

**PLAY LIKE
A CHAMPION
TODAY**

Character Education Through Sports

Champion Parent Note

Educating Parents and Developing Champion Athletes

Physical Literacy

We are all familiar with the concepts of physical activity and physical education, but a new term for sport parents to become aware of is **physical literacy**. Dr. Margaret Whitehead is recognized by many as the lead authority in this field. Whitehead describes this concept *“as a disposition to capitalize on our human-embodied capability wherein the individual has the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and understanding to value and take responsibility for maintaining purposeful physical pursuits and activities throughout the life course.”*



Dr. Whitehead outlined the major trends and concerns in our world today that point to the need to place emphasis on lifelong engagement in physical activity:

- Fewer people are continuing physical activity after leaving school.
- Sedentary leisure pursuits are on the rise (electronic gaming).
- Cases of obesity and stress-related conditions are increasing.
- In many schools and other physical activity settings, there is a move toward high-level performance as the principal focus, rather than participation and movement.



In addition to the clear physical benefits, Dr. Whitehead highlights psychological reasons for being physically literate. These individuals will achieve an enhanced quality of life related to the development of:

- Self-esteem.
- Self-confidence.
- More positive relationships with others.

Important for our *Play Like a Champion* community is that the literature emphasizes that support offered by teachers, coaches, parents, and peers is paramount in promoting physical literacy. Since we are social beings who become our best-selves through our relationships, it is important for those who have responsibility for forming children to encourage and assist them in embracing lifelong fitness pursuits.

Parents here’s what you can do to encourage habits of health and physical activity:

- Ask your child about his/her Physical Education (PE) class and take an interest in what they are learning about movement and fitness in school.
- Expose your child to a variety of movement activities such as running, leaping, cycling, jumping, dancing, swimming, etc.
- Encourage your child to try multiple sports and sample new sports when possible.
- Put the emphasis of sport participation on the *joy of participation*, de-emphasizing the outcome of your child’s performance.
- Encourage your child to always have fun with and enjoy physical activity.
- Praise your child for the effort they put forth in a physical activity. This increases their confidence and encourages continued participation.
- Set a positive example of engaging in regular physical fitness yourself.

Make physical movement a family activity:

- Go for a nightly family walk or a weekend family bike ride together.
- Play catch with your child.
- Have a family relay race or run/walk a 5K together.



Contrary to a popular culture that places the emphasis on children becoming elite athletes, a sport parent’s ultimate goal should be for their child’s athletic journey to in-grain in them the skills, knowledge, habits, confidence, and desire to continue participating in physical activity throughout that child’s entire life. This will encourage healthy development as a

whole person. Embracing physical literacy will make your child and our world a healthier and happier place!

*I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and whoever lives and believes in me shall never die.
~ John 11:25-26*

Preparing Students for a Physically Literate Life



E. Paul Roetert
Dean Williams
Terry S. Ellsworth
Chief, Recreation

The author references the concept of physical literacy, the notion that all people should have the opportunity to be physically literate. Physical literacy is the ability to move with confidence and competence in a variety of physical activities. It is a holistic concept that encompasses physical, mental, and emotional well-being. The author emphasizes that physical literacy is not just about physical fitness, but also about the joy and benefits of movement. He encourages parents and educators to support children's physical literacy by providing opportunities for active play and movement throughout the day.

Paul Roetert is a person well versed on the topic of physical literacy. The new Director of Education and Strategic Engagement for the NCAA's Sport Science Institute, Paul recently served as the CEO of the Society of Health and Physical Educators, known as SHAPE America, an organization dedicated to promoting active, healthy lifestyles. Paul has written numerous articles on Physical Literacy. [Coaches and parents will find this article helpful.](#) Paul will lead off Saturday's session at our annual **Play Like a Champion Today Conference** with a Keynote Address on *The Benefits of Multi-Sport Participation*. We hope you will join us!

[Click Here to Learn More About Paul & Other Conference Speakers](#)

A Prayer for Sports Parents

Dear Lord, thank you for the opportunity to move... for legs to run and jump, for arms to throw and hands to catch. Help me place a positive emphasis on participation in all physical activities for the joy it brings to one's body, mind and soul. Give me the confidence and desire to set a positive example for my children that physical activity is fun and necessary for whole happiness in life. Amen.



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PO Box 72, Notre Dame, IN 46556 | information@playlikeachampion.org
www.playlikeachampion.org

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