

Children

Activity Box 1.1

Module 1: Target Group



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Key Facts

- Almost 90% of the student population has been cut off from school due to the pandemic (21)
- 5.7% of children affected by overweight in 2020 (22) and is increasing drastically in high-income countries and territories but is also on the rise in low- and middle-income countries, particularly in urban settings (165)

Specific groups this Activity Box applies to:

Due to the broad age range, this Activity Box considers the age criteria of UN (23):

- Pre-schoolers (below 5)
- Primary School Children (6 to 12)
- Pre-adolescents (12 to 15)

Why is it so important

Contribution

- Higher amounts of sedentary behaviour are associated with the following health risks: increased obesity; poorer cardiometabolic health, fitness, behavioural conduct/pro-social behaviour; and reduced sleep duration (4).
- Physical education and Sport play an important role in SCHOOL and OUT-OF-SCHOOL LIFE and may help to improve social and mental skills.
- Including physical education, Sport and play into the school curricula can be an effective means to increase the number of children enrolled in school and boost retention rates.

International endorsement

- The right to play is protected in Article 31 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1).
- World Health Organisation, the European Union and its Member States recommend at least 60 minutes of daily moderate-intensity physical activity for children and young people.

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Barriers to Sport that should be overcome

- Increased interest in virtual games and resources
- Excessive competitiveness and high pressures coming from parents
- Transportation constraints and access fees
- Non-inclusive Sport activities
- Weak Sport infrastructures
- Culture and religion
- Absence or low priority is given to PE in school curricula
- Lack of involvement of parents

Tips and key success factors

Safeguarding in Sport:

- Safeguarding refers to the actions we take to ensure all children are safe from harm when involved in activities in Sport clubs and other facilities.
- Abuse refers to the acts of omission that lead to a child experiencing harm.
- Harm refers to the negative impact or consequences upon the child of those actions (3).

Age-appropriate activities

Proper precautions need to be taken as children's bodies, and coordination are still developing:

First six years of a child's life:

- Play is one of the primary ways they explore and experience the world and develop their physical, cognitive and social-emotional capacities.
- Critical to a child's brain development.

7 to 12 years old:

- Leisure activities can facilitate or complicate forming a strong and coherent sense of identity.
- Developmentally beneficial activities involve challenge, effort, and concentration. As Sport and physical activity possess these characteristics, it is believed they can be an important transitional activity for youths.

Other measures to prevent risk situations:

- Wearing proper safety gear and equipment
- Appropriate adult supervision
- Assessment of skill, weight, and physical and psychological maturity level for the Sport
- Provide enough water or other fluids

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Sport-related stress due to excessive competitiveness can affect a child negatively

- Signs that a child may be suffering from that are: Loss of appetite, Vomiting, Headaches, Depression, Low energy, among others
- Adapt rules to make Sport fair and fun for all who play. Example: lowering the basketball goal or shortening the distance of a race (75)
- Encourage and praise effort rather than winning. Children may believe that losing implies something negative about them personally and may misunderstand how factors like effort, luck, difficulty, ability, opponent strength are just part of the game. This can diminish their Sport motivation and self-confidence

Other tips:

- Offer after-school activities with a focus on the activities of your IOS. Festivals and exhibitions could be an interesting alternative for attracting them
- Creativity in how to move them away from digital devices: Guide them in the usage of new virtual alternatives
- Develop group attachment and supportive coaching styles
- Involve parents or other relatives in activities
- Use the same activities/routines
- Do not force children to engage in activities they do not enjoy

Available Resources

- International safeguards. [Click Here](#)
- UNICEF Life skills suggestion (page 21). [Click Here](#)
- Child safeguarding Toolkit for UEFA member associations. [Click Here](#)
- UEFA Play makers. [Click Here](#)
- Icoach kids framework. [Click Here](#)
- Designed to Move Active Schools. [Click Here](#)
- Physical literacy framework, Sport Australia. [Click Here](#)
- Playdagogy, Play International. [Click Here](#)
- Global Matrix on Physical Activity for Children and Youth, Active Healthy Kids Global Alliance. [Click Here](#)

Sample Case

Minigolf Kids for a Better World (World Minigolf Sport Federation)

- Children collect domestic waste to build unique obstacles to be used in minigolf tournaments for kids.
- For building obstacles, the children have to work as a group to generate ideas and execute them.
- At the same time, the children also learn to recycle materials and reuse them for building new things.

More information:

Benefits of mini golf for kids [Click Here](#)

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