

Daily movement programme has positive impact on children's learning

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Credit: Loughborough University

Following a daily movement programme can improve children's physical development levels and has the potential to boost their chances in the classroom, researchers from Loughborough University have found.

Academics from the University's School of Sport, Exercise and Health Sciences have been working with two schools and more than 40

Foundation Stage [children](#) in a year-long study.

They found that those who took part in a daily [movement](#) programme for one academic year showed greater improvements in throwing/catching, balance and manual dexterity compared to those not taking part in the programme.

The participating children also improved their overall levels of physical [development](#) from the 32nd percentile to the 50th (an improvement of approximately 18 percentile points) bringing them back in line with scores for children of the same age established in 2007.

A child's physical development level impacts their ability to complete simple tasks such as sitting still, holding a pencil, putting on their shoes, and reading – all skills essential for school.

Tests carried out by the team in 2016 found a larger number than previously estimated were starting school with lower than desirable levels of physical development, with almost 30% of children presenting with symptoms typically associated with dyslexia, [developmental coordination disorder](#) (dyspraxia), and ADHD.

To try and redress this decline in pupils' physical development Loughborough's Dr Rebecca Duncombe and Professor Pat Preedy created 'Movement for Learning'.

The daily programme gives children opportunities to move, improve fine and [gross motor skills](#) and inhibit primitive reflexes (baby reflexes that should no longer be present). Activities include throwing, catching, balancing, drawing large letters in the air, articulating sounds and skipping.

To assess the effectiveness of the programme the team recruited

children from two schools, with some doing the daily Movement for Learning exercises and others not.

"The results show a definite improvement for those children that took part in the Movement for Learning programme," explains Dr Duncombe. "We know that there is a link between physical development and achievement in the classroom so the findings of this research are especially important. We are hopeful that, as a result of this project, we will be able to help reverse the recent decline in physical readiness for [school](#) and for learning."

Professor Pat Preedy added: "Changes in our modern world mean that many children are moving less and are not developing the physical skills that they need for learning. It has been most rewarding to see how a short, daily programme can help children to get back on track for learning."

Fifty other schools are currently following the Movement for Learning programme and are due to provide feedback after the summer. The team plan to make the programme freely available for all schools by 2018.

Provided by Loughborough University

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