



Predictors of Physical Literacy in Elementary School Children

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Abstract

Background: In Canada, only half of children aged 5 to 11 met the recommended physical activity (PA) guidelines from 2022 to 2024 (Government of Canada, 2025). In adolescence, there was a further decline in PA participation as only 21% met these guidelines, emphasizing the need to improve PA adherence (Government of Canada, 2025). In early childhood, the development of physical literacy (PL) can contribute to the development of foundation movement skills and the establishment of lifelong PA habits (Faigenbaum & Myer, 2012; Hulteen et al., 2018). Physical literacy extends beyond PA by incorporating an individual's competence and confidence to engage in activities across a range of environments for life (Whitehead, 2013). Despite the importance of developing PL in early childhood, little is known about the factors that may predict PL. The purpose of this study is to examine predictors of PL in elementary school children.

Methodology: This study is a secondary data analysis of a two-year longitudinal study that explored the PL of grade two students in elementary schools within the West Vancouver School District across three timepoints (Tang et al., 2023). This longitudinal study also examined the relationship between changes in PL and in-school support by mentors using a longitudinal dose response design. Physical literacy was assessed using the PLAY*fun* and PLAY*self* tools ("PLAY Tools," n.d.). Physical activity was measured using wrist-worn accelerometers over seven days. Parent support was assessed by the Activity Support Scale for Multiple Groups (Davison et al., 2011). Neighborhood walkability was assessed using the Neighbourhood Environment Walkability Scale for Youth (Rosenberg et al., 2009). The school-built environment was assessed using the School Grounds Assessment Tool (Jones et al., 2010). Program implementation dose was assessed by checklist, and individual characteristics were assessed through parent and child self-report. Pearson's and Spearman's correlational analyses will explore relationships between correlates and PL. Linear regression analysis will determine the predictors of PL.

Conclusion: Potential implications for policy and practice in addressing the modifiable correlates of PL among elementary school student will be discussed.

Keywords: Children; Physical activity; Physical literacy; PLAY tools



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