

## THINKING ACTIVE PHYSICAL PLAY SELF-REFLECTION INVENTORY: SHORT FORM

### **A Self-Reflection Inventory for Supporting Young Children's Active Physical Play in Early Childhood Program Settings**

Janice Fletcher, EdD  
Laurel Branen, PhD., R.D., L.D.  
Samantha Ramsay, Ph.D. R.D., L.D.

*The TAPP is a self-reflective inventory for staff in early childhood settings. Use the reflection to think about supporting active physical play for children, ages 24 months through five years old.*

#### **Introduction**

Young children in early childhood settings encounter active physical play environments that include facilities, equipment, routines, and schedules. They develop relationships with peers and staff. The quality of environments and relationships influence a child's opportunity to develop optimum physical strength, flexibility, and endurance.

Achieving good health and enjoying physical activities that support development of physical competence are among the most important rights of children.

#### **What Is Active Physical Play?**

Active physical play includes two parts:

1. Children initiate and practice basic movements, using repetitive physical play. The result is development of physical skills with increased precision, strength, and endurance. These skills include skills such as balancing, crawling, creeping, walking, running, galloping, skipping, hopping, pushing, pulling, lifting, climbing, throwing, and catching.
2. Children initially work to master basic physical skills. Then, they use that foundation to create play themes that helps them maintain, strengthen, and extend those skills.

#### **Seven Guiding Principles for Active Physical Play**

1. Adults set safe, appropriately challenging environments for daily active physical play.
2. Children engage in active physical play to develop their bodies, and for fun and enjoyment.
3. Each child has opportunity for frequent and vigorous active physical play.
4. Each child has time for and support for uninterrupted, sustained play.
5. Each child has access to many and varied active physical play opportunities.
6. Active physical play is supported by adult-child relationships and child-to-child interactions.
7. Adults advocate for children to have opportunities and environments that support active physical play.

## Who Should Use the TAPP Self- Reflection Inventory-Short Form?

This self-reflection is for those who want to address development of competence in physical skills and healthy weight for young children in group settings. Managers and supervisors, teachers, and classroom aides are appropriate users of the TAPP. The TAPP Short Form is for those who want to do a *quick screening* of active play practices.

## Why Should I Use the TAPP Self-Reflection Inventory?

The TAPP-SF can jumpstart your thinking about environments and relationships that support children's active physical play. This quick review of practices can stimulate discussions and focus attention physical activity in your program. If you prefer a more comprehensive reflection tool, use the full TAPP.

## How Do I Use the TAPP Self-Reflection Inventory?

The TAPP-SF includes self-reflections about active physical play for young children. Note that a "*reasons*" section follows each reflection statement and response. To enhance a meaningful report of the responses, users can write explanations of why they chose a response.

Each statement offers four response choices:

*already doing; making progress; considering; and not planning to do.*

- Choose *already doing* if you consistently use this practice.
- Choose *making progress* if you use the concept on some level. For example, you might choose this response if you have ordered materials for the environment, or some of the staff use the practice, but not all.
- Choose *considering* if you want to use the practice, but have taken no steps toward implementation.
- Choose *unable to do* if you would like to follow the practice, but you believe there are factors which prevent you from using the practice.
- Choose *not planning to do* if the concept simply does not work for your program, you do not agree with the concept, or if the concept is not applicable in your program.

**Safe & Challenging**

**Fun & Enjoyment**

**Frequent & Vigorous**

**Time & Support**

**Varied Play Options**

**Relationships**

**Advocacy**

## THINKING ACTIVE PHYSICAL PLAY SELF-REFLECTION INVENTORY SHORT FORM

### Guiding Principle I

*Adults set safe and appropriately challenging environments for active physical play*

I.1 A variety of play equipment is available (permanent and portable).

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

I.2 Equipment is available for many levels of ability.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

I.3 Age appropriate games are available.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

I.4 Equipment is in excellent condition for safe use by children.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

I.5 A wide variety of props and equipment is available for children to create play.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

I.6 There is enough equipment so children do not wait longer for a turn than is appropriate for age and ability of each child.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

I.7 Storage is nearby for staff to quickly and safely access equipment or props as children create play.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

Safe &  
Challenging

## THINKING ACTIVE PHYSICAL PLAY SELF-REFLECTION INVENTORY SHORT FORM

### Guiding Principle II

*Children engage in active physical play to develop their bodies and for fun and enjoyment*

II.1 Staff are aware of each child's physical skills.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

II.2 Staff plan environments that consider each child's level of skill.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

II.3 Staff model basic physical skills to help children try out new skills, or to expand skills.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

II.4 Each child receives frequent encouragement for effort and achievement of new skills.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

II.5 Children freely choose from an array of structured and unstructured play opportunities.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

II.6 Sounds of children's voices from the play areas are mostly relaxed and agreeable.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

II.7 Children create play themes that include active physical play.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

Fun &  
Enjoyment

Frequent &  
Vigorous

Time &  
Support

Varied Play  
Options

Relationships

Advocacy

## THINKING ACTIVE PHYSICAL PLAY SELF-REFLECTION INVENTORY: SHORT FORM

### Guiding Principle III

*Children have opportunity for frequent and vigorous active physical play*

- III.1 Staff regularly observe and evaluate each child's frequency, endurance, and intensity of active physical play.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

- III.2 When a child does not participate in vigorous active physical play over time, staff document and intervene with lesson plans and strategies to encourage active play.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

- III.3 Schedules for physical play are coordinated with times for arrival, departure, snack, and mealtimes.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

- III.4 Indoor and outdoor schedules for active physical play offer time for sustained periods of high intensity activity. (For example, running, dancing, leaping)

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

- III.5 Lesson plans include well-defined goals and objectives for daily active physical play.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

- III.6 Appropriate attire is available for staff and for each child to play comfortably outside MOST days.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*  
Reason:

Safe &  
Challenging

Fun &  
Enjoyment

Frequent &  
Vigorous

Time &  
Support

Varied Play  
Options

Relationships

Advocacy

## THINKING ACTIVE PHYSICAL PLAY SELF-REFLECTION INVENTORY: SHORT FORM

### Guiding Principle IV

*Children have time and support for uninterrupted, sustained play*

- IV.1 Daily schedules offer time for both active and quiet play.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

- IV.2 Staff use naturally occurring opportunities to support active physical play.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

- IV.3 Each day, children have opportunity to play in both structured outdoor and indoor physical activity (teacher-directed) and unstructured play (child-chosen).

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

- IV.4 Staff offer props and play ideas active physical play throughout the day.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

Safe &  
Challenging

Fun &  
Enjoyment

Frequent &  
Vigorous

Time &  
Support

Varied Play  
Options

Relationships

Advocacy

## THINKING ACTIVE PHYSICAL PLAY SELF-REFLECTION INVENTORY: SHORT FORM

### Guiding Principle V

*Children have access to many and varied active physical play options*

- V.1 The daily curriculum includes scheduled active physical play indoors and outdoors.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

- V.2 Materials and equipment for active physical play are rotated frequently in response to children's developmental progress and needs.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

- V.3 Storage for physical play equipment and materials is easily accessible to staff.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

- V.4 Equipment is available for vigorous play.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

- V.5 Most of the time, active play environments are set up for each child or groups of children to engage in active play without interrupting play of others.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

Safe &  
Challenging

Fun &  
Enjoyment

Frequent &  
Vigorous

Time &  
Support

Varied Play  
Options

Relationships

Advocacy

## THINKING ACTIVE PHYSICAL PLAY SELF-REFLECTION INVENTORY: SHORT FORM

### Guiding Principle VI

*Active physical play is supported by adult-child relationships and peer interactions*

VI.1 Adults are within sight and sound of children's physical play.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

VI.2 Adults quickly respond to protect children's from unsafe physical play situations.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

VI.3 Adults are intentional in observing children's physical skills, and support a child's attempts at advancing to the next skill levels.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

VI.4 Adults offer strategies to encourage a child to extend an active dramatic play. (For example, teacher offers props or helps the child engage other children for active play.)

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

VI.5 Toddler physical play environments offer multiples of popular or new materials and structures.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

Safe &  
Challenging

Fun &  
Enjoyment

Frequent &  
Vigorous

Time &  
Support

Varied Play  
Options

Relationships

Advocacy



## THINKING ACTIVE PHYSICAL PLAY SELF-REFLECTION INVENTORY: SHORT FORM

### Guiding Principle VI (continued)

*Active physical play is supported by adult-child relationships and peer interactions*

- VI.6 Routines for taking turns with equipment are established and supported by adult supervision.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

- VI.7 Adults support children as they learn to wait for a turn.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

- VI.8 Adults adapt environments so that each child has opportunity to try challenging physical play activities comfortably.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

Safe &  
Challenging

Fun &  
Enjoyment

Frequent &  
Vigorous

Time &  
Support

Varied Play  
Options

Relationships

Advocacy

## THINKING ACTIVE PHYSICAL PLAY SELF-REFLECTION INVENTORY: SHORT FORM

### Guiding Principle VII

*Adults advocate for children to have opportunity to engage in active physical play*

VII.1 Policies are written and available to staff and parents for active physical play.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

VII.2 Administrators take active steps for advancing policies, grants, and practices that support children's active physical play.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

VII.3 Staff input is used by administrators for planning schedules for active physical play.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

VII.4 Budgets include resources and funds for active physical play materials, equipment, and staff training.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

VII.5 Parents and staff communicate about children's active physical play at school.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

Safe &  
Challenging

Fun &  
Enjoyment

Frequent &  
Vigorous

Time &  
Support

Varied Play  
Options

Relationships

Advocacy

## THINKING ACTIVE PHYSICAL PLAY SELF-REFLECTION INVENTORY: SHORT FORM

### Guiding Principle VII (continued)

*Adults advocate for children to have opportunity to engage in active physical play*

VII.6 Time for planning active physical play is set aside for staff and administrators.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

VII.7 Staff frequently (daily) discuss curriculum needs for children's active physical play

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

VII.8 Staff attend training about active physical play.

*Already doing Making progress Considering Unable to do Not planning to do*

Reason:

Safe &  
Challenging

Fun &  
Enjoyment

Frequent &  
Vigorous

Time &  
Support

Varied Play  
Options

Relationships

Advocacy