

# Physical Activity in Primary School

## - Is there a best practice?

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### Introduction

In accordance with the Norwegian Education Act, all Norwegian schools are obliged to facilitate the completion of 76 hours of physical activity (FYSAK) for pupils at intermediate level (5th-7th grade). These hours must be in addition to the physical education lessons.

The Directorate of Education set seven minimum requirements for school owners to implement the scheme:

1. The activity must be physically and mentally health-promoting
2. The activity should give the pupils joy and a sense of mastery
3. The activity should contribute to improving the motor skills
4. Arrangements must be made for various activities that provide a varied school day
5. The activities must be regular
6. All pupils must be given the opportunity to participate regardless of functional ability or other prerequisites
7. The activity shall promote social competence

(Utdanningsdirektoratet, 2022 february)

In 2016, the National Center for Food, Health and Physical Activity made a report on research and evaluations about FYSAK since the scheme's inception in 2009 (Nasjonalt senter for mat helse og fysisk aktivitet, 2016). This action research project follow up on this report.

### Aim and objectives for the study

The purpose of this empirical research is to survey whether the minimum requirements in the legislation is followed up, how the scheme is implemented and to increase knowledge of appropriate procedures to facilitate the physical activity scheme ( FYSAK) in schools.

The main aim is to look for a best practice on how to implement the scheme.

### Methods

A collaborative educational action research project. A digital survey was used to collect data for the initial part of the project. All of the primary schools (n=10) in a selected Norwegian municipality was invited to participate. The survey is a follow-up on six weeks of observation of FYSAK at a local school collaborating with student teachers, teachers and the school management.



Photo: Colourbox

### Findings (as of 02.06.24)

Preliminary results based on data from the survey (n=4):

- Little knowledge of the seven minimum requirements
- Variations in levels of competency and formal physical education background
- Little to non continuing education or further education
- Evaluation is implemented every second year or not at all
- Free play: average 30 %
- A good variety of activities and arenas are implemented
- Challenges related to activating large groups of pupils at the same time

### Conclusions

There are signs of a lack of knowledge of the minimum requirements, hence they are not being followed during the planning phase. A combination of free play and teacher-led activities, time of day being carried out and an ample variation in activities seems to be factors of importance for motivating, participating and being successful in implementing the scheme.

Targeted measures, including offers for continuing education, exchange of experience between schools and raising awareness of the purpose of FYSAK, may be necessary to achieve the intended goals of promoting physical and mental health, joy, mastery and social competence among pupils to an even greater extent.

### References

Nasjonalt senter for mat helse og fysisk aktivitet (2016). Rapport: Kartlegging av forskning og evaluering. Innføring av 76 timer fysisk aktivitet på 5.-7.trinn.

Utdanningsdirektoratet (2022, february). Rett til fysisk aktivitet Udir-11-2009

<https://www.udir.no/regelverketstolkninger/opplaring/Innhold-i-opplaringen/udir-11-2009-rett-til-fysisk-aktivitet>

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