

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by Chief Education Officer

Education Services Committee: Wednesday 18th September 2024

Subject: Early Years Sport and Physical Activity Programme

1. Purpose

1.1 This report has been written at the request of council, from their meeting held on Wednesday 19th June 2024, to consider how an appropriate sport and physical activity programme can be delivered within Early Years.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that Committee notes:

2.1 Our Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) staff are skilled in delivering appropriate sport and physical activities in line with early level national guidance, specifically, the Curriculum for Excellence, Early Level, Health and Wellbeing (Physical).

3. Background

3.1 Over a number of years, across all Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings West Dunbartonshire Leisure delivered a Sport and Physical Activity Programme.

4. Main Issues

4.1 This session, there is no longer funding available to continue this programme.

4.2 Within the national curriculum, Curriculum for Excellence, it is the expectation, at the early level, that children develop their skills in relation to Health and Wellbeing (Physical Education), in the areas of physical competencies, cognitive skills, personal qualities and physical fitness. In WDC our own skilled staff work with this national curriculum and are competent in providing a wide range of appropriate activities and experiences to support our children work towards achieving the early level.

4.3 Through recent consultation with a range of staff we are confident that they have the necessary skills and competencies to provide relevant and appropriate sports and physical activities for the children within our ELC settings. While staff are disappointed that the leisure trust programme will no longer run they are confident in delivering sports and physical activity experiences to children.

- Staff believe that they understand very well that gross physical motor skills take a long time, and a lot of practice, to develop. They are aware of the

vestibular system, which gives us our sense of balance and spatial awareness, and that the best way to help babies and young children develop this vestibular system is through providing daily opportunities for physical play, especially outdoors.

- Within our settings staff provide a wide range of physical experiences for children, such as, balancing, throwing and catching, crawling, core developments, ball skills, running, jumping, climbing, dancing, skipping, coordination, obstacle courses, sports' day events and learning about different sports. Some also provided the children with swimming, cycling and yoga.
- All settings provide access to the outdoors on a daily basis.
- ELC staff also are skilled in observing, planning, monitoring, tracking and identifying next steps for learning in this area of the curriculum.

4.4 When discussed with staff, some views were:

- 'I feel the staff team have a good understanding of child physical development and how to tailor different experiences to individual children's physical needs and abilities whilst providing challenge, and, encouraging risk assessing.'
- 'We need resources which will challenge older children, our climbing equipment is too small for the majority of our children.'
- 'Staff are all experienced in supporting children's health and wellbeing and gross physical motor skills.'
- 'Children have daily opportunities which is tracked through weekly planning, it is also captured in children's individual learning journeys, milestones, HWB cross cutting skills trackers and personal plans.'
- 'We provide a range of experiences for children to develop physical skills.'
- 'We will no longer have sports development input therefore we plan to access the gym hall/ sports hub to continue weekly sports input.'

5. People Implications

- 5.1** We will continue to monitor and evaluate staff skills. Where any settings identify that specific training is required for some staff in relation to providing physical activity experiences this could be sourced, initially from within their Local Learning Community.

6. Financial and Procurement Implications

- 6.1** Over time sports and physical resources will require to be upgraded or replaced. Settings should prioritise the funding of these resources from their own budget if required and grant funding could be explored for larger purchases.

7. Risk Analysis

- 7.1** The Key Risks:

Ensuring that all settings regularly monitor and self evaluate children's physical experiences to maintain high quality and enable children to continue to make good progress in this area of the curriculum.

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

8.1 There was no requirement to undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment for the purposes of this report as it is providing an update for Committee.

9. Consultation

9.1 Consultation with Early Learning and Childcare staff and children has taken place, and, will continue on a regular basis, in this area through a range of ways, such as, gathering views, questionnaires, setting observations, internal and external scrutiny.

9.2 Legal Services, Finance and the Section 95 Officer have been consulted in relation to the content of this report.

10. Strategic Assessment

10.1 This report reflects the Council's aspiration to have resilient and thriving communities, where health and wellbeing remains a priority and residents are supported to increase life and learning skills. Additionally, it provides a strong and flourishing economy which is adaptable and focused on delivering best value. These are some of the strategic priorities for 2022-2027.

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Background Papers: none

Wards Affected: All

