

10 Top Tips for Parents and Educators

PROMOTING PHYSICAL WELLBEING

Physical activity isn't only beneficial for our bodies; it also plays a role in promoting mental wellbeing. With both the Euros and the Olympics this summer, it's an opportunity to engage young people in regular exercise which can reduce stress, improve mood and boost self-esteem. Despite these benefits, many children face barriers to participating in physical activity.

1 MAKE IT FUN



Incorporate activities that children enjoy, such as playing games or dancing. Encourage participation in team sports or group activities to foster social connections and a sense of belonging.

2 MIX MOVEMENT WITH LEARNING



Educational settings can incorporate movement breaks and physical activities to enhance focus, concentration and cognitive function. Embedding exercise into the curriculum can also reinforce learning and stimulate creativity. 'Revision walks' with podcasts and flashcards can benefit older learners.

3 CREATE OPPORTUNITIES



Provide clear chances for physical activity throughout the day, both indoors and outdoors. Schools can encourage active play during breaks and at lunchtimes, while limiting screen time at home can help keep children up and about.

4 PROVIDE POSITIVE REINFORCEMENT



Praise and encourage children for their efforts and achievements in physical activity. Recognise their progress and celebrate their successes to reinforce positive behaviours. Educators could do this in several ways, such as applauding their efforts at assemblies or celebrating their accomplishments in newsletters.

5 VARIETY IS KEY



Introduce a selection of physical activities to keep children engaged and prevent boredom. From swimming and cycling to yoga and martial arts, trying different types of exercise can help children to discover what they enjoy most.

6 ENJOYMENT OVER COMPETITION



Encourage children to focus on the enjoyment of physical activity rather than winning or achieving perfection. Emphasise effort, improvement and having fun rather than outcomes, to minimise the amount of stress that children can sometimes associate with sports and other competitions.

7 SET REALISTIC GOALS



Help children set achievable physical activity targets based on their interests, abilities and preferences. Celebrate their progress and successes to maintain motivation and enthusiasm.

8 MAKE IT ACCESSIBLE



Ensure that children have access to safe, suitable spaces for exercise at home, at school and in the community. Advocate for inclusive environments which accommodate diverse needs and abilities. Be a change maker in your community if facilities aren't already available.

9 LEAD BY EXAMPLE



Parents and carers can be positive role models by prioritising their own exercise and involving children in their fitness routines. Gentle walks, bike rides or sports activities can be wonderful opportunities for bonding and staying active together.

10 ENCOURAGE PERSISTENCE



Help children develop resilience and perseverance by encouraging them to overcome challenges and setbacks in physical activity. Teach them the importance of perseverance and the value of effort in achieving their goals.

Meet Our Expert

Adam Gillett is a learning and development specialist who, as well as working for Minds Ahead, is associate vice principal for personal development at a large secondary school in Barnsley. He was asked to be part of an expert research group for the Department for Education, one of only three school leaders to be asked to do so.



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