**Exercise Program:** 4Sport Kids – Genesis Place, Airdrie AB.

**Description:** “One registration gets you access to four FUNdamental sports to develop a strong sense of physical literacy in your children that will last a lifetime! Participants explore swim, skate, sports, and gymnastics.”

* 1. The length of the program is 40 sessions over 20 weeks. Every 5 weeks, children enter a new physical activity domain. As the lead instructor for the dryland portion, my goal is to create and apply creative engaging lessons to teach the fundamentals of physical literacy using sport and fun games. In my session, children in groups of ~7, age 4-12 in age-appropriate groups engage for 45-minute sessions between 4 and 7pm. The program was designed to cater to kids who have not found a fit within traditional sport environment to be able to explore, learn new skills from the ground up, have fun and be physically active. Children are given certain agency with choice of games.
  2. **Self-Efficacy Theory (SET)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Predictor of Self-Efficacy | What 4Sport Kids does to address this | How it affects SE/physical activity behaviour |
| Past  Performance | By teaching children skills and games from the basics, it gives each child a chance to build successful past experiences and interest in getting better. When children have participated in sports previously, we challenge them to keep learning and using their skills. | When people partake in activities the same as/similar to ones where they have had previous success, they have increased SE and may be more likely to participate in future PA (+) |
| Vicarious  Experiences | By having children in age-appropriate groups, they get to see others learning with them, be successful at skills they are learning, while understanding the struggles they all face. | For children, seeing people they identify with have fun and succeed at a task predicts higher SE and higher future PA (+) |
| Social  Persuasion | As instructors, we try to emphasize the great effort the children bring and celebrate the victories they have as they learn. It is individualized and catered to what stimulates greatest effort for each child. Their parents are also invested in keeping them active, and partner with us to get them prepared to be active. | The use of verbal and nonverbal encouragement from the instructors, along with the support from parents should increase SE and future PA (+) |
| Physiological/  affective states | The program occurs in the evening, and for some of the younger children, the time of day is challenging. They are tired and the exercise is exhaustive at the end of the day. Any stress from games or lack of immediate gratification leads to meltdowns and behavioral challenges. For others, they have energy to burn. The space they are given to play makes them feel good. One remark I get quite often is “I’m sweating!” as they smile and keep on running. | The variation in response to exercise makes predicting SE challenging. For some, the ability to be active and feel-good burning off energy and feeling challenged increased SE and PA (+), while for others the time of day and lack of resiliency due to their age may decrease SE and future PA. (-) |

**Self-Determination Theory (SDT)**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Predictor of Motivation | What 4Sport Kids does to address this | How it affects/predicts motivation/ physical activity behaviour |
| Autonomy | Children are given the chance to explore different sports before them and their parents commit to one or another. In the dryland session, they are given agency over what sports and games they can play. When a child is directly against an activity, we see many behavioral challenges. | As children learn what they enjoy, they can decide what to pursue which, which combined with the fact that during sessions they are given choice on what to play enhances their intrinsic regulation for future PA. **(+)** However, when they meet an activity they did not choose they may be demotivated and decrease PA **(-)** |
| Competence | The program teaches skills from the most basic elements. For children, this level of instruction is necessary for them to learn confidence in their abilities. The children are given time to practice skills, where we highlight their progress as we cue them on necessary adjustments. | When introduced to behaviors, the children are given opportunities to learn and succeed, giving them confidence in their abilities which helps move them into intrinsic motivation for future PA. **(+)** |
| Relatedness | The children have the same group of peers with them in each class. For most, they enjoy the company of others and make great friends. For some who are younger or socially anxious, dealing with sustained interaction with others is challenging and results in behavioural challenges. | For those that enjoy time with their peers, this enhances the enjoyment of PA and will promote future PA. **(+)**  For those that struggle, they may feel decreased motivation to attend or feel there is no point if they don’t enjoy it, negatively predicting future PA (-) |

* 1. For SET, in uniquely describes that the physiological and affective states felt after exercise make a big difference with SE and adherance to exercise. In the example, 4Sport does its best to accommodate children with their level of coping with stress, however it is challenging to fully control due to the time of day.

For SDT, it describes the need for autonomy in being motivated to exercise. In 4Sport, when children are given choice on what to play, they are more willing to participate and challenge themselves. It is also clear when children are in 4Sport for the pool or gymnastic portion only, as they hesitate to engage.

* 1. If I was to change one thing about 4Sport Kids to help boost motivation and increase children PA behavior, I would target the autonomy predictor of motivation of the SDT. To do this, I would offer a 15-week program (two sessions – Fall and Winter) with the choice of 5-6 sports, for parents and children to build a 3-sport lineup. By establishing a favorites list, it would allow schedulers to place children in the activities they like most based on a priority system of the favorite list along with who signed up first. For some, they may prefer organized team sports while others may prefer individual PA experiences like swimming or rock climbing. Giving kids choice into what they sign up for will increase their intrinsic motivation to exercise and increase buy-in for future programs they participate in.