

## ARTICLE REVIEWED

### SKIPping With PALS: Exploring Parental Engagement in a Motor Intervention for Their Preschool Children

Brian, A., Taunton Miedema, S., Starrett, A., Griffin, S., Stribing, A., Miedema, B., Walker, M., Casner, C., Wainwright, N., Wadsworth, D., Goodway, J. D., & Stodden, D. F. (2022). SKIPping with PALS: Exploring parental engagement in a motor intervention for their preschool children. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 1-10, <https://doi.org/10.1080/02701367.2022.2041538>

#### THE PROBLEM

Motor skills interventions can be effective for enhancing preschool children's fundamental motor skills (FMS) and physical activity (PA) (Palmer et al., 2019; Palmer et al., 2020). Many researchers have implemented motor skills interventions (Van Capelle et al., 2017). However, questions arise when considering the feasibility and validity of having experts such as researchers or trained coaches deliver motor skills interventions. Thus, there is a need to explore how other individuals, such as parents, can implement interventions and teach children about FMS and PA.



#### Research Summary

The SKIPping with PALS intervention lasted 6 months from September 2019 to February 2020. Parents attended monthly training sessions at their child's early childhood center. The trainings were one hour in duration and consisted of two parts. During the first 30 minutes, parents learned about the importance of motor skill development and movement. During the second 30 minutes, parents and their children participated in activities that included the previously learned skills. Parents were instructed to do the activities with their child once per week and to be physically active with their child for at least 30 minutes daily. Activities, instructions, video demonstrations, and equipment were available for parents to deliver the intervention at home. The Test of Gross Motor Development-3 was used to measure children's FMS (i.e., locomotor, manipulative skills) before and after the intervention, and the Movband 4 was used to measure children's PA (i.e., steps) for six weeks during the intervention. Parents also completed surveys at each monthly session.

#### Conclusion

For every SKIPping with PALS session attended by parents, children's locomotor skills increased by 1.87 points. Children's manipulative skills also improved by 1.95 points when parents attended a session. Children's steps increased 1,455 steps for each session attended by parents. Seventy five percent of parents reported doing the activities at least one day a week and instructed their child to be physically active daily. Most of the parents (85%) enjoyed attending the sessions and 95% of them enjoyed doing the activities with their child. More than 65% of parents reported a greater understanding of children's movement and 45% said they would continue with the intervention after it finished.

#### Key Takeaway

Involving parents and training them to deliver the SKIPping with PALS intervention is a viable approach to teaching children about FMS and PA. The authors recommended that parents attend a minimum of four sessions to promote change. This intervention shows that parents are willing to learn about how they can enhance their child's FMS and PA to develop healthy habits at an early age.

#### ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Palmer, K. K., Chinn, K. M., & Robinson, L. E. (2019). The effect of the CHAMP intervention on fundamental motor skills and outdoor physical activity in preschoolers. *Journal of Sport and Health Sciences* 8(2), 98-105. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jshs.2018.12.003>

Palmer, K. K., Harkavy, D., Rock, S. M., & Robinson, L. E. (2020). Boys and girls have similar gains in fundamental motor skills across a preschool motor intervention. *Journal of Motor Learning and Development*, 8(3), 569-579. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jmld.2019-0043>

Van Capelle A., Broderick C. R., van Doorn, N., Ward, R. E., & Parmenter, B. J. (2017). Interventions to improve fundamental motor skills in pre-school aged children: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Science and Medicine in Sport*, 20(7), 658-666. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsams.2016.11.008>