**Using the APPLE Model in My Playroom**

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*Active for Life has partnered with* [*The Early Years Physical Literacy Research Team*](https://www.earlyyearsphysicalliteracy.com/) *to study the impact of physical literacy programming on infants and young children. One of the tools early childhood educators (ECEs) use in the study is* [*The APPLE Model*](https://activeforlife.com/apple-model-early-childhood-education/) *(Active Play and Physical Literacy Every Day), along with a program called* [*APPLE Seeds*](https://www.earlyyearsphysicalliteracy.com/apple-seeds-program)*, a 12-week program of activities designed to help young children develop fundamental movement skills. Here’s one ECE’s story about how the APPLE Model and the APPLE Seeds program has helped her centre incorporate more active play throughout children’s days.*

The concept of Physical Literacy was difficult to understand at first, but once the APPLE Model was introduced it made sense and justified how I have wanted to guide the children in my care. The Model has given me the freedom to let the children learn through their play about who they are, what they want and need. It gives me the opportunity to provide a variety of self-directed activities and an enriched environment both indoor and outdoor that allows the children to develop their skills and abilities.

To help parents and other staff better understand physical literacy, I designed a bulletin board to simplify the concepts and show them what was involved.

The APPLE Model allowed me to break down how Physical Literacy was to be implemented and why. Looking at one piece of the “APPLE” at a time allowed for staff and parents to have a greater understanding and acceptance.

I produced a giant apple out of bristol board and stapled it to the parent board. Around the outside of the apple, I posted the layers of the apple in four sections (environment, play, engagement, and relationships). I then added pictures of the children participating in some of the activities from the APPLE Seeds program. Every couple of weeks I would add new pictures and more explanations (point form) of the skills and abilities the children were working on and achieving.

Using the three fundamental skills, stability, locomotor, and manipulative descriptions provided in the APPLE Seeds, gave a basic understanding for parents and staff on the movements, skills, and abilities that I had shown or described. It also helped to show the parents that the activities could be both structured and unstructured, that they could create an activity or game with equipment or as simple as climbing a structure or snow hill.

The inner core of the APPLE model is the motivation, confidence, and competency to move.

The most important piece of the APPLE Model for me was the confidence to move. In the many years of being in this field, that is the one element that I have tried to encourage the most.

I have seen many children who have been afraid, unsure, hesitant or will not try any new experiences. Even in the child care field there have been a lot of rules, licensing requirements, and staff who are unsure or concerned about various safety issues — a lot of “stop,” “don’t,” “get down,” or “it’s not safe.”

The APPLE Model and APPLE Seeds program has encouraged my staff and me to be more open to the children trying different things that have not been allowed before or that we were scared of. This has also meant that the children are more free, excited and explore things at an earlier age, which increases their self-confidence to move even more.

Since being involved in this program I have seen a great change in the children, staff, and room. I have children who are only one year old who are climbing, moving, and participating in activities that the two- and three-year-old children are doing. The experiences we have shared have only made the environment, relationships and engagement so much more rewarding.

Another exciting aspect of the APPLE program is the flexibility for the children to discover new ways to utilize materials, activities, and spaces. The educators provide the materials, structure, and methods of the activities but then let the children experience them in their own way. This has allowed for creativity, imagination, and less involvement from educators who may feel they need to guide or direct the children’s play. It has allowed my staff and me to open our minds, expand, and learn from the children.