

Children and Young People’s Mental Health and Physical Activity – Edge Hill University Evidence Review



Physical activity can benefit children and young people’s mental health

There was strong and consistent evidence that sport and physical activity interventions have positive effects on the diagnosed mental health problems of children and young people.

(Edge Hill University Evidence Review 2024)

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Diverse forms of aerobic and resistance exercise, of at least moderate intensity, are particularly effective for children and young people with a diagnosis or symptoms of depression.

(Edge Hill University Evidence Review 2024)

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Active children and young people have lower rates of loneliness.

(Active Lives Children and Young People’s Survey 2023–2024)

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“Physical activity isn’t just nourishing for the body; it’s vital for the mind. It helps calm your thoughts, fosters meaningful social connections and cultivates a deep-seated confidence and empowerment that greatly supports mental wellbeing.”

A young person from Mind’s Young People’s Physical Activity Advisory Group

There is a positive association between levels of engagement in sport and physical activity and levels of mental wellbeing.

(Active Lives Children and Young People’s Survey 2023–2024.)

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