



## A **JOLLY** BACK IS A **HEALTHY** BACK

### **How to improve back health in primary children with physical activity**

Physical activity and healthy movement are fundamental to back health and the development of a healthy spine - helping to build up muscle strength and co-ordination, maintain flexibility and boost self-esteem so children are able and feel proud to “walk tall” and learn well.

Physical Activity will already be an integral part of your school day which is great. Here’s how to help even more.

#### **Ideas to help:**

- Avoid restricting break and PE times wherever possible. Encourage physical activity during breaks. Remember 5 -18 year old children should have at least 1 hour of aerobic physical exercise every day. Sadly, many do not have the opportunities to achieve this out of school.
- Incorporate movement and standing into lessons where possible.
- Ensure adequate warm up before and cool down after PE to reduce the chance of injuries and instill important exercise habits.
- Encourage adequate hydration. The shock-absorbing discs of the spine are 80% water, therefore adequate hydration is essential for optimum back health. Can school provide water stations and prompt children to drink?
- Continue to encourage healthy eating – A healthy “weight to body mass index” limits stress on the joints and muscles of the spine and promotes better back health.

All the best and as always if we can help further, we’d love to hear from you,  
Lorna Taylor, Physiotherapist and Director, Jolly Back