



Global Matrix 4.0 on physical activity for children and adolescents

What can we learn from the most successful countries?



A- Overall Physical Activity

In Finland, the role of physical activity in supporting growth, development and learning of children and adolescents of different ages has been taken into consideration in documents that guide early childhood education and teaching. National physical activity promotion programs have been funded to create a more physically active operational culture in educational institutions.



A Organized Sport and Physical Activity

In Denmark, several national policies support physical activity for children and adolescents in day care, school, transport, city planning, leisure, and health policies. In regard to organised sport and physical activity, the Danish legislation obliges municipalities to make facilities available for sports clubs and other voluntary associations and to provide financial support for activities for children and young people under the age of 25 years.



A- Active Transportation

In Japan, enforcement order of the Act on National Treasury's Sharing of Expenses for Facilities of Compulsory Education Schools determines school commuting distances within around 4 km for public primary schools and around 6 km for public junior high schools. This policy, associated with high level of independent mobility in children, potentially led to the observed high percentage of Japanese children and adolescents walking or cycling to school, in particular in urban areas.



A Physical Fitness

In Slovenia, children grow up with a tradition of receiving quality physical education instruction, and this may lead to increased physical literacy so a potentially better ability to maintain their fitness. The national education regulations also dictate that every primary school and secondary school must have at least one sports hall fully equipped with all the necessary sports equipment, including additional outdoor facilities for the children, and all schools in Slovenia have written public physical activity policies (e.g., bike racks at school, traffic calming on school property, outdoor play time).



A+ Family and Peers

In Nepal, parents and schools generally expect students to participate in and win intra- and inter-school competitions. Families usually allow their children and adolescents (especially boys) to play with friends in their neighbourhood after school and on weekends. Activities such as playing, walking, cycling (in plain/Terai regions) among adolescents are considered as ordinary activities by their family members in Nepal.



A+ School

In Hungary, a national physical education curriculum including five sessions of 45 min per week (one per weekday) and recommendations for extracurricular physical activity as well as school sports programs were gradually introduced from 2012 in all Hungarian schools. After the introduction of daily physical education in Hungarian schools, leisure time spent on sports and exercise increased significantly, regardless of gender and age group.



A+ Community and Environment

Sweden has long prioritised green space and the outdoor environment and providing the Swedish people with a usable outdoor environment that promotes physical activity and active transport. In 2012, a Swedish outdoor recreation policy was created to increase opportunities to be in nature and promote outdoor recreation.

In Singapore, public playgrounds are regarded as a basic precinct recreational facility in public housing estates. Playgrounds have evolved over the years from only functional play equipment, such as slides and swings, to thematic playgrounds with a selection of play equipment as a key feature, supporting a wider array of activities such as climbing, swinging, balancing, and jumping



A Government

In New Zealand, significant central and local government investments in physical activity and sport initiatives have been implemented since 2018. Sport NZ, Ihi Aotearoa, a key crown agency supporting children and adolescents through sport and PA initiatives, established a national physical activity framework, strategy, and plan, and conducted evaluations of most initiatives.

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