed as comprehensively as possible. The handbook is designed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the importance of movement experiences for the development of children, and it does so in an easy-to-understand manner. The first section of the handbook covers the basics of movement theory for children, followed by practical exercises that are designed to enhance movement skills and encourage physical activity. The handbook is organized by age group and movement type to make it easy for educators and caregivers to select appropriate exercises for the children in their care. Practical exercises make up most of the handbook. The chapters are divided first according to age groups, then according to the form of movement that is trained in the exercise.

For years, numerous scientific studies have confirmed that the practice of physical activity has positive effects on our body, mood and brain. In general, it facilitates the development of intellectual abilities, improves and keeps the body's functions active, supports the development of communication and interaction skills with others, and finally improves motor skills and abilities.

Therefore, motor growth is favored when the subject in developmental age finds himself in the conditions of:

- to face all the ontogenetic stages in an environment favorable to the discovery and consolidation of the skills of translocation in space, of prehension and manipulation of objects;
- develop basic motor patterns both from a quantitative and qualitative point of view, especially in the favorable periods of learning;
- Improve conditional coordinative motor skills;
- Facing an approach to educational sport and a sporting approach of a multipurpose and multi-sport type.

It can be concluded that physical activity plays a crucial role in the holistic development of children, encompassing not only the enhancement of basic motor skills but also other vital areas.

3. ANALYSIS OF PILOT PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION

On the field experiences (from O3)

The implementation of the pilot program involved a series of training activities on various topics. Some of them include:

Training activity aimed at implementing specific motor programs and identifying practical physical activities for pre-school children. Competence acquired concerned the enhancement of the following aspects:

- Strengthening motor and cognitive skills
- Strengthening coordination
- Strengthening mobility
- Strengthening motor and cognitive skills
- Strengthening coordination
- Strengthening mobility

Training activity that covered various topics related to child nutrition and physical activity, providing the staff with knowledge and skills in healthy meal planning, promoting

physical activity among young children, and identifying and addressing barriers to healthy lifestyles. Competence acquired concerned the enhancement of the following aspects:

- Knowledge of child nutrition and the importance of healthy eating habits for young children.
- Techniques for encouraging physical activity and promoting an active lifestyle in children.
- Strategies for addressing barriers to healthy lifestyles such as lack of access to healthy food or safe places to play.
- Understanding of how to create a supportive environment for healthy habits, both within schools and at home.
- Ability to communicate effectively with children, families, and other professionals about the importance of healthy lifestyle.
- Skills in observing and assessing children's behaviour and physical activity level.
- Proficiency in planning and implementing healthy lifestyle activities and programs for children.

Training activity to increase the knowledge and strengthened the skills in planning and implementing regular physical activity and playful learning for the children in kindergarten with children age 1-6. Competence acquired concerned the enhancement of the following aspects:

- Reinforced motivation for physical activity teaching values
- Expanded and updated practice in order to keep up the kindergarten educators/ sport coaches with the new demands being placed on them
- Promoting high-quality learning while giving every child the opportunity to learn through sport activities and games in the way that is best suited to the child's individual strengths and needs
- Improved fine motor skills including balance, dexterity, and flexibility
- Enriched cognitive development in early childhood
- Strengthened gross motor skills
- Improved strength, balance and mobility on children
- Developed better social skills

Training activities to improve the communication skills of the staff to transmit healthy lifestyles to children and parents and to implement motor activity programs in relation to the child's age. Competence acquired concerned the enhancement of the following aspects:

- Ability to adapt activities to children with different capacities.
- New techniques to communicate effectively with children.
- Knowledge on the importance of promoting a healthy lifestyle among children and families.
- Comfort and fluency in including and organizing activities to promote physical activity among children
- Methodologies to work and strengthen the basic motoric skills of children at different ages.
- Offer children the opportunity to lead parts of the activity while the staff takes on a more observational role.

4 POLICY RECOMMENDATION PAPER

1. Promote Physical activity

Promote to be physically active several times a day in a variety of ways; incorporating physical activity into children daily routine with structured physical activities and also with regular movement breaks taking into consideration that all movements count, but more is better.

2. Follow the international guidelines

Adopting evidence-based practices for physical activities for children in early childhood and Including WHO physical activity recommendations in your programs.

For children of 3-4 years spend at least 180 minutes in a variety of types of physical activities at any intensity, of which at least 60 minutes is moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity, spread throughout the day.

For children of 5-6 years spend at least an average of 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous-intensity, mostly aerobic, physical activity, across the week.

3. Teach active and healthy lifestyles to contrast sedentary behaviour

WHO recommends that children should not sit in front of a screen (e.g. computer, television, mobile phone or tablet) for more than one hour a day, indeed higher amounts of sedentary behaviour in children are associated with: increased adiposity; poorer cardiometabolic health, fitness, behavioural conduct/pro-social behaviour; and reduced sleep duration.

Teaching children about lifelong active and healthy lifestyle can: help prevent obesity, heart disease, and diabetes; improve cognitive skills and emotional skills; build strong bones and muscles; increase flexibility; teach teamwork, sportsmanship and friendship; boost self-esteem; boost child's mental and behavioural health; encourage health and active living.

4. Choose the correct activities for each age range

Children aged three to six benefit greatly from unrestricted play. It is crucial that their play involves a wide range of movements, such as running, climbing, sliding, and jumping, in a playground setting. Storytelling and role-playing can also enhance their play experiences.

Activities such as jumping, throwing, running, and climbing can help develop their coordination skills, setting them up for success in sports and other physical activities.

Between the ages of seven and twelve, children's ability to learn coordination skills is at its peak.

5. Keep the focus on the fun

When engaging in activities with children, particularly young ones, it is important to prioritize enjoyment and incorporate opportunities for playful learning in their early development. To cultivate their imaginations, utilize storytelling to create entertaining motor activities.

6. Use appropriate equipment

Give children equipment/materials that encourage physical activity and provide age-appropriate equipment and space for physical activity to support children's gross motor skills development.

7. Provide adequate space (especially in outdoor)

Create a physical environment that promotes physical activity and implementing activity (indoor/outdoor) that is developmentally appropriate.

Create opportunities for outdoor play, such as playgrounds, free play and nature walks,

to provide diverse physical activity experiences.

Ensure that adequate facilities are available on school premises, in public spaces and sport association spaces for physical activity during recreational time for all children.

8. Include psychological and social components in your activities

Successful physical activity should involve multi-sectoral cooperation, such as the inclusion of psychological and social components.

From the first year of life, movement plays a decisive role in the development of physical (motor) and psychological (cognitive) abilities. Children of kindergarten and primary school age go through an important phase of their development: during this time, the biological, psychological and social foundations are laid that are crucial for the rest of their life. A special training programme is just as unnecessary at this age as specialization in certain types of sport. What is important is that movement should be versatile and fun!

9. Offer ongoing training to staff

Support the continued professional development and offer staff training to provide safe and developmentally appropriate physical activity for children in early childhood.

Especially:

- Provide ongoing professional development opportunities on physical activity and healthy lifestyle promotion for young children.
- Encourage staff to obtain relevant certifications, such as physical education or health education, to improve their skills.
- Create opportunities for staff to observe and learn from experienced professionals in promoting physical activity and healthy lifestyles in young children.
- Provide ongoing support and feedback to staff on their physical activity and healthy lifestyle promotion practices.
- Encourage staff to engage in self-reflection and goal-setting to improve their skills in promoting active and healthy lifestyles in young children.

After adequate training, the staff has acquired the ability to decline any area of didactic/educational competence considering movement experiences as the basis of learning. It would be important that all organizations that deal with children began to consider movement and the body as the main tool for getting to know themselves, communicating with others and with the world.

10. Collaborate with local organizations

Collaborate with community organizations to provide additional physical activity opportunities; assist key stakeholders on local level to understand the importance of physical activity for health benefits among children in early childhood at last support early childhood education organizations in their efforts to enable networking and access to professional resources that need for updating and building educators knowledge and skills in early childhood education.

