

Finnish Schools on the Move programme

Henna Haapala

Researcher (PhD), Teacher

LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health, henna.haapala@likes.fi

Finnish Schools on the Move is a national action programme aiming to establish a physically active culture in Finnish comprehensive schools. The main themes of the programme include supporting learning, enabling student participation, and increasing physical activity and decreasing excessive sitting. Schools and municipalities participating in the programme implement their own individual plans to increase physical activity during the school day.

Finnish Schools on the Move programme is one of the key projects in the field of knowledge and education in the Government Programme of Finland. The goal of the government is that "the Schools on the Move project will be expanded across the country to ensure one hour of physical activity each day". The Schools on the Move programme is carried out by the Finnish National Board of Education and the Ministry of Education and Culture. The programme is financed with lottery funding and coordinated by the LIKES Research Centre for Physical Activity and Health.

Finnish Schools on the Move programme started with a pilot phase (2010-2012). In March 2018, more than 86% of comprehensive schools (2 061 schools) are involved in the programme.

Physical activity and sedentary time

Decreasing excessive sitting during school lessons is an opportunity to participate in the programme ideology. The promotion of physical activity among school-aged children consists of both increasing physical activity and decreasing sedentary time. This requires measures to be undertaken both at school and at home.

During the school day, physical activity can be increased by adding more physical education lessons, promoting active commuting and encouraging physically active breaks.

During schools lessons, sedentary behaviour can be decreased by implementing active learning methods involving short active breaks, in order to support optimal learning and avoid long periods of continued sitting. Decreasing excessive sitting during school lessons is an opportunity for all school personnel to participate in the programme ideology.

Useful links and information on research in Finnish Schools on the Move

- Programme [webpages](#) in English:
 - ✓ Research summaries
 - ✓ [Interim report on the Finnish Schools on the Move programme 2015-2016](#)
- Henna Haapala's doctoral thesis: [Finnish Schools on the Move: Students' physical activity and school-related social factors](#)
- [Finland's Report Card 2016](#) on Physical Activity for Children and Youth