

Physical Literacy in Australia

– A research impact case study

A new way to measure kids' physical literacy.

The Physical Literacy in Children Questionnaire can be used by: **researchers** to understand how physical literacy relates to health behaviours, **teachers** interested to know how to plan lessons, **sporting clubs** looking to develop the whole child and **parents** to understand how their child rates their own abilities.



Physical literacy is as important as learning to read.

Physical inactivity, poor fitness and being overweight/obese are key risk factors for heart disease. Just as children need to be taught the alphabet to read, they also need '**physical literacy**' – the physical, psychological, social and cognitive skills to achieve lifelong physical activity.

[Sport Australia](#) assumed a leadership role in 2016 to create a definition of physical literacy that fit within the Australian context. Sport Australia commissioned Dr Richard Keegan (University of Canberra), [Associate Professor Lisa Barnett](#) (IPAN), and Dr Dean Dudley (Macquarie University) to lead the research that informed development of the:

1. [Definition](#): the three worked closely with representatives from nine Australian universities and four international institutions with expertise in motor skill development, psychological factors, education, sport participation and physical activity.
2. [Australian Physical Literacy Framework](#):



Sport Australia released a [physical literacy position statement](#) in 2019 which was endorsed by 60 sport and physical activity providers and some peak government bodies.

In 2019, Sport Australia engaged an IPAN team led by A/Prof Lisa Barnett to develop a way to measure children's physical literacy. **The Physical Literacy in Children Questionnaire (PL-C Quest)** was released in 2021. The PL-C Quest was co-designed with children and a range of stakeholders to ensure it is visually appealing to primary school aged children of any cultural background.

Enabling young people to be active for life.

Physical literacy definition:

“Physical literacy is lifelong holistic learning acquired and applied in movement and physical activity contexts. It reflects ongoing changes integrating physical, psychological, social and cognitive capabilities. It is vital in helping us lead healthy and fulfilling lives through movement and physical activity. A physically literate person is able to draw on their integrated physical, psychological, social and cognitive capabilities to support health promoting and fulfilling movement and physical activity – relative to their situation and context – throughout the lifespan.”

Contact [A/Prof Lisa Barnett: lisa.barnett@deakin.edu.au](mailto:lisa.barnett@deakin.edu.au)

December, 2021

What impact has this work had?

There is strong evidence that the concept of physical literacy has gained significant traction, following on from the definition and framework.

Sport Australia’s [‘What is Physical Literacy’](#) video has been viewed more than 29,000 times since it was uploaded in October 2019.

The project was a finalist for the [Engagement Australia 2021 Excellence Awards](#) for Outstanding Engagement for Research Impact.

Schools

- The Victorian Government’s ‘Active Schools’ program prioritises many of the components outlined in Sport Australia’s Physical Literacy: Guide for Schools.
- Sport Australia has developed the [Physical Literacy Toolkit](#) for schools, including:
 - Physical Literacy: Benefits for Schools
 - Physical Literacy: Guide for Schools
 - Physical Literacy Implementation Plan
 - Physical Literacy Action Plan Presentation
- Sport Australia’s Physical Literacy Toolkit for Schools was used in the [Sporting Schools Plus](#) program.

Sporting Organisations

- Sport Australia has developed resources for clubs:
 - Physical Literacy: [Benefits for Clubs](#)
 - Physical Literacy: [Guide for Clubs](#)
- Many national sporting organisations including AFL, Golf Australia, Football Australia, Netball Australia, Surfing Australia, Athletics Australia, Gymnastics Australia and Baseball Australia have or are applying physical literacy into their products.
- National sporting organisations are using Sport Australia’s Physical Literacy Program Alignment Guidelines to design products. Many of the national sporting organisations’ products also refer to the Australian Physical Literacy Framework.
- Sport Australia is using the Physical Literacy Benefits for Clubs and Physical Literacy Guide for Clubs in Game Plan.
- Sport Australia continues to integrate physical literacy into workforce development (coaches and officials).
- Sport Australia has integrated physical literacy into product development and life stage insights.

PL-C Quest is available for use through Sport Australia

- PL-C Quest has already been utilised by multiple researchers across 15 countries.
- Email physical_literacy@sportaus.gov.au to receive the PL-C Quest user agreement, questionnaires and scoring sheet.

