



Implementing the Physically Active Children in Education (PACE) program optimally and sustainably



PROGRAM OVERVIEW - OCTOBER 2022

What is the issue?

We know...

children need to increase their physical activity levels to prevent chronic disease

and... governments set minimum amounts of physical activity for schools.



But... schools struggle to meet physical activity targets.



supports schools to meet physical activity targets now & into the future.

HOW WILL THIS RESEARCH PROGRAM HELP?

The PACE research program provides policy makers and practitioners with a school-based physical activity intervention that is **effective** and **feasible** to implement at scale and is **sustainable** over the long term.

WHAT IS PACE?

The Physically Active Children in Education (PACE) program supports teachers to embed more physical activity throughout the school-day through **active lessons**, **energisers** (short in-class activity breaks), **physical education** and **school sport**.

What sets PACE apart?

It supports schools to **sustain** the program in the **long-term**.

We are encouraging local health districts to incorporate versions of PACE that are adapted to their contexts.

We will continue to inform our stakeholders on the outcomes of our sustainability research and the importance of building sustainability support into community-based health programs.

DOES PACE WORK?

In four initial studies, our researchers found PACE to be effective, feasible and scalable across multiple local health districts spanning metro, regional, rural and very remote areas.¹⁻⁴

Teachers rated the program highly acceptable, and we saw an increase in teachers' scheduling of total physical activity across the school week by approximately 27 minutes. This included an increase in the scheduling of energisers by 21 minutes and active lessons by 5 minutes.

IS PACE COST-EFFECTIVE?

The original version of PACE relied on in-person support provided by local health service staff, with a mean cost of delivery of \$1057 per school.^{3,4}

We trialled an adapted version of PACE and showed that we could achieve the same results using less in-person support at a lower cost (**saving \$373 per school**).

A study is currently underway to examine an online version (ePACE).

Optimised versions of PACE may improve access to the program where health service providers have limited funding, competing priorities, few qualified delivery personnel, or large distances to travel to reach schools.

WILL PACE WORK IN THE LONG TERM?

Many school-based physical activity programs are delivered at a lower quality or stopped altogether once initial program support is withdrawn.

We found that schools who had participated in PACE were still scheduling the same amount of physical activity 6 months after PACE support ended.^{3,4}

We are now exploring if support is needed to sustain the implementation of PACE and similar programs in the long-term.



PUBLICATIONS

1. Nathan, NK. et al. [Implementation of a School Physical Activity Policy Improves Student Physical Activity Levels: Outcomes of a Cluster-Randomized Controlled Trial](#). J Phys Act Health. 2020.
2. Nathan, N. et al. [Multi-strategy intervention increases school implementation and maintenance of a mandatory physical activity policy: outcomes of a cluster randomised controlled trial](#). British J Sports Med. 2022.
3. Lane, C. et al. [Economic evaluation of a multi-strategy intervention that improves school-based physical activity policy implementation](#). Imp Sci. 2022.
4. Lane, C. et al. [Optimising a multi-strategy implementation intervention to improve the delivery of a school physical activity policy at scale: findings from a randomised noninferiority trial](#). Int J Behav Nutr Phys Act. 2022.



Take a photo to read more.

ABOUT US

This research is being conducted by researchers at the National Centre of Implementation Science (NCOIS), an NHMRC funded Centre of Research Excellence associated with the University of Newcastle.

The research is led by Dr Nicole Nathan and supported by Dr Alix Ivers, Dr Cat Lane, Rebecca Jackson and Nicole McCarthy and will form part of PhD projects by Mr Adam Shoosmith and Mr Edd Riley-Gibson.

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