

Are you ready? Physical readiness is there a mismatch in understanding and knowledge?

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The Family and Childcare Trust (2017) have highlighted concerns from policymakers and head teachers about the perceived lack of 'school readiness' among large numbers of young children when they enter the first year of primary (elementary) school. The majority of previous research has focused on young children's cognitive, social-emotional and behavioural readiness for school (Whitebread and Bingham, 2011). In contrast, there has been a paucity of research, which asks what it means to be physically ready for the demands of formal schooling. This paper seeks to address this gap in knowledge and understanding. It will explore primary teachers' and practitioners' beliefs about 'physical readiness' at the beginning of school life, which in England can be as early as just after the child's 4th birthday.

Ofsted (2014) identified that in over one in eight young children settings from disadvantaged areas, children were arriving with low levels of physical development on entry. Some children were up to 12 months behind in their development and could not manage activities such as; riding a trike / scooter / throwing / catching / kicking. School readiness in the physical development sense has been defined by NAHT and Family and Childcare Trust (2017) identify physical development readiness as issues with coordination, control and movement.

The paper will questions if there is a mismatch within practice between early years' practitioners expectations of what children can physically do and how they move, as they exit their care and then what primary education teachers expect the children in terms of physical development and 'readiness' to enter their care and school setting. It is believed that there is a potential mismatch of understanding and knowledge. The paper will offer novel perspectives of practice and support potential developments that are needed to support both our workforce and our children's physical development.