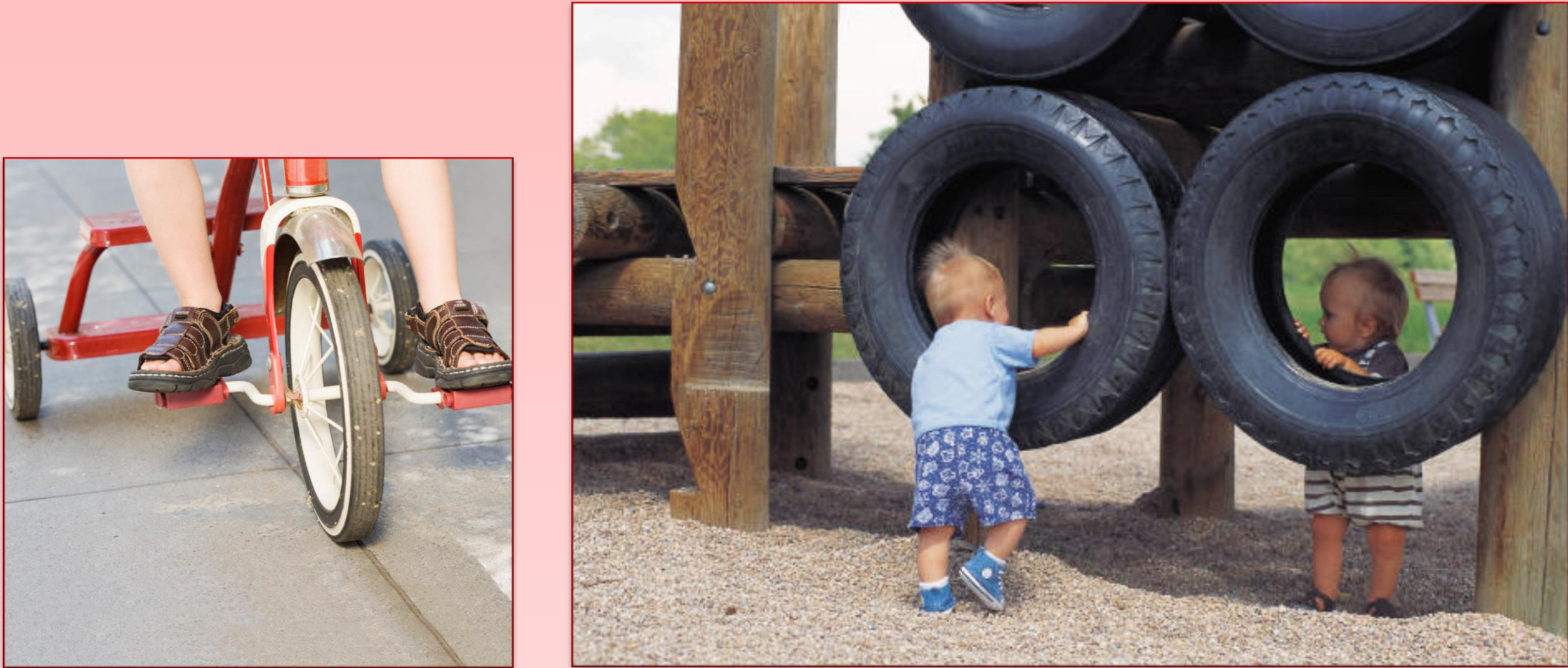


APPLE in the Early Years:
Active Play and Physical Literacy Everyday

Introduction

- Globally, more than 42 million children under age 5 years are overweight (Timmons et al., 2012)
- In Canada, 35% of children between the ages of two and five years are obese or overweight (Shields, 2010)
- 73-84% of children’s waking hours are spent sitting still (LeBlanc et al., 2012)
- In March 2012, the Canadian Society for Exercise Physiology (CSEP) created Canada’s first physical activity guidelines and sedentary behaviour guidelines for children 0-4 years
- We are creating ways to promote the **physical literacy of children (6 months to 5 years) through active play**, to meet guidelines in child care centres



Holistic Development

- From birth to age five, the brain expands and develops more rapidly than at any other time (Brain Development and Early Learning, 2007)
- Neural connections need to be nurtured and are dependent on experience
- If areas of the brain are not stimulated at appropriate times, they are lost (Thompson, 2001)
- Physical activity is the fundamental key to brain development (Pienaar, 2009)
- All areas of development are essential and interdependent
- Although experts often stress the importance of a child’s cognitive, emotional, and social development, they often overlook the vital nature of physical development (Maude, 2010)

If we miss the mark in building physical literacy in children and fail to encourage children to be active for life, we are at risk of “dulling the brains of the next generation” (Ratey and Hagerman (as cited in Maude, 2010, p. 102)

Active Play

- Active play is the vehicle for enhancing physical literacy
- The Active Start Stage, (as developed by Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) as part of the Long-term Athlete Development model (LTAD)) emphasizes the **importance of being active in the first six years of a child’s life** (LTAD Stages, 2011)
- Bruce Perry (2009) refers to the importance of **curiosity** in sparking a child’s desire to take part in active play, leading to **exploration, repetition, mastery, and competence**.

Physical Literacy

Physical literacy is “a universal concept applicable to every individual whatever their age or physical endowment... physical literacy can be described as the motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge and understanding to maintain physical activity throughout the lifecourse.” (Whitehead, 2010, p. 5)

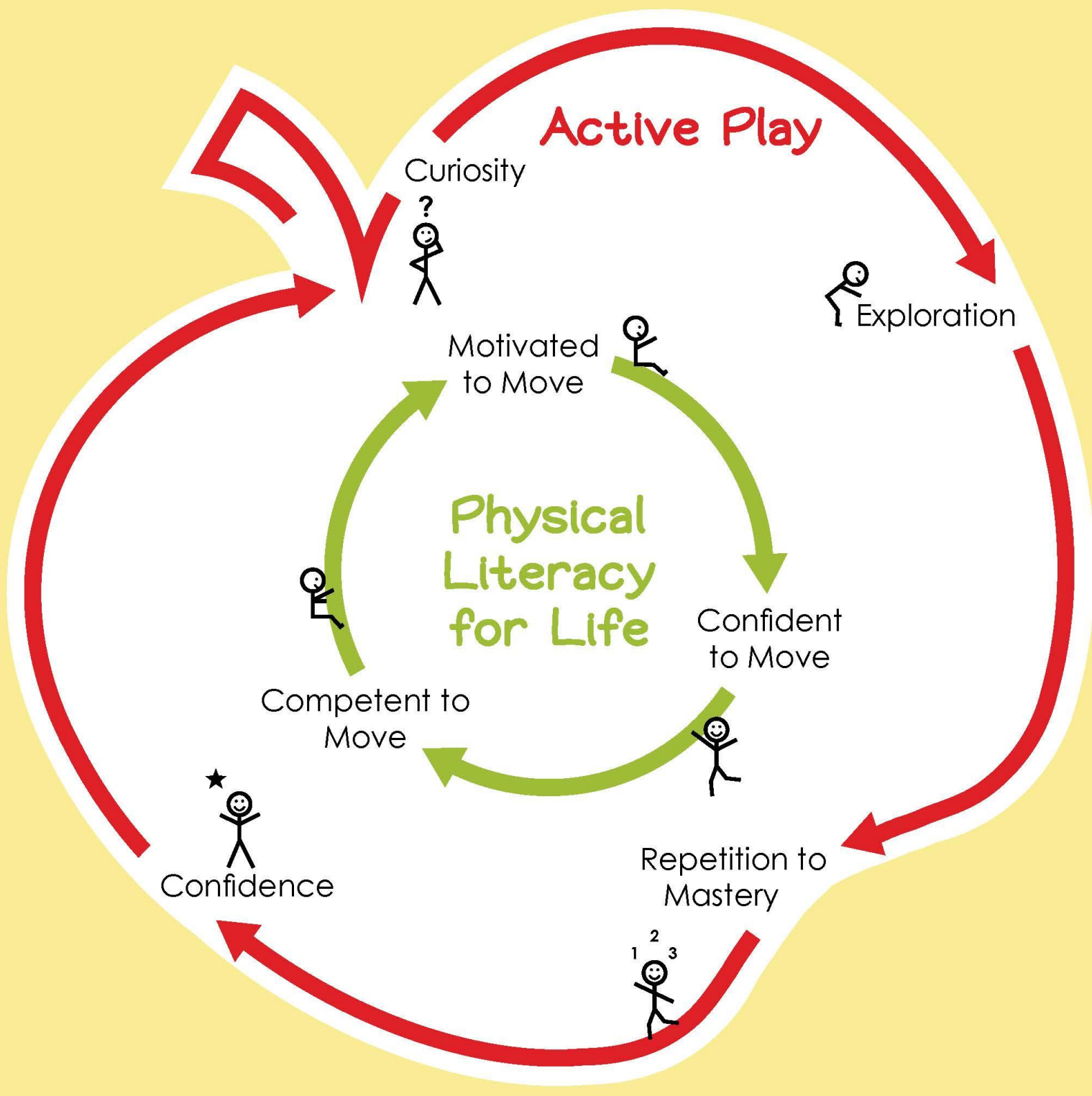
- A child is **physically literate** when he can “move confidently and with control in a wide range of physical activity, rhythmic (dance) and sport situations...” (CS4L, 2011)
- It is important to foster children’s acquisition of skills in multiple movements across multiple environments (CS4L, 2011)
 - **Fundamental movement skills** enable locomotion, balance, and manipulation of objects in the environment
 - **A child’s physical activity level in the early years is a determinant of his/her physical activity levels for his/her future** (Reillo, et al., 2010)



Healthy Active Behaviours

- Environment plays a critical role in provoking curiosity and play, which in turn lead to movement
- Physical literacy is not innate
- Healthy, active behaviours are learned
- Parents, educators, caregivers, and family members serve as role models

apple
ACTIVE PLAY & PHYSICAL LITERACY EVERYDAY



- 1 Create a rich environment that promotes **ACTIVE PLAY** to spark a child’s curiosity and exploration, and motivates a child to move
- 2 The child will repetitively engage in active play building mastery, confidence and competence to move in different ways
- 3 Active play facilitates fundamental movement skill development promoting physical literacy for life



The APPLE Model

- The **Active Play and Physical Literacy Everyday (APPLE)** model we created **combines** Bruce Perry’s **active play model** (Perry, Hogan, & Marlin, 2009) and Margaret Whitehead’s **physical literacy model** (Whitehead, 2006)
 - 1. **Curiosity** draws a child to move and explore
 - 2. **Exploration** requires movement
 - 3. Through **repetition**, movements are **mastered**
 - 4. Mastering movement skills establishes **confidence**
-
- 1. Curiosity **motivates** the child to move
 - 2. **Exploration** and **repetition** lead to skill mastery and **confidence to move**
 - 3. Skill mastery of fundamental movement skills leads to pride in personal **competence** and an increase in overall **confidence**

Conclusion

- The APPLE model is being used to spread awareness about the importance of physical literacy and active play in the early years
- The model and message have been widely disseminated (e.g., child care centres, dayhomes, etc.) with additional potential audiences yet to be contacted (e.g., recreational facilities, organized sports teams, children’s camps etc.)
- Postcards of the APPLE model have been distributed across Alberta. To date, the APPLE model will be presented at two national conferences in January 2014:
 - *The Early Years Conference 2014: Shaping Childhood: Factors that Matter* in Vancouver, British Columbia
 - *Canadian Sport for Life (CS4L) National Summit* in Gatineau, Quebec

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