

LES MILLS BORN TO MOVE™ RESEARCH



Les Mills BORN TO MOVE™ was developed with one specific goal in mind: to get young people moving. By changing attitudes towards fitness, and encouraging daily physical activity, we believe that we can create a clear road towards combating the health problems that face the youth of today.

The key focus of BORN TO MOVE™ is on developing a positive attitude towards exercise. Therefore the aim of the research projects that took place during the development of BORN TO MOVE™ was to demonstrate a measurable shift both in attitude towards being active, and inclination to engage in physical activity.

Research study #1

The overall aim of this first study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the Les Mills BORN TO MOVE™ program on children's physical activity and physical fitness.

This study was conducted by Professor Ralph Maddison and his team at the University of Auckland. The evaluation was undertaken with two classes from Orewa College in Auckland, New Zealand, during Terms 3 and 4 (August - November) of 2012. Participating children were in year 8 (aged approximately 12-13 years). One class took part in the Les Mills BORN TO MOVE™ program during school time while the other continued with their usual curriculum and served as a control.

Data was collected on psychological variables (self-efficacy and perceived enjoyment) as well as physiological variables (oxygen consumption and energy expenditure).

THE FINDINGS

Results of the study revealed:

- The intervention was well received by students; almost all students rated the program as enjoyable.
- Exercising to music and the group environment were key features of the program for students.
- The intervention had a positive effect on student's self-efficacy to be active.
- The energy expended during Les Mills BORN TO MOVE™ classes was equivalent to moderate intensity exercise.
- Almost all students (87%) viewed the classes as a positive challenge.
- Almost all students (87%) enjoyed the musical component and the group environment.

Research study #2

A follow up study to the University of Auckland investigation took place in July – August 2013.

This study was conducted by Pennsylvania State University and involved two groups of children (56 aged 6-8 years and 38 aged 9-12 years). Each child completed two Les Mills BORN TO MOVE™ group fitness classes per week for six weeks.

This study measured psychological variables similar to those conducted in the University of Auckland study (self-efficacy and perceived enjoyment). In addition, parents were asked to complete a survey at the conclusion of the intervention to gauge both their impressions of the program and their perceived impact of the classes upon their children (72 of the parents completed this questionnaire).

THE FINDINGS

It's crucial that we remember the philosophy of BORN TO MOVE™ when considering the results from this trial:

1. To create experiences where children can express themselves on a physical platform
2. To develop a lifelong love of movement

The outcomes in the psychological variables for the younger children in the Pennsylvania State University study were very positive and mirrored those of the University of Auckland study. This age group had high levels of enjoyment (72%) and three quarters found the classes interesting (72%). The children demonstrated a strong belief in their ability to do the moves (87%) and low levels of concern about the way they looked (76% were unconcerned). Music was a key driver of fun (90%) and the majority preferred exercising in a group (65%).

For the older children the outcomes in the psychological variables were also positive. Both interest (72%) and enjoyment (61%) were still high for this age group as was self-efficacy (69%), and the majority felt that the music drives the fun (81%). While there were still a significant number who were not worried about how they looked (47%) or their ability to do the movements (31%), there was an increased proportion who demonstrated a level of concern about these two aspects. This highlights the importance of instructors creating a safe and accepting environment for older children to help them achieve a high level of intrinsic satisfaction from completing a BORN TO MOVE™ class.

Outcomes of Parents' Survey

Parents' feedback around BORN TO MOVE™ was extremely positive. One hundred per cent of parents surveyed stated that they would continue to send their children to classes and that they would recommend the program to other parents. Parents had a variety of reasons for wanting their children to take part, but encouraging their child to be healthier in general and develop positive attitudes towards exercise were key drivers for everyone.

Most parents believed that, prior to the start of the BORN TO MOVE™ trial, their children already possessed: a love of activity; a willingness to try new activities; strong levels of self-confidence (both towards exercise as well as in general). BORN TO MOVE™ has strengthened these convictions and all of the parents believed that their children enjoyed doing the BORN TO MOVE™ classes.

IN CONCLUSION

These studies demonstrate objective shifts in attitude and levels of enjoyment, factors which are critical to both cultivating children's immediate appetite for exercise, and establishing great physical habits for life.

