



From mountain to sea

Working Together to Support Motor Skills

Guidance for Schools

December 2017



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Date	Version	Reason for update
July 2007	1.0	Original guidance
December 2017	2.0	Update and refresh

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Introduction

This guidance has been compiled in collaboration with staff in the Additional Support Needs Team (Aberdeenshire Education and Children's Services) and NHS Grampian Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service.

The Scottish Government have made physical activity a new national indicator to reflect its importance. Information on physical activity is published online by the [Scottish Government](#) and details physical activity levels, guidelines, information and support on how and where to get active and the campaign to encourage a healthy active lifestyle.

All children benefit from taking part in a range of physical activities throughout their school day and at home. Some children have more difficulty in mastering motor skills than others, may have poor co-ordination and need more support to develop the skills for everyday activities such as dressing, hand skills for writing / scissors use, ball skills and balance.

Most children develop their skills within their family group without any specific professional help beyond that available to them within playgroups, educational settings, and community groups. There are a variety of resources available for schools and parents to use related to the development of motor skills and everyday self-care skills.

These include:

The Aberdeenshire Council Website:

www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/parents-carers/support-for-families/developing-motor-skills/

The Northern Alliance, Highland Literacy Website:

www.highlandliteracy.com

Aberdeenshire Council in collaboration with the Northern Alliance (7 Local Authorities) have introduced, through pilot schools, the Highland Council developmental approach to 'raising attainment through literacy, language and communication'. An important part of this is checking the child's readiness for literacy by ensuring that the underlying motor skills are established.

Why work on motor skills?

Some children have more difficulty mastering everyday activities and need a little more help. Motor skills follow a developmental continuum and activities provided by families and school staff need to consider where the child's skills are on the continuum.

It is important that children have lots of opportunities to develop their gross motor and co-ordination skills. It is easy to overprotect children, but we should try to allow them to develop their independence. What suits each child/young person and what is safe and comfortable will be different for each individual. Children need support and encouragement from the adults around them to participate in activities

they find more challenging, so they experience variety of activities rather than only the ones they prefer and feel safe with.

Without secure gross and fine motor skills, learning is made more challenging.



Getting started

There is no specific format to use, and it will depend on the school's setting however it is important that all children have opportunities to participate in physical activity to promote the development of motor skills. This may be delivered as a whole class, whole school, or specific small group session.

Whichever activities you decide to do with the child/young person it is helpful to remember:

- Short sessions throughout the week are better than one long one and easier to fit around other activities e.g., 20 mins 3 times a week instead of 1 hour once a week
 - Do not overload the child/young person with lots of activities all at one time
 - Stop, simplify, or find another activity if the child/young person is not coping or enjoying the activities
 - Watch out if other children are much better or very competitive and think about changing the game or making it an individual one. It is often best to compile a group of children with similar needs to work together and offer each other encouragement
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- Give the child/young person some choice as they will be more likely to participate
- Activities should be fun, presented as games and involve the whole group where possible

Resources

Some resource kits are available through the Aberdeenshire Library and Information Service loan system. [Appendix 1](#) contains details of the content of a kit. Practical advice to support children and young people is included in these kits. There are also a variety of books and motor skills programmes available through education suppliers which may allow you to use the equipment already available in schools PE stores in a more targeted way. Booklets included with the resource kits are entitled 'Fun Fit' and are tailored to primary aged pupils, but a secondary booklet is available from the supplier if required.

More recent information is available online from the following websites.

Aberdeenshire council:

<https://www.aberdeenshire.gov.uk/schools/parents-carers/support-for-families/developing-motor-skills-1/>

NHS Lothian

<http://www.asl.scot.nhs.uk/Resources/ResourcePacks/Pages/MotorSkills.aspx>

The Northern Alliance, Highland Literacy Website:

www.highlandliteracy.com

Active schools programmes are available in local clusters in line with the government requirement for an increase in physical activity provided to all children/young people during their school hours.

Benefits

The active learning promoted by these activities and subsequent development of improved motor skills functions makes a significant contribution to the four capacities of *A Curriculum for Excellence*.

This also supports the curricular principles of 'challenge and enjoyment', 'personalisation and choice' and promotes 'health and wellbeing'.

Active schools coordinators work in partnership with community learning and development and pupil support workers to identify children who would benefit from participating in physical activity targeted to defined outcomes e.g. the development of self-esteem and confidence.

Children also benefit from lots of other experiences, including gymnastics, craft activities, swimming, martial arts, yoga, horse riding and access to other social clubs. Many school activities such as outdoor woodland learning, PE, music, and active learning provide opportunities to develop skills.

GIRFEC and Staged Intervention

In line with requirement for 'Getting it Right for Every Child' (GIRFEC) children's additional support needs are assessed through a staged intervention model. At each stage, listening to the child/young person and partnership with parents/carers is a crucial component.

Stage of intervention	Actions	Resources
School based assessment and action	Needs assessed and addressed by the class teacher through the school curriculum. All children will benefit from a range of activities	<p>Baseline assessment (Highland Literacy prewriting screen)</p> <p>Reasonable adjustments made to activities/curriculum</p> <p>Participation in a regular motor skills programme within the class</p> <p>Professional judgement of teacher</p> <p>Consideration and implementation of programme for transition including pre-school, primary to secondary and post-school.</p> <p>Additional input requested and provided from Active Schools coordinator</p> <p>Continuous Lifelong Professional Learning* – opportunities on Aberdeenshire Events</p>
External support additional from the local cluster of schools	<p>Support and advice sought from the network in discussions with the school leadership teams</p> <p>The teacher and child/young person are supported through collaborative working with network staff</p>	<p>Consultation with Additional Support for Learning, Educational Psychology Service and/or specialist PE teachers for advice and support</p> <p>Planned support through an Individual Education Plan</p> <p>Input and support from Active Schools coordinators on a regular basis</p> <p>Participation in a regular motor skills programme within the school</p> <p>Access to swimming and/or horse riding (through RDA) or other provision available at local level</p> <p>Continuous Lifelong Professional Learning* – opportunities on Aberdeenshire Events</p>
External multi-agency support	Referral to the Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service for advice / support	<p>Standard referral procedure / pro forma</p> <p>Continuous Lifelong Professional Learning* – opportunities on Aberdeenshire Events</p>

*NHS Grampian Paediatric Occupational Therapy Service provide an annual In-Service day training for school staff. The target audience are those working with children in mainstream schools.

For those staff participating in in-service training offered by NHS it is expected that they will develop strategies and programmes in their own schools.

Schools may wish to take account of this in the School Development Plan.

Referrals for specialist assessment and support

If following intervention from educational practitioners the child/young person is considered to have significant continuing motor skills needs, it may be appropriate to seek advice, assessment, and support from specialists. The occupational therapy service can assist in consideration of a child/young person's development and meeting needs.

Referrals can be made via:

- The School Nurse
- The local Child Development Team
- Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital Occupational Therapy Service

Forms for completion to detail concerns can be obtained directly from these sources.

[Appendix 2](#) details the criteria for referral to the Occupational Therapy Service.

Appendix 1: Motor Skills Kits contents list

Motor skills kits are available for loan to schools. These contain materials and equipment to support skills development. The kits are available from ALIS (Aberdeenshire Library and Information Services), and a school can request to have one on loan for a term. There are 16 kits available and there may be a short waiting list.

Contents of Kit

- 4 Scooter Boards
 - 2 Small Space Hoppers
 - 2 Large Space Hoppers
 - 1 Large Body Ball
 - 2 Pairs of Giant Feet
 - 1 Woggler
 - 1 Maze Wobble Board
 - 1 Set of 6 Hedgehog Stepping Stones
 - 1 Parachute
 - 1 Parachute Pack (10 rainbow foam balls, 6 beanbag scarves, 6 beanbag animals, 2 beach balls, 2 assorted balls, 2 playground balls)
 - 1 Giant Coloured Dice
 - 1 Kick Flick
 - 4 Ribbon Glitter Sticks
 - 6 Throw Down Spots
 - 5 Plus Balls (paper balls) and straws
 - 1 Stopwatch
 - 1 Squistle (squeeze whistle)
 - 1 Fun Fit Club Book (activity suggestions & 30 planned Sessions)*
 - 1 Set of Woggler Instructions
 - 1 Set of Plus Ball Instructions
 - 1 Ball Pump
 - Spare Pump Adapters for Space Hopper/Body Ball
- All contained within Big Red Megabag (wheeled storage bag).**
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***Fun Fit Booklet** can be obtained from:

Gillian Houghton (Admin assistant EP&AST)

Children and Family Services

Children, Families and Adults Directorate

Cornwall Council

Room 36

39 Penwinnick Road

St Austell

PL25 5DR

Tel: 01872 323052 (Mitel 493052)

Email: gjhoughton@cornwall.gov.uk

The items included in the Motor Skills Kits can be supplemented by the equipment already available in the majority of school gym cupboards e.g., mats, cones, benches, balls, quoits. All the equipment is available from Davies Sports, who provide the play equipment as part of the Sainsbury's Active Kids Scheme.

Address: Davies Sports, 2 Gregory Street, Hyde, Cheshire SK14 4TH

Phone: 0345 120 4515

Email: enquiries@daviessports.co.uk

Website: www.daviessports.co.uk

Appendix 2: Occupational Therapy Service criteria for referral

**Paediatric Occupational Therapy
Combined Child Health
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital**

Westburn Road

Aberdeen

AB25 2ZG

Extension: 50593

Direct Line: 01224 550593

Fax: 01224 550707



Guidance for completing request for assistance to Paediatric Occupational Therapy

Health Care / Education

The Occupational Therapy (OT) service has recently reviewed service provision in line with both local and national standards. This information has been developed to assist you when making a request for assistance to Child Health Occupational Therapy services.

The role of the Occupational Therapist (OT) is to enable children/young people to participate in daily life to improve their health and wellbeing.

Children and young people may experience disruption to their occupations due to injury, illness or disability, family circumstances, or at times of transition. Occupational therapists will spend time finding out about the child's and family's typical daily life and what they want, need or are expected to do. They will then work together with the child, family, and other key people to evaluate what helps or hinders their involvement in daily life roles. Together, possible solutions will be developed, such as exploring alternative ways of doing things or making changes to the environment to support participation.

A request for assistance to Occupational Therapy can be made by anyone currently involved with the child/young person. When a request for assistance is being made by a third person, consent must be obtained from the parent/carer and recorded on the request for assistance paperwork.

When considering a request for assistance please refer to the following information regarding what we can offer a child.

Reasons for request for assistance to Occupational Therapy include:

The Child is experiencing difficulties in self-care and independence skills (Occupations) including:

- Activities of daily living, washing, dressing, eating a meal, using the toilet
- Being productive, attending school or University, volunteering,
- Leisure, playing socialising with friends, hobbies, and sports.
- Upper limb and hand function
- Equipment / environmental modification needs for home and/or school
- Sensory issues affecting participation in daily life.

Paediatric Occupational Therapists work with children from early years to adulthood

Self-care

An occupational therapist will work with the family of a baby or infant to help establish a routine and develop suitable techniques for occupations such as sleeping, feeding, and bathing.

For older children the role of the occupational therapist will be to provide strategies, skills, and techniques for everyday activities such as dressing, using the toilet, or participating in mealtimes. In their teenage years, the occupational therapist will focus on supporting the young person to look after themselves so they can participate in school, college, work, or leisure activities.

Education

Learning and being productive is vital for children and young people; it gives them a sense of purpose and opens up opportunities.

An occupational therapist will recommend ways to position a child and suggest activities so they can experience new things and learn whilst playing.

For school age children an occupational therapist will work with school staff to develop a child's skills or recommend changes to the environment so they can successfully participate in the classroom, such as using scissors, cutting, and pasting, or drawing.

An occupational therapist will explore techniques with teaching staff so the young person can reach their potential in the classroom.

For older children, if a need is identified, the OT will explore strategies to help the child engage in the classroom to the best of their abilities.

Play and leisure

Having fun is extremely important for children and young people; it is through play and leisure that learning happens and friendships are formed.

An occupational therapist will support parents to help their baby succeed through play. For older children, an occupational therapist can provide strategies to develop social skills for friends and play at home, school and in the community. For the young person, an occupational therapist will support them to develop their own interests, opportunities to socialise, and take part in hobbies.

If you would like to discuss a referral or require any further advice please contact the Occupational Therapy Team at:

Combined Child Health
Royal Aberdeen Children's Hospital
Westburn Road
Aberdeen AB25 2ZG
Extension: 50593
Direct Line: 01224 550593

Upon receipt of a referral, it will be discussed at a weekly vetting meeting and if accepted then will be allocated to an Occupational Therapist within the service
