

It's official. Fit children do better at literacy and numeracy.

A landmark study shows that physically active primary students perform better academically.

The results are out. Professor Richard (Dick) Telford, Australian swim coach and AIS founding member was horrified with what he saw in Primary schools. A fixation on Numeracy and Literacy had grown to a point that schools were neglecting important elements of a healthy, holistic education.

Talking to authorities he found that there was no appreciation of the connection between healthy, engaged children and numeracy and literacy skills. So, he set out to prove that there is.

He raised enough money to employ three full time PE teachers for three years, plus evaluation staff and tools. Over 800 students randomly selected at 28 schools were evaluated at commencement and then participated in regular structured physical activity.

At the end of three years the results are conclusive. According the study by **Professor Telford**:

"PRIMARY school students who exercise regularly are more likely to have higher NAPLAN test scores in numeracy and writing, according to a landmark study.

Additionally, "Kids need to become more physically active because of increasing trends for children and adults to suffer from chronic illnesses such as type 2 diabetes and heart disease."

Professor Telford says the findings about the academic benefit of professionally structured exercise are supported by neurological research emerging from Germany and the US over the past 10 years. The use of brain imaging has found that exercise, especially fitness activities that involve hand-eye co-ordination, can improve brain function.

"We're now realising that there's a mutual development process between the brain and other tissues like muscles," Professor Telford says.

"This mutual process seems even more evident in children. So if children are not exercising they may not have the optimum environment for growth of the body and brain." [Click here](#) to read more.

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