

Family Fun Fit

Family Fun fit is a school based initiative involving children and parents to improve health, particularly fitness levels, of participants. It has been developed from similar projects such as Somerset Sports Partnership's DASH (Do Activity Stay Healthy) programme.

The programme measures improved fitness levels, not weight. This avoids the risk of it being considered a "fat club". It can also be a surprise to realise who may be considered to take part, children who may have relative low weight may still have low levels of fitness. So a suggested method of identifying a group is to target your "non participants" your children who do not like actively taking part.

The aim of Family Fun Fitness is to look at being fit and healthy, so will not look at creating good sports players. The programme will look at how being active can be fun, playing games, learning new skills but not being sport specific. The programme is uncompetitive. It is key to get parents involved to encourage activity outside of the school environment.

AIM:

To improve the fitness levels of participants and their enjoyment and understanding of being active.

The programme:

- School based
- Target group of children who are less likely to participate in activity particularly those who are not keen on "sports"
- Target group may include children with weight issues, or low self esteem
- Work with parents and carers for 1 session per week
- Non-competitive, low-level aerobic activities
- Aim to offer 3 activity sessions a week (2 after school, 1 lunch time?)
- Uses a "journal" with families to enable other lifestyle areas to be monitored

Physical Activity Sessions

What do these include?

These sessions should include the following:

- Multi-skills these cover:
 - Agility
 - Balance
 - Co-ordination
 - Basic ball skills
- Aerobic exercise to improve the aerobic fitness
- Flexibility
- Weight-bearing – e.g. skipping, gymnastics
- Games – lots of fun!
- Family activities
- Progression to sport (?)

Multi-skills

These are non-sport specific activities that are designed to improve the basic skills needed to be physically active and to later compete in sport. It is also thought that they can help increase body awareness and may help improve confidence to participate.

Aerobic

Aerobic fitness improves cardiovascular system more effectively than any other type of physical activity. To work in the aerobic zone participants should see an increase in breathing rate, heart should beat at a faster pace. Participants should work at approximately 60-80% of their maximum heart rate; if the participant is out of breath they are working at the wrong level and should work at a lower level. A way to judge this easily with children is that they should be able to talk to a friend while continuing to exercise or to be able to sing along to music reasonably well. It is also thought that working in this zone is the most appropriate for weight loss purposes.

Flexibility and weight-bearing

These activities are essential for children as it helps to develop and strengthen bones and muscles while they are growing and can help to promote stronger bones later in life.

Games and family activities

It is important to show the fun side of physical activity and all activities we do should be fun, using games to be active is key. Activities suitable for the whole family will help the continuation of physical activity outside of the programme and in the future.

Progression to sport

If during the programme children have found interest in particular sports it is important to encourage this and help them to progress onto taking part and learning this sport with appropriate information and skills where possible.

Rockport Walking Test Protocol

To assess the success of the programme we will need to test fitness before the start of the programme and compare with fitness at the end of a set period. We are interested not solely in reducing obesity levels but also at an improvement in fitness. A key part of a person's fitness is their aerobic fitness (or capacity) increasing this can not only help improve body composition and reduce weight, but can increase heart size allowing the heart to cope more effectively with high levels of exercise. Links have been shown with reduction of major diseases such as CHD and diabetes. Fitness levels will be calculated using an appropriate fitness test.

The fitness test we plan to use is the *Rockport Walking Test* this is a sub-maximal aerobic fitness field test. This test requires participants to walk at a fast pace (no running or jogging) for a mile, the time it takes them to complete this will be recorded, along with their body mass, age and heart rate as they finish the assessment. Using these results we can calculate their aerobic fitness and compare the level to normal values for their age and sex. This test should take a maximum of approximately 20 minutes.

Rockport walking test requires the following equipment:

- 400 metre track or a measured 1 mile walk
- stopwatch (preferably one for each participant)
- Heart rate monitor (not essential if happy to calculate pulse)
- Scales

To complete the test participants must:

- Be weighed prior to starting, they should be weighed with the clothes (including shoes) that they will wear during the test,
- Walk for a mile at a fast pace (not running or jogging) this should be timed for each participant (400 metre track 4 times around the inside lane)
- At the end of the mile the participants heart rate should be recorded
- These results should be noted and can be used to calculate $VO_2\max$ if required.

Equation for calculating $VO_2\max$:

$$VO_2\max = 6.9652 + (0.0091 \times \text{Weight}) - (0.0257 \times \text{Age}) + (0.5955 \times \text{Gender}) - (0.244 \times \text{Time}) - (0.0115 \times \text{Heart rate})$$

Gender: male = 1, female = 0

Programme plan

Activity Ideas – Aerobic sessions

Warm ups

1. Catch the rain

Equipment: A large amount of rounded markers

Get some children to scatter the markers over a large area. Half should be the right way up, the other half upside down. Tell the children to imagine it is raining. Team A, want to catch the rain in the upside down markers, so they must rush around, turning them all upside down. The Team B doesn't want to catch the rain so their mission is to turn them back the right way! Both teams do this for a set time and then the markers are compared to see which team has the most their way up. Repeat as desired. It's really not as chaotic as it sounds!

2. Robbing the Nest

Equipment: Hoops and Tennis balls

You will need 4 teams and 5 hoops with about 12 tennis balls. One member of each team collects a ball from the central hoop and takes it to their team hoop. Then the next member to collect a ball and bring it back. Once all the balls have disappeared from the central hoop, teams need to steal balls from the other teams. The winners are the team who collects 4 balls in their hoop first.

3. Heads I Win

Equipment: Two balls

Description: The players are divided into two teams and each team has a ball. The game starts by throwing the ball high into the air. The idea of the game is to prevent the ball from hitting the ground. No player may touch the ball more than twice in a row. When the ball hits the ground that team is out and the other team score a point. Play continues for a set time and the team with the highest score wins.

4. Beans

Explain to children the actions required when certain beans are called:

Broad Bean – make your body into as wide a shape as possible

Jumping Bean – jump around the area

Baked Bean – lay down on the floor like your sunbathing

Jelly Bean – shake like Jelly
Runner Bean – run on the spot

Then ask children to walk around the area and do the required actions when called – progress to a jog. You can progress this by introducing new beans – what actions can they think of (French bean, Chili Bean etc.)

Activity Sessions

First session – fun games

For this initial session use the warm up games above just to start children moving at their own pace. This will also give you a chance to see the difference in fitness of the children as they take part in the activities. It's also a really fun way to get the group use to each other.

Effects of exercise

Pair children of different ages together, where possible, to help younger children complete this task. This exercise can be found in your "Active Club" pack. It asks children to walk with a partner, go for a brisk walk, jog and then run. They should think about what they feel after each session e.g. hot, warm, breathing harder. This will help children have an understanding of what levels they should be doing (you will be able to point out at which stage was the right one for them to work) this will vary depending on the child's fitness levels.

Skipping

Equipment: Skipping Ropes (variety of long and short), music and player (optional)

Skipping is not only a great aerobic exercise; it is also brilliant for helping strengthen children's bones and muscles. It is recommended that children should take part in some type of weight-bearing activity such as skipping once every week. The other benefit of skipping is that it is something children can do on their own and equipment is cheap. There is obviously a variety of skipping activities you can do - your BHF Active Club pack has some brilliant instruction cards on this. From very simple activities such as "Wiggly Worm" and your basic two foot jump, to long rope skipping, double dutch and partner skipping. It is accessible to all - a session should allow children to see some progress and improve confidence they can also work towards their 1,000 skips certificate (also in your pack) at home/school after they've learnt some new skills.

(Fun) Aerobic circuits

Your “Active Club” pack has guidelines for setting up some fun circuits that will work your pupil’s aerobic system. These involve working together in small groups or pairs. We recommend you use the following activities to set up mini fun circuits:

Beanbag pick-up (111 Active club card)

Jump to it (113 Active Club card)

Ball roll (Aim to roll a ball around waist as many times as possible – use smaller balls to make it more difficult)

Skipping – see how many skips they can do (more advanced skippers can pick harder skips)

Pupils can aim to go round the circuit 2/3 times in the session – they can then see if they have improved.

Wake and Shake

Equipment: Music and player, Wake up shake up DVD and CD (optional), TV/projector to view DVD (optional)

Many schools are using wake and shake – for children who are less active some of these routines may be daunting. Learning a new routine before the rest of the school uses this is not only a brilliant aerobic work out but also a huge boost to self confidence. This will obviously depend on what routines your school has already used – try using one of the simpler routines initially such as the “Don’t stop me now routine” or find a song your groups likes and get them to make their own routine. They can then teach other people at school.

Playing games

At some point in school sport children will be expected to participate in team games. At this point the group should be comfortable with each other and happy enough to play in teams (however ensure that teams are picked fairly no-one picked last). Use your active club pack to look at different games and use the making games section to get children to adapt games to their teams abilities. Introduce a variety, so no one game is played for too long, this will mean if a child is not particularly good at one game they will quickly move onto another. E.g. Ultimate Frisbee, mini rounders, mini volleyball. Also the inclusive games in the pack can be brilliant to help level the players abilities.

Activity Ideas – Family Session

Warm ups

A general warm up may be more appropriate initially with parents e.g. Jog gently or walk quickly, stretches, knee lifts etc. You could progress to playing some of the warm up games mentioned in the aerobic session.

Activity Sessions

Parachute games

Parachute games are brilliant for the first family session – they are not competitive in any manner and do not involve vigorous physical activity. They are low level and you can increase the activity depending on how the session goes. They are also brilliant for ice breakers and getting the group comfortable with each other.

Treasure hunts/orienteering

Try setting up Treasure hunt/orienteering session for children and parents/carers. They can work in small groups or as parent/child pairs. This is great for children and parents/carers to be active together and to work as a team. This could be set up around the school grounds or possible trip to a different location e.g. woods.

Team building games

Use a variety of team building games with parents/carers together – these should not be particularly strenuous just slightly active and encouraging them to work together. Use a selection of activities all should be relatively simple. Try Human knot, overhead knot, alphabet people etc. The games you can use will vary on your group.

Adventure walk

Ask children and parents to walk around the area you are in. Give them a list of objects to find as a pair. They need to try and be first back, this will encourage them to speed up their walking. This is however giving them the perfect

opportunity to complete a task they could easily do at home, and the opportunity to spend time together while being active.

Games

Play some simple games without emphasis being on winning, you may choose to do adults against children to see how they react. Simple games such as rounders, Frisbee, mini-football, or get the children to teach the adults to play a game they have developed in their aerobic session.

Final session

This is a good opportunity to introduce families to something different – different people may be able to help you with this. How about yoga, dance, or cycling. Maybe ask families activities they would be interested in and get a coach in for the most popular activity. The programme is about promoting continued physical activity and giving them the opportunity to try something new in an environment that is safer can help develop this.

Activity Ideas – Multi-skills

Multi-skills sessions should be run by a member of staff who is multi-skilled trained and has had experience of this. We can help you to organise training for staff if required. The sessions will obviously depend on the skills and abilities of your participants. The participant with the lowest ability should be able to keep up with the rest of the group, you may need to extend the exercise slightly for the more able.