



FA Active Literacy Primary Playgrounds



For All

In March 2017, the Football Association (FA) launched their strategy 'A Gameplan for Growth' which aims to double participation in girls' and women's football across England by 2020. But why is the strategy needed?



(i) 2014 Football Participation – quantitative research

(ii) The psychological and emotional benefits of playing football on girls and women in Europe (April 2017)

(iii) The Gameplan for Growth: The FA's strategy for Women's and Girls' Football 2017-2020

(iv) Stead & Neville 2010

What is FA Active Literacy – Primary Playgrounds?

The Active Literacy programme is an initiative set up by the FA in partnership with the National Literacy Trust to improve the literacy skills of children through sport themed activities. The programme targets girls aged 5-8 years with the hope that the link between football and literacy helps to engage young girls into football; a fresh way to sell the sport and make it appealing to them. The activities are built around creative play and each girl will receive a creative workbook to complete and support their learning. There will be three stories that the Activator will work through with the girls.

Why should schools participate?

The FA active literacy programme supports 'the beginner girl' in developing their fundamental movement skills and patterns which are often a barrier to these children engaging in physical activity. The approach taken develops fundamental movement skills through the medium of creative play and literature. It is hoped that through the programme these girls will grow in confidence which will lead to them become more physically active in the playground and engaging in a wider range of activities.

Each school will:

- Receive three storybooks plus 20 copies of a home activity book, for the girls to do with their families.
- Receive training for a member of staff, who will be the Activator or will be supporting the Activator in school.

The ideal Activator will:

1. Be able to understand and adapt sessions to individual needs and ability; be familiar with delivering to a session plan.
2. Be able to make the girls feel like they are in a safe/comfortable environment; can manage group dynamics and be comfortable with creative play.
3. Have a fun and creative mindset; can tell a story and bring it to life, and be able to engage the most disengaged.

The club can be run by playground leaders or young leaders from a local secondary school, but these groups will require a large amount of support from the member of staff who attended the training to maximise impact on the participating girls.

The pilot found that:

- Secondary school Young Leaders struggled to feed the imaginations of the girls and were uncomfortable with creative play.
- Primary school playground leaders could drive imagination, but they were too inexperienced to manage group dynamics.

What are the outcomes?

For the practitioner:

- Understand how to deliver creative, fun and engaging physical activity sessions for girls.
- Ready-made resources to help children achieve the recommended daily target of 60 active minutes per day.
- Engage parents and carers to embed the activities within the setting and home environment.

For the young people:

- Become more engaged and inspired to participate in physical activity, and improve speaking and listening skills.
- Embraces locomotion (agility), stability (balance), object control (coordination), body confidence and positive body image.
- Develops character traits (i.e. resilience, empathy, aspiration).

Training

The training will be delivered locally via a three hour training workshop theory- and practical-based learning. Organisation of the training will be led by the School Sports Partnership, with Youth Sport Trust facilitating the booking system and tutor arrangements.

Assessing Impact

In order for us to assess the number of girls engaged in the programme, each school will be asked to submit their data three times over the course of the academic year – four weeks before the end of the autumn, spring and summer term.

Each school will need to give:

- The number of girls participating
- The age, diversity and SEN breakdown of the girls.
- The number of girls trying football for the first time (a definition will be given at the training).

We are also coordinating an independent evaluation of the programme. The researchers will select a representative group of schools to work with across the academic year.

