

Canada's Long-term Athlete Development Model

Canadian Sport for Life⁵ documents the Long-term Athlete Development model adopted by Sport Canada and the Canadian Sport System (www.ltad.ca). Each National Sport Organization (NSO) responsible for a specific sport is developing its unique LTAD model based on Canadian Sport for Life, and through its Provincial and Territorial counterparts is implementing the model across the country. Canada's LTAD model is shown in **Figure 1**.

Physical literacy is developed during the first three stages of Canada's LTAD model, meaning the time from birth to the start of adolescence: from birth to approximately age 11 for girls and to age 12 for boys.

In addition to the material in Canadian Sport for Life, which applies to everyone, there is additional information in **No Accidental Champions**⁶ that applies to Canadians with a disability.

How and Where Do Children Become Physically Literate?

Developing physical literacy in our children will take the combined efforts of parents/guardians, day-care providers, schools personnel, community recreation leaders and everyone involved in the Canadian sport system. Each has a role to play if we are to be successful.

The Myth That it "Just Happens"

While it's true that many children DO develop good physical skills on their own by trial-and-error, there are many who do not; and for those the consequences can be severe.

Children who are physically skilled often enjoy vigorous healthy play, while the less skilled are often left out. This creates a vicious cycle; those with the skills play, and through that play further develop their fitness and skill. In contrast, those who are less skilled play less, have fewer opportunities to refine and develop their skills, and fall further and further behind their skilled peers. Eventually many of the less skilled children stop trying, and withdraw from physical activities that would help them become fitter and develop their skills.

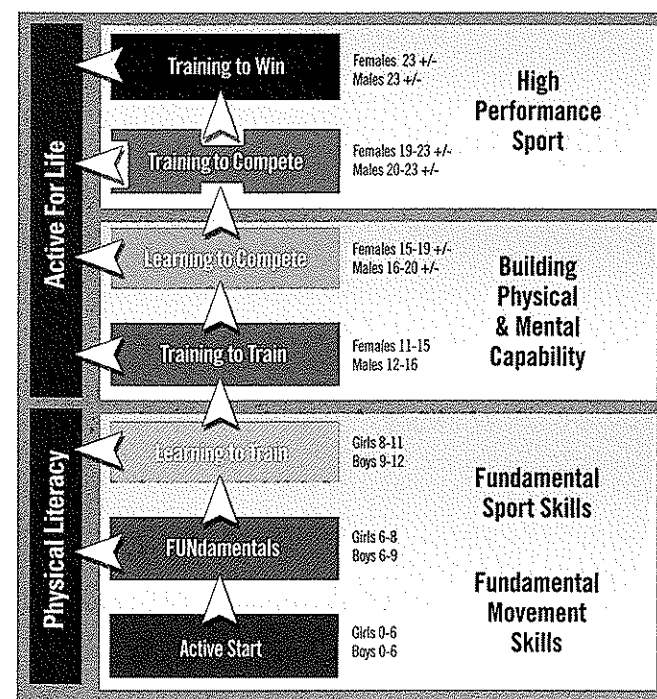
To prevent this from happening appropriate physical literacy need to be taught to every child in Canada. This teaching needs to occur in a wide range of settings, and, because

of this many different people need to be involved. **Figure 2** gives some idea of the range of settings and the range of people who need to understand and be able to teach physical literacy skills.

Ultimately the responsibility for developing a physically literate child rests with parents and guardians. Just as parents and guardians ensure their children are in learning situations that result in them having the ability to read, write and do mathematics, they must also ensure their children develop physical literacy.

Children tell us that not having the skills to play is one major reason they drop out of physical activity and organized sport.

Figure 1 Canada's Long-Term Athlete Development Model



Physical Literacy - the Details

Figure 2 Who is responsible for Physical Literacy?

	Where?	Physical Literacy	Who?
LTAD Stage	Schools Sport clubs Community recreation Sport programs Home	Learn to Train Girls 8-11, Boys 9-12	Parents/Guardians Coaches Teachers Recreation leaders Youth leaders
	Schools Sport clubs Community recreation Sport programs Home	FUNdamental Girls 6-8, Boys 6-9	Parents/Guardians Coaches Teachers Recreation leaders Youth leaders
	Home Pre-schools Day care Sport programs Community recreation	Active Start Girls and Boys 0-6	Parents/Guardians Day care providers Pre-school teachers Kindergarten teachers

*Where specialist physical education teachers are employed at the primary/elementary level

In a child, physical literacy is the combination of mastering fundamental movement skills and fundamental sport skills, which will enable a child can look at and understand movements going on around them, resulting in sound decisions based on that understanding.

Fundamental Movement Skills

To become physically literate children need to master fundamental movement skills, but this mastery does not come all at once, and we need to remember that children are not just "adults in miniature". For almost every skill the developing child needs to go through a series of developmental stages (For example, see **Figure 3** to see how throwing changes as the child matures). The goal should be to help each child move to the next most mature version of the skill they are learning, rather than pushing them to perform the skill the way an adult would.