



**International Organisation of  
Physical Therapists in Paediatrics**

In this, the first newsletter of the International Organisation of Physical Therapists in Paediatrics (IOPTP) you will find messages from the President, Secretary and Treasurer as well as the names and contact details for the different committees of the IOPTP.

You will also find information about the upcoming World Physical Therapy Day. The theme for this day is Movement for Health and this year the focus is on obesity which is rapidly becoming major issue in child health both in the developed and developing world. To complement the toolkit provided by WCPT to member organisations on ways to ways to promote the theme for this year, you will find information and links to resources on obesity in childhood and the importance of physical activity in combating childhood problems of overweight and obesity.



Barbara Connolly President IOPTP, Bert Aukema, President of the Dutch Association for Paediatric Physiotherapy, Sheree York, Secretary IOPTP

### **President's message**

Welcome to the first newsletter for the International Organisation of Physical Therapists in Paediatrics! Only one short year ago, our organization was approved in Vancouver by the WCPT. Today, we have 20 member organisations that have joined as founding members of the IOPTP. We anticipate that we have over 9,000 individual physical therapists represented in these founding organisations.

Our first year has been filled with organization activities such as establishing a website through the WCPT which will allow us to communicate with our members much easier. Our web master, Toby Long, has plans to add the following to our web site:

- Lists and links to paediatric physical therapy journals
- Lists and links to international paediatric PT conferences
- Links to other paediatric PT groups' websites (ie the Section on Pediatrics of the APTA site)
- Resource lists - books, videos, etc
- The IOPTP newsletter

We have also worked diligently in setting up a bank account so that dues can be collected to support activities of the IOPTP. Even more important, we have now filled all committee chair positions, as well as committee member positions. We anticipate that the committees will become fully functional within the coming year. Some of the committees have already begun collecting information, which will be shared with our membership, on topics such as entry level education in paediatrics in the member organisations and the role of paediatric physical therapists in educational settings.

I hope that each of you will be willing to participate in activities of the IOPTP when possible and support the IOPTP as we attempt to network physical therapists in paediatrics around the world.

Barbara H. Connolly PT, DPT, EdD, FAPTA  
President. IOPTP

## Report from the Secretary

I am so pleased to be serving as your secretary of the IOPTP. It is hard to believe that our group was just established in June 2007. Your officers have worked on recruiting member organisations and identifying committee chairs and members. I will serve as the liaison to the communications committee. We will work to provide information through newsletters and on the website. Please let us know if you have ideas or questions. I look forward to working with you through the IOPTP.

Sheree York, PT, MS, PCS  
Secretary, IOPTP

## Report from the Treasurer

I am pleased to be serving as the treasurer of the newly formed IOPTP. My first task was to open a bank account at the Bank of Scotland. This took a number of months due to the complicated logistics that arise when the organisational headquarters are in England, the treasurer of the organisation lives in the Netherlands and the president is in the United States.

At this moment I am focusing on collecting the dues from the 20 original member organisations. I have received payment announcements from Denmark (391 full members), the Netherlands (986 members) and Switzerland (456 members). I hope the other member organisations will follow soon.

The dues are needed to pay for the organisational support from WCPT, such as maintaining the IOPTP website and staying in contact with member organisations through newsletters.

Maria Nijhuis-van der Sanden, PT, PhD  
Treasurer, IOPTP

## World Physical Therapy Day and the epidemic of obesity

*“Physical therapists, as exercise experts, join the worldwide concern for the ever growing epidemic of obesity, which is probably one of the greatest challenges to our health systems around the world in the 21st century.”* Marilyn Moffat, WCPT President

[World Physical Therapy Day](#), which falls on 8th September every year, provides an opportunity for physical therapists from all over the world to raise awareness about the crucial role their profession plays in making and keeping people well, mobile and independent.

The theme for World Physical Therapy Day is Movement for Health. This year the focus is on the ways that physical therapists can counter some of the diseases of civilisation, such as obesity.

The Toolkit has numerous suggestions for ways to raise awareness of the role of movement in promoting health. As an example, suggested events to raise awareness of the importance of physical activity in promoting health for children include:

- Find a way of rewarding children who walk/cycle to school
- Have a walk/cycle to school day
- Give schools the opportunity to set up “walking buses” to school

Overweight and obesity, as well as decreasing levels of physical activity pose health risks for children. Paediatric physical therapists, with their specialised knowledge of typical and atypical movement development have an important role to play in promoting and advising on appropriate

and safe physical activity for children.

## **Obesity and physical activity in children – links and research**

### **WHO Global strategy on diet, physical activity and health**

“Childhood obesity is one of the most serious public health challenges of the 21st century “  
[read more](#)

### **National association for sport and physical education**

Active Start: A Statement of Physical Activity Guidelines for Children Birth to Five Years  
[read more](#)

### **Australia’s Physical Activity recommendations for children and young people**

[read more](#)

**van Sluijs EM, McMinn AM, Griffin SJ` (2007)** Effectiveness of interventions to promote physical activity in children and adolescents: systematic review of controlled trials. BMJ. 6;335(7622):703. [Full text](#)

The conclusion of this systematic review was that there was some evidence for “potentially effective strategies to increase children's levels of physical activity. For adolescents, multicomponent interventions and interventions that included both school and family or community involvement have the potential to make important differences to levels of physical activity and should be promoted. The lack of high quality evaluations hampered conclusions concerning effectiveness, especially among children.”

**Strong WB, Malina RM, Blimkie CJ, Daniels SR, Dishman RK, Gutin B, Hergenroeder AC, Must A, Nixon PA, Pivarnik JM, Rowland T, Trost S, Trudeau F.** (2005) Evidence based physical activity for school-age youth. J Pediatr.146(6):732-7

For a copy of this article e-mail [wstrong003@comcast.net](mailto:wstrong003@comcast.net)

#### **Abstract**

**OBJECTIVES:** To review the effects of physical activity on health and behavior outcomes and develop evidence-based recommendations for physical activity in youth. **STUDY DESIGN:** A systematic literature review identified 850 articles; additional papers were identified by the expert panelists. Articles in the identified outcome areas were reviewed, evaluated and summarized by an expert panelist. The strength of the evidence, conclusions, key issues, and gaps in the evidence were abstracted in a standardized format and presented and discussed by panelists and organizational representatives. **RESULTS:** Most intervention studies used supervised programs of moderate to vigorous physical activity of 30 to 45 minutes duration 3 to 5 days per week. The panel believed that a greater amount of physical activity would be necessary to achieve similar beneficial effects on health and behavioral outcomes in ordinary daily circumstances (typically intermittent and unsupervised activity). **CONCLUSION:** School-age youth should participate daily in 60 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity that is developmentally appropriate, enjoyable, and involves a variety of activities.

**Timmons BW, Naylor PJ, Pfeiffer KA. (2007)** Physical activity for preschool children--how much and how? Can J Public Health. 98 Suppl 2:S122-34

For a copy of this article e-mail [timmonbw@mcmaster.ca](mailto:timmonbw@mcmaster.ca)

## Abstract

Alarming trends in childhood obesity even among preschool children have re-focused attention on the importance of physical activity in this age group. With this increased attention comes the need to identify the amount and type of physical activity appropriate for optimal development of preschool children. The purpose of this paper is to provide the scientific evidence to support a link between physical activity and biological and psychosocial development during early childhood (ages 2-5 years). To do so, we summarize pertinent literature informing the nature of the physical activity required to promote healthy physical, cognitive, emotional, and social development during these early years. A particular focus is on the interaction between physical activity and motor skill acquisition. Special emphasis is also placed on the nature of physical activity that promotes healthy weight gain during this period of childhood. The paper also discusses the strongest determinants of physical activity in preschool-age children, including the role of the child's environment (e.g., family, child-care, and socio-economic status). We provide recommendations for physical activity based on the best available evidence, and identify future research needs.

**Spurrier NJ, Magarey AA, Golley R, Curnow F, Sawyer MG.** (2008) Relationships between the home environment and physical activity and dietary patterns of preschool children: a cross-sectional study. *Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act.* 30;5:31 [Full text](#)

This study assesses relationships between characteristics of the home environment and preschool children's physical activity and dietary patterns in 280 Australian children. The study found an association between parental physical activity, size of backyard and amount of outdoor play equipment and more outdoor play. Fewer rules about television viewing and presence of play station were associated with more indoor sedentary time. Characteristics of the home environment also contributed to the child's dietary patterns

This study concludes that "physical attributes of the home environment and parental behaviours are associated with preschool children's physical activity, sedentary behaviour and dietary patterns. Many of these variables are modifiable and could be targeted in childhood obesity prevention and management."

**Murphy NA, Carbone PS; American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Children with Disabilities.** (2008) Promoting the participation of children with disabilities in sports, recreation, and physical activities. *Pediatrics.* 121(5):1057-61 [Full text](#)

"This clinical report discusses the importance of physical activity, recreation, and sports participation for children with disabilities and offers practical suggestions to pediatric health care professionals for the promotion of participation."

**Dugan SA.** (2008) Exercise for preventing childhood obesity. *Phys Med Rehabil Clin N Am.* 19(2):205-16, vii.

For a copy of this review article contact [sheila\\_dugan@rush.edu](mailto:sheila_dugan@rush.edu)

## Abstract

"Childhood obesity is a key public health issue in the United States and around the globe in developed and developing countries. Obese children are at increased risk of acute medical illnesses and chronic diseases-in particular, osteoarthritis, diabetes mellitus, and cardiovascular disease, which can lead to poor quality of life; increased personal and financial burden to individuals, families, and society; and shortened lifespan. Physical inactivity and sedentary lifestyle are associated with being overweight in children and adults. Thus it is imperative to consider exercise and physical activity as a means to prevent and combat the childhood obesity epidemic. Familiarity with definitions of weight status in children and health outcomes like metabolic syndrome is crucial in understanding the literature on childhood obesity. Exercise and physical activity play a role in weight from the prenatal through adolescent time frame. A child's

family and community impact access to adequate physical activity, and further study of these upstream issues is warranted. Recommended levels of physical activity for childhood obesity prevention are being developed.”

### Contact details for IOPTP Committees

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