



The 
Daily
Mile ™
children fit for life



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The inconvenient truth

ELAINE WYLLIE, FORMER PRIMARY SCHOOL HEADTEACHER AND FOUNDER OF THE DAILY MILE

In February 2012, I asked a class of eleven year olds to run round the school playing field. By halfway round most children were exhausted and had to stop. Most of them were completely unfit - and they recognised this themselves. What was to be done about this inconvenient truth? If not now, then when? If not us, then who?

I sat down with the class and their teacher to discuss the situation and the children were keen to run round the field for fifteen minutes every day, to see what level of fitness they could achieve after a month. The results were remarkable. The children looked better, felt better and were much fitter. The children were averaging five laps of the field in the fifteen minutes which, when a lap was measured, turned out to be roughly a mile - so The Daily Mile was born.

By the end of the spring term, five classes were doing The Daily Mile and by the end of the summer term all twelve classes were taking part. The nursery children (3-5 year olds) joined in early 2013. Since then all 420 children have done The Daily Mile.

The improvements in the children's physical health were obvious and we

could have predicted that running daily would make them fit. What we didn't see coming were the other equally important benefits to their mental, emotional and social health and wellbeing, which have become apparent over time.

Nearly four years later, The Daily Mile has produced transformational change in our children. They are physically fit, more focused in the classroom, more confident and more resilient.

The Daily Mile is completely simple and fully inclusive. It introduces daily physical activity into children's lives with the minimum of fuss. It takes place outside in the fresh air where all of our children are every day - in their schools and nurseries - and it has the full support of children, parents and staff. Without this it could not have been sustained for so long. On reflection, The Daily Mile succeeds because all barriers to participation in physical activity are removed.

Many millions of pounds have been spent on complicated and expensive initiatives to tackle the problem of physical inactivity and none of them have worked. Not one single initiative in the Western world has had any

impact on childhood obesity - children continue to get fatter, younger. The Daily Mile has stood the test of time, is being adopted by schools and nurseries across the UK and beyond, and senior figures in Public Health believe that it is a powerful weapon in the fight against physical inactivity and obesity.

The Scottish Government, the Acting Chief Medical Officer for Scotland, and the CEO of the Royal Society for Public Health, have all said that every child should have the opportunity to do The Daily Mile. The initiative has also received support from other senior medical figures and educational organisations, and it was recently recommended for all primaries in the UK Government's Childhood Obesity Strategy. It is a simple, universally valuable intervention that, in this time of austerity, costs nothing.

I wish you all the best as you implement The Daily Mile in your setting. I'm sure that the children and staff in other schools and nurseries will have as much fun doing The Daily Mile as the children at my former school have had, and experience the same benefits.





THE JOURNEY SO FAR

The Daily Mile has been embedded in the culture of the original school for four successful years — and is now spreading around the UK and beyond.

2012



FEBRUARY: 'The inconvenient truth' - Elaine Wyllie, Headteacher of a large Scottish primary school, realised that her pupils, like many others, were unfit.

MARCH: Elaine encouraged a P5 class to run around the field for 15 minutes every day in order to improve their fitness. On measuring the circumference of the school path, 5 laps was 1 mile. Thus The Daily Mile was born!

JUNE: By now, every class in the school was doing The Daily Mile. Parents, children and staff all love it.

2013/14



SEPTEMBER 2013: The nursery class began doing The Daily Mile!

SEPTEMBER 2014: Scotland's Chief Medical Officer visited the school and loved The Daily Mile.

2015



APRIL: Elaine presented The Daily Mile at a Raising Attainment for All conference in Glasgow.

JUNE: The Daily Mile began to be featured across the UK's media and other schools began to implement it.

JULY: Elaine spoke at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park for GO Run For Fun's flagship London fun run - and supported over 6,000 primary school runners.

OCTOBER: Elaine Wyllie won a Pride of Britain award for her efforts growing The Daily Mile. The Universities of Stirling and Edinburgh began scientific studies on the effects of The Daily Mile.

2016



JANUARY: Local authorities in England started to develop strategic partnerships in order to introduce The Daily Mile into their schools.

MARCH: The UK national launch of The Daily Mile took place at Hallfield School in Westminster, London- supported by The BBC, The Sun, and other national media.

SINCE MARCH 2016: Hundreds of schools up and down the UK continue to pick up The Daily Mile, either independently or supported by local authorities and health partnerships.

The Daily Mile is also flourishing in Belgium and Holland, and is being picked up in the US, Germany, Spain, Italy, France, and even Argentina!

The Scottish Government pledged to make the country the first ever 'Daily Mile Nation', and in August the UK Government recommended The Daily Mile for all primary schools in its Childhood Obesity Strategy.

It's growing fast - keep checking our website for further exciting updates! www.thedailymile.co.uk

THE DAILY MILE WORKS... FOR CHILDREN

It improves physical, social, emotional and mental health and wellbeing.

It is fun, friendly and social - this is vital and ensures sustainability.

All children are included and all children succeed.

Children with SEN or ASN benefit greatly from taking part in The Daily Mile.

It's not a race or a competition - this is not cross-country or sport.

It is a mixed activity across the Primary age range - nursery to 11.

Children enjoy a sense of freedom outside in the fresh air.

Different age groups and classes can do The Daily Mile together.

It reduces anxiety and stress.

It helps to build relationships.

Children know they are healthier and are proud of their fitness.

THE DAILY MILE WORKS... FOR TEACHERS & HEADTEACHERS

It's health and wellbeing, not PE.

It takes only 15 minutes from leaving the classroom until returning.

The class runs every day, ideally at a time when the teacher decides it is suitable.

There is no equipment, training or staff development needed.

Children run in their school clothes - no time is lost waiting while they change into kit.

Focus, concentration and behaviour are improved.

Children are fitter so can access and succeed at PE more readily.

Children return to class refreshed, energised and settle quickly to work.

It is sustainable over the entire session and for years to come.

Aspects of the curriculum can be incorporated in simple and interesting ways.

THE DAILY MILE WORKS... FOR PARENTS

It meets the needs of childhood - freedom, fun, fresh air and friends.

It takes place in a safe and secure environment.

Children are noticeably fitter - usually only 4 weeks after starting to run regularly.

It helps to reduce obesity and improves general health outcomes.

No need to transport children to clubs or events and it is free.

It prevents children being too sedentary and encourages physical activity out of school.

Children develop greater resilience and confidence.

Enhanced attainment is linked to increased physical activity.

It helps to make children feel happy.

Mental health and wellbeing can be enhanced by regular physical exercise.

Many children will sleep and eat better.

HOW TO IMPLEMENT THE DAILY MILE: TEN STEPS TO SUCCESS



FUN

The children have the freedom to run in the fresh air with their friends. They should know that it's not a competition - many will mix running and walking, particularly at the start.



100%

It's fully inclusive - all the children are out together and children with SEN or ASN benefit greatly.



WEATHER

Treat the weather as a benefit not a barrier - children respond to the seasons. Jackets on in the cold and damp; ditch the sweatshirt if it's warm.



TRACK

Most schools will use their playground and a track or path with a minimum of 5-10 laps works well. It's okay to have more laps depending on your setting.



QUICK

Takes place in a 15-minute turnaround from leaving the classroom until returning. Try to go out every day - it's easier for the children and they get the full benefits.



RISK

Do a risk assessment for your path or playground - there is a sample risk assessment on The Daily Mile website (www.thedailymile.co.uk).



JUST GO

No need to warm up - straight outside and off they go. They return to class refreshed and energised.



CLOTHES

No kit required. The children go out in their school clothes. No time is wasted changing.



OWN IT

Allow the children to own their Daily Mile. They can choose to run, walk or jog - or mix all three - but should be encouraged to do some running.

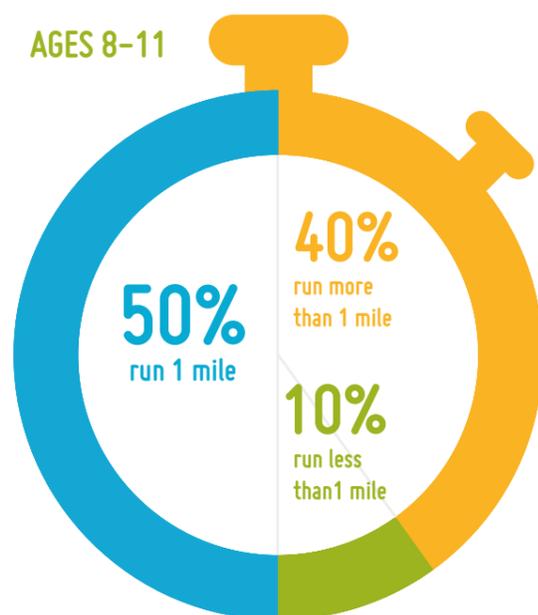
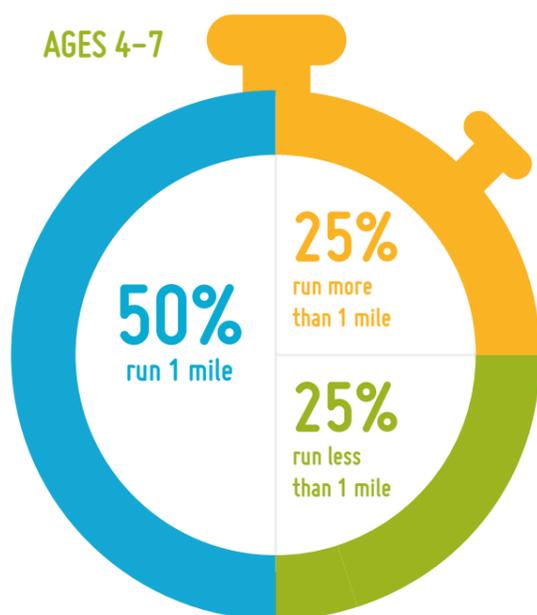


SIMPLE

Keep it simple: resist the temptation to make it too complicated as its simplicity makes it both successful and sustainable.

HOW FAR DO THE CHILDREN RUN IN 15 MINUTES?

The Daily Mile is differentiated by the children's level of ability and they do not all run the same number of laps in the time they are outside. The number of laps the children walk/jog/run varies as shown in the diagram below. In the nursery, most of the children do just under a mile with a few doing only 2 laps and a few doing 6 or 7 laps.



THE IMPACT OF THE DAILY MILE ON HEALTH & WELLBEING

- Reduces anxiety and stress.
- Fitness and energy levels are improved.
- Greater concentration is evident in class.
- Health outcomes for life are improved.
- Classes experience the pleasure of being outdoors, in all seasons.
- Obesity and weight reduction is addressed for all age groups.
- Helps to build confidence - all children succeed at The Daily Mile.
- Children with SEN or ASN feel the benefits of regular participation.
- As a social activity, it can improve relationships and reduce isolation.
- Children have a sense of achievement in their own fitness and pride in their own Daily Mile.
- Develops greater resilience and determination.

TESTIMONIALS

WHAT CHILDREN SAY ABOUT THE DAILY MILE

It's good fun and you can go at your own speed.

I like The Daily Mile because it gives me some fresh air and a break from my work, I come back in feeling refreshed.

I like running with my friends. It makes me feel healthy.

I used to only be able to run one lap, now I can run all three!

I really enjoy The Daily Mile. It helps me run faster when I play football but it also gives me confidence to do other things in school. I think everyone should have a go at doing The Daily Mile.

I really enjoy running lots of times. I even manage more than a mile sometimes.

WHAT STAFF SAY ABOUT THE DAILY MILE

The children love being outside.

There are significant benefits for interdisciplinary learning, especially in numeracy and topic work.

It supports the rhythm of the classroom and the school and nursery day.

The children's confidence has increased.

Children are focussed and ready to learn when they come back into the classroom.

Relationships benefit from the informality of The Daily Mile - children engage with staff in a way which is more relaxed than in the classroom.

WHAT PARENTS SAY ABOUT THE DAILY MILE

Parental evaluations are consistently and overwhelmingly positive.

Children are sleeping better - they are 'tired in a good way'.

Children are eating better.

Children are fitter.

They are less fractious.

Children are talking about their health at home.

Families report that they are doing more exercise together at weekends.

It's fully inclusive and works well for children with Additional Support Needs.

SEE MORE ON WWW.THEDAILYMILE.CO.UK

THE DAILY MILE REMOVES THE BARRIERS TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

The Daily Mile is easy to implement and fun to do. Even children who are reluctant to take part in PE enjoy and participate happily in The Daily Mile. Children with mobility difficulties should be fully supported to take part as well.

1

No kit, no 'cool' kit, no time wasted changing, no forgetting or losing kit.

2

No body image issues, no revealing your body.

3

No equipment, no set up, no tidy up and no time wasted.

4

No staff training required.

5

No need to be sporty - it's health and wellbeing, not PE or cross-country.

6

No risk - takes place under teacher supervision in the playground.

7

No costs - it's easy and cheap to implement.

THE SCIENCE

It is widely accepted that physical inactivity and a sedentary lifestyle are bad for our health. It leaves children at risk of developing a range of adverse medical conditions during childhood and beyond into adulthood.

This contrasts with those children who are physically active - they will generally have better blood sugar regulation, improved bone density, less body fat, lower blood pressure and improved arterial development.

And evidence suggests that benefits go far beyond physical health. Regular physical activity, such as The Daily Mile, can lead to improvements in social, mental and emotional health too, resulting in children who...



//
The children were unfit.
What should be done? //

Elaine Wyllie, Headteacher

//
Like all really good ideas, the Daily Mile is simple and easy to implement. I was blown away by the enthusiasm of parents, staff and — most importantly — pupils for the concept. If all schools adopted it, we'd have an incredibly powerful antidote to the ills resulting from physical inactivity that plague modern day Scotland. //

Dr. Aileen Keel CBE, Acting Chief Medical Officer for Scotland

//
Lack of physical activity is a real problem. It has crept up on us and we have to fix it, particularly for kids. The Daily Mile is simple, fun and most importantly, part of everyday life for the kids. I spend a lot of time around the country trying to find the bright spots to learn from and spread to other places...this is my new favourite. //

Jason Leitch, National Clinical Director, Healthcare Quality, Scottish Government

//
The Daily Mile is a fantastic initiative, with teachers and parents seeing a significant impact on the health and wellbeing of those children taking part. //

Shona Robison, Cabinet Secretary for Health, Scottish Government

//
These teachers have not only helped to make these kids fit today, they have bought them another seventy years of better health. //

Maureen Bisognano CEO, Institute for Healthcare Improvement

//
Every child, no matter their circumstances, age or ability, can succeed at The Daily Mile. //

Thomas Dowens, Education Scotland

//
It's fantastic to see initiatives like The Daily Mile be established, showing real leadership from the education sector to improve children's fitness levels and their cognitive behaviour, and make a real difference to schools, teachers, parents and young people's lives. We know sitting still kills; not sitting still helps children build skills that will stay with them for life. //

Tanni Grey-Thompson
(Baroness Grey-Thompson, DBE, DL)

//
Initiatives like this will make a huge difference to children's health and fitness. //

Nicola Blackwood MP, UK Public Health Minister

//
Daily Running is one of the best interventions for regular physical activity in primary schools in a generation. //

Tim Howells, London Project Manager, England Athletics

//
Physically active children and young people perform better academically than their inactive peers and those who are most active benefit the most. //

Dr Richard Bailey, International Council of Sport Science and Physical Education

//
I think this mile a day will make a difference. Children must be given every chance to live healthily. //

Sebastian Coe (Baron Coe, CH KBE)



Already doing The Daily Mile? Add your school to our Daily Mile participation map at www.thedailymile.co.uk/participation-map

www.thedailymile.co.uk

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Facebook www.facebook.com/thedailymile.uk

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