

Developing physical literacy

How do you offer opportunities for physical literacy at your nursery? Many practitioners mention time and space as reasons for limited opportunities for their children to explore physical development.

Enabling children to be physically literate supports their physical, cognitive, social and emotional development and creates healthy, active movers.

If you're short on time and space:

- Ask staff to arrive early. Move all the equipment, furniture etc. into another room or outside. By providing an empty space for children, it will enable you to observe their creative play and adaptation potential
- Allocate a day to spend in a woodland or park area. Ensure you have plenty of volunteer helpers to assist with monitoring the children. Examine how their play patterns alter depending upon the environment
- Offer each member of staff the opportunity to be creative and change the setting. Provide all staff members with the opportunity to evaluate the dynamics of the space, advantages and disadvantages
- Dig a big hole in your outdoor area. Leave spades, buckets, mud, water and have kitchen equipment to hand and monitor children's play
- Move all of the furniture to one area and cover the remaining space with cardboard boxes, stationery equipment, scissors, tape etc. Leave images of rockets, transport etc. to inspire children's creativity
- Move all of your furniture to a safe area. Limit light in areas and provide coloured lights in sections of the space to offer a sensory light experience. Provide boxes with feeling holes to examine and explore what is inside. Cover surfaces with foil, bubble wrap, silk and chiffon to discover a variety of textures
- Encourage children to travel around! Place a beanbag or another object on the floor. Without moving their feet, encourage children to pick up the item from where they are. As they succeed, keep moving the item further away. This game helps to develop core stability, patience, planning and the refining of movements.



A note on babies

Tummy time little and often from birth is good for children. It helps to strengthen their neck, shoulders and core muscle strength. This is important for future movement and the ultimate development of physical movement skills.

Even in the most restricted space, we can ensure our setting is an exploratory place for play. Often the only obstacle is sufficient preparation and planning.