Physical activity - hearing children’s voices: why and how?

Other

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**INTRODUCTION**

- In 2015, only 22% of children in England met the government’s guidelines for physical activity (PA) (NHS Digital, 2016).
- The transition to secondary school can be difficult for some children, increasing the risk of mental health problems (e.g. anxiety and depression) whilst PA levels often decrease further (Rice et al., 2011).
- The number of children experiencing mental health problems through the transition has increased during the Covid-19 pandemic (Bagnall et al., 2022).

**OBJECTIVES**

1. Engage with children's voices to better understand what makes a PA experience positive or negative through the transition into secondary school.
2. Engage with children's voices to determine how the transition into secondary school can impact access to, motivation towards, and participation in PA.
3. Use the findings to inform schools, parents, sport governing bodies and government on what children need from PA experiences to support their continued motivation and participation.

**AIMS**

- To explore children’s thoughts and perspectives on PA to understand how to provide engaging PA experiences for them as they transition into secondary school and beyond.
- To determine in a post-pandemic world what children need from PA experiences to ensure their continued motivation and participation.

**RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

How can it be ensured that the physical activity (PA) children can access supports their transition from primary to secondary school?

Sub-Questions:
1. What sort of PA activities engage children as they transition from primary to secondary school?
2. How do these PA sessions vary across children?
3. How does the process of transition from primary to secondary school influence children’s PA preferences?
4. What can children's experiences of the pandemic tell us about their PA preferences?

**METHODOLOGY**

- Qualitative Inquiry
- Case Study Design
- Participatory Methods
- Creative & Thematic Data Analysis

A participatory approach to research does not just allow the participants to voice their views, it involves research with, rather than on the participants, leading to the co-construction of knowledge and a shared understanding of the meanings identified (Wilkinson and Wilkinson, 2018).

The children will be given a range of materials allowing all of them the chance to share their experiences in the way that best suits them.

Data will be collected through multiple methods, including the children’s artefacts, audio and video recordings, observations, field notes and follow-up interviews – This draws upon Clark and Moss’s (2011) Mosaic Approach.

The children will be engaged by choosing from a range of methods or creating their own. Some options include: map-making, drawing, collage, story-writing, peer interviewing and role play.

Each child will interpret their own data through an individual discussion with me, based around the artefact they produced.

I will interpret my field notes, observations, audio and video recordings and link my findings to the children’s own interpretations.

**REFERENCES**


