

The measure of a moment - physical literacy in everyday life



When we nurture physical literacy, we're not just building skills, we're creating conditions for something greater, writes columnist Thorsten Gohl. Photo courtesy of Thorsten Gohl

Northern News Services

We often talk about physical literacy in terms of skills: running, jumping, skipping, balancing. But what if it's also about something deeper? Something quieter or more powerful? Something measured not by medals or metrics, but by moments. Moments like a child taking their first confident stride across a gym floor or a grandparent joining in a family game of tag or a youth returning to a sport after a tough year because someone said, "I believe in you."

These are the moments that matter because they show us what physical literacy is really about. Not just movement, but meaningful movement. Movement that's connected to confidence, motivation, and belonging. Movement that becomes memory.

Movement with Meaning

You don't always remember how fast you ran, or how far you jumped, but you remember how it felt to be included. To be part of something. To feel your body and your spirit working together, even if just for a second.

That's physical literacy also. When

we support youth in learning to move with joy and confidence, we're not just teaching them skills, we're planting seeds for future moments. For showing up. For saying "yes" to trying again. For finding their place on the team, the stage, or simply the playground.

The Power of Being Present

Physical literacy grows in the moments we're present, not distracted by outcomes, but grounded in experience. A parent tossing a ball with their child. A community member showing up for a weekend event. A coach who notices the small win. Because sometimes the greatest impact isn't in teaching a perfect skill. It's in being there. Witnessing it. Holding space for it.

And the ripple effect? That one moment of confidence can become the reason a child tries something new

next week. That shared laugh can be the bridge to connection. That small act of movement can be the start of a lifelong relationship with activity.

What Is Physical Literacy?

It's more than learning to run, jump, skip, and balance. It's developing the skills and the confidence, motivation, and understanding to move in a way that feels good, and to keep moving for life.

And at the very beginning of it all, we find something beautifully simple called fundamental movement skills: throwing, catching, rolling, sliding, balancing, jumping, kicking, dodging, spinning. These may seem small, but they are huge for a child's development. They are the foundation of every moment to come.

Because a child who learns to balance might one day try skating. A child who learns to throw might find joy in



GUEST COMMENT

Thorsten Gohl is the co-ordinator of Physical Literacy NWT

baseball, hand games, or javelin. And a child who learns to move confidently might one day keep going, even when life feels tough.

The Hidden Power of Everyday Play

We don't always think about it this way. But every time a child climbs a hill, rolls down a snowbank or jumps across puddles, they're building the tools for resilience because movement is more than activity. It's identity. It's how we explore our world, test our limits, and grow into ourselves. It's how we measure a moment, not in distance or speed, but in courage, connection, and joy.

In my work across the North, I've seen countless moments like these. A shy child who speaks through their movement. A teen who regains confidence through sport. A parent relearning the joy of play alongside their child.

When we talk about physical literacy, we're talking about everybody. Every body. Every story. Every path to movement.

Whether you're learning to hop for the first time or returning to sport after

a long pause, your movement matters. When we focus on skills and spirit, we don't just create active communities, we create resilient ones.

So here's my invitation to you: celebrate small wins. Help someone take their next step. Literally. Let's reimagine how we measure success in sport and recreation. Let's pay attention to the moments. The first time a child says, "I can do this!" The quiet courage to show up again. The joy of moving just for the sake of it.

Be part of it. Encourage play. Share your time. Because when we build strong foundations through fundamental movement and meaningful moments, we grow something more powerful than performance. We grow belonging. We grow confidence. We grow connection. We grow the superpower of resilience together.

When we nurture physical literacy, we're not just building skills, we're creating conditions for something greater. The belief that every moment of movement matters.

When we start to see those moments, not as small but as significant, everything changes.

Polar bear injures skier in Auyuittuq National Park



Parks Canada staff are working to evacuate an injured skier from Nunavut's Auyuittuq National Park following an attack on the morning of April 24, according to Parks Canada. Tim Bowman/USFWS photo

Evacuation complicated by poor visibility for helicopter

Derek Neary
Northern News Services

A polar bear injured a skier near Summit Lake in Nunavut's Auyuittuq National Park and poor visibility is preventing a rescue helicopter from reaching the area, according to Parks Canada.

The incident occurred during the early morning of April 24. Other park visitors were able to assist the injured skier in getting to the Summit Lake emergency shelter, where they awaited support from Parks Canada Staff.

"Parks Canada has trained staff who are assisting in evacuating the visitors, as a helicopter could not enter the area due to low ceiling," stated Margaret Friesen, external relations manager

for Parks Canada's Nunavut Field Unit. "This situation is ongoing. Parks Canada's priority is assisting the parties and securing their safety."

Friesen pointed out that the visitors were carrying communication devices that allowed them to quickly get in touch with Parks Canada staff.

All visitors to Auyuittuq National Park, which lies north of Pangnirtung and west of Qikiqtarjuaq, attend a mandatory orientation about the unique challenges of the Arctic environment, emphasizing self-reliance and preparation to ensure safe visitation, Friesen stated.

"Polar bears are a risk throughout Nunavut, and polar bear orientation is delivered to visitors before entering the park. Visitors are permitted to carry bear deterrent kits," Friesen added.