

# Promoting children physical activity and movement through the PAMIA principles

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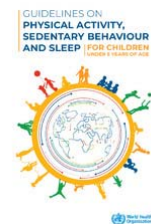
*CIAPSE 2025 - Holistic approaches to childhood development*  
Zürich, Switzerland – September 3-5, 2025



## Introduction

## Some key facts

- A physically active lifestyle has a positive impact on young children, either directly or later in their life (Telama et al., 2014)
- Children under 3 should accumulate at least 180 minutes (3 hours) of physical activity daily, spread throughout the day, at any intensity. This includes both light activity like standing and moving around, and more energetic play like running, jumping, and skipping (WHO, 2019)



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## Some key facts

- Programs have been implemented all around the world to promote physical activity in early years children



**EXAMPLE**

Joy in Motion Programme Document. A physical activity and well-being programme for early childhood education and care. LIKES Research Reports on Physical Activity and Health, 368. Valo Publication Series no 1/2015.

[https://liikkuvavarhaiskasvatus.fi/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/joy\\_in\\_motion\\_programme\\_document\\_LV\\_www.pdf](https://liikkuvavarhaiskasvatus.fi/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/joy_in_motion_programme_document_LV_www.pdf)

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## Some key facts

- AIESEP established a special interest group aiming to create an active network of researchers/academics with an interest in issues relating to early childhood education, physical activity and health, physical education and physical development



<https://aiesep.org/aiesep-sig-for-early-years/>

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## Some key facts

- Parents, grandparents, childcare professionals, preschool educators... can contribute to helping children become physically active and to design appropriate tasks to stimulate their development



Bellotti et al. (2021)



FWB (2022)



Active for Life (2025)



Sääkslahti & Mononen (2009)



Bley et al. (2018)

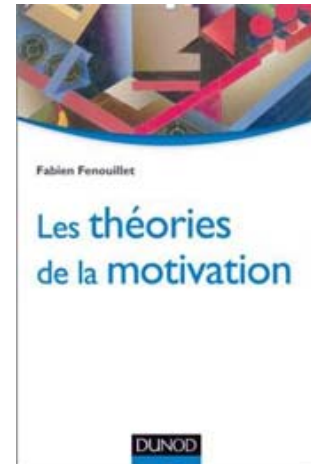
- Several resources are available and underline the role of play

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## A common denominator: creating motivation

- The term 'motivation' comes from the Latin 'moveo' which means 'to move'.
- Motivation is what explains the dynamism of behavior.
- It is almost impossible to have an exhaustive inventory of all motivational theories, as this universe is so vast and effervescent.

Fenouillet (2016)



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<https://selfdeterminationtheory.org/>

f t in

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Visit SDT 2026 Website



In this presentation

## Content of this presentation?

- Foundations of the PAMIA principles
- Illustration of the principles with young children in a family context
- Reflection on their application in various contexts

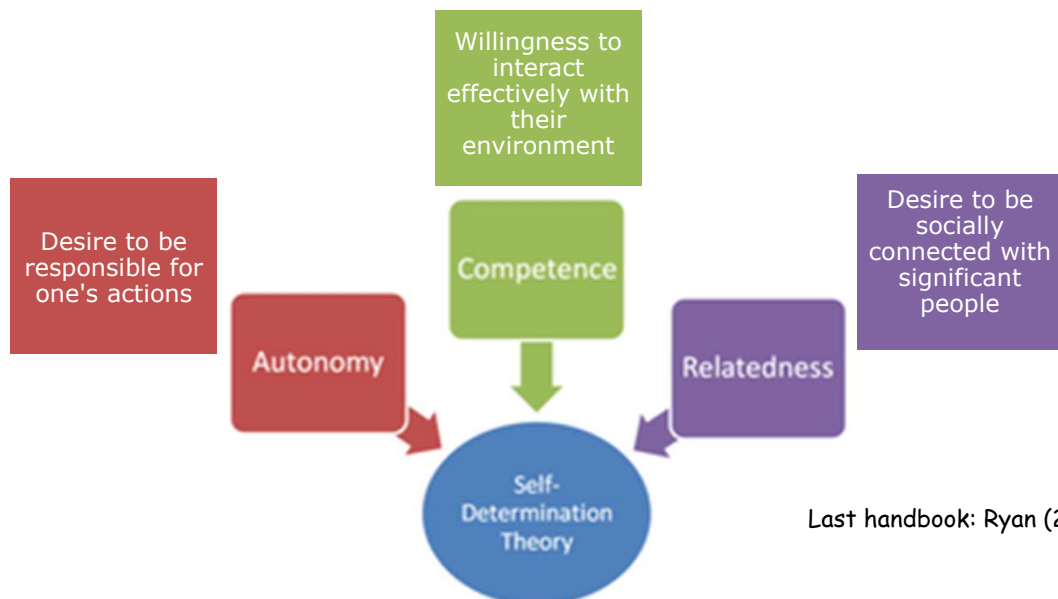


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## Foundation of the PAMIA principles

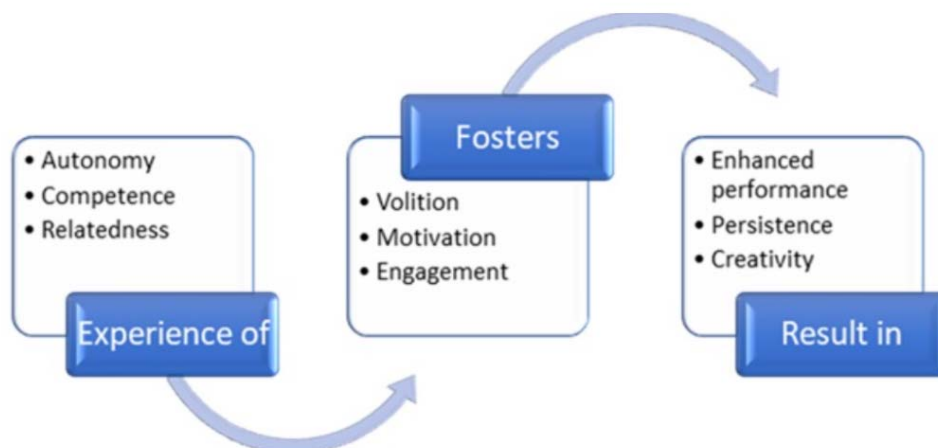
### Self-Determination Theory (SDT)



Last handbook: Ryan (2023)

## Self-determination Theory

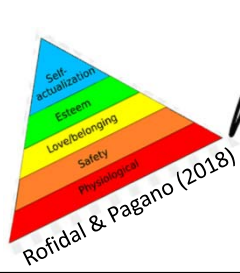
UK Coaching (2019)



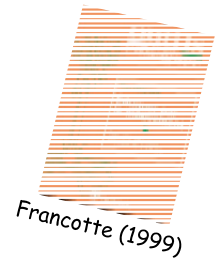
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**But there  
is still  
something  
missing...**





*Movement*  
... as a basic need !



**FIRST PRIORITY**

*Pleasure*



# PAMIA

2017, Retos, 31, 245-251

© Copyright: Federación Española de Asociaciones de Docentes de Educación Física (FEADEF) ISSN: Edición impresa: 1579-1726. Edición Web: 1988-2041 (www.retos.org)

## **Preparing physically educated citizens in physical education. Expectations and practices Preparar ciudadanos físicamente bien educados en Educación Física. Expectativas y prácticas**

Marc Cloes  
University of Liege (Belgium)

## The PAMIA principles

Cloes (2017)

- P** Pleasure - Foster enjoyment by giving meaningfulness and positive climate
- A** Achievement – Foster self-esteem and learning by guaranteeing ‘delicious uncertainty’
- M** Movement – Foster activity by proposing situations that lead students to expand energy
- I** Interaction – Foster contact with others and with the environment
- A** Autonomy – Foster learners’ opportunities to take decisions

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## The PAMIA questions

### Application:

- ☞ Reflective practice with self-interrogation before, during and after each activity



- ☞ Download the layout after the presentation to have an inspiration

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## 'PAMIA' - Pleasure

- When planning any activity, the 'educator' should think about how the children will be able to experience this positive emotion:
  - Will children have fun?
  - How will I ensure that the atmosphere of the activity will be pleasant?
  - Are the activities fun enough?
- During the activity, he/she will make sure to observe their behavior :
  - Are there smiles on the face of each child?
  - Are shouts of joy, encouragement, laughter regularly heard?
  - Do the children look at me with joy in their eyes?
- At the end of the activity, the 'educator' will take stock of what happened:
  - Did the children spontaneously say that they had fun?
  - Did they express their surprise that the activity was already over?
  - Did I myself have fun proposing this activity?

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## 'PAMIA' - Achievement

- **When planning** any activity, the 'educator' should think about how the children will be able to experience this positive emotion:
  - Will the children be able to succeed in what I am going to ask them to do?
  - How will I ensure that they will finish the activity feeling like they have made progress?
  - Are the intended learning tasks accessible to all children?
- **During the activity**, he/she will make sure to observe their behavior:
  - Does each child succeed in the actions proposed?
  - Do they tend to look for more difficult solutions, to give themselves more complicated challenges?
  - Do the children look proud of what they are doing?
- **At the end of the activity**, the 'educator' will take stock of what happened:
  - Are the children able to explain what they have learned during the activity?
  - Did some spontaneously declare that they had made good progress?
  - Can I concretely describe what the activities brought them?

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## 'PAMIA' - Movement

- **When planning** any activity, the 'educator' should think about how the players will consider that they exerted a lot:
  - Are children going to be able to be active for most of the activity?
  - How will I ensure that all participants leave the session feeling that they moved a lot?
  - Will the planned activities and planned organization limit unsuccessful waiting periods?
- **During the activity**, he/she will make sure to observe their behavior:
  - Does each child have the opportunity to participate in the activities?
  - Do they all get the same practice time?
  - Do the children seem to exert a lot?
- **At the end of the activity**, the 'educator' will take stock of what happened:
  - Do children look tired (red face, sweating)?
  - Did some spontaneously declare that they exerted a lot?
  - Did I use every opportunity to make them all move ?

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## 'PAMIA' - Interaction

- When planning any activity, the 'educator' should consider how children will feel that they have been able to make positive contact with the different actors/to discover the environment:
  - Will the children be encouraged to establish supportive relationships with their peers and with me?
  - How will I ensure that all of them leave the session feeling like they belong in the group?
  - Will the planned learning tasks and the planned organization help foster positive exchanges between children?
- During the activity, he/she will make sure to observe their behavior:
  - Does each child have the opportunity to feel part of the group?
  - Do all children receive the same attention?
  - Do they all communicate together?
- At the end of the activity, the 'educator' will take stock of what happened:
  - Do the children give the impression of forming a group?
  - Did they all have the opportunity to express themselves?
  - Did I pay the same attention to each of them?

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## 'PAMIA' - Autonomy

- When planning any activity, the 'educator' should consider how children will feel that they have had the opportunity to participate in decision-making:
  - Will the children be made to take on responsibilities and leadership?
  - How will I go about allowing each of them to participate in decision-making?
  - Will the envisaged learning tasks and the planned organization contribute to favoring decision-making?
- During the activity, he/she will make sure to observe their behavior:
  - Does each child have the opportunity to make decisions about their learning?
  - Do they all express their opinions?
  - Do children share leadership?
- At the end of the activity, the 'educator' will take stock of what happened:
  - Did children seem taking care of themselves?
  - Did they all have the opportunity to make decisions?
  - Did I leave them a margin of decision?

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## A parallel vision

Review | [Open access](#) | Published: 23 February 2017

### Framework for the design and delivery of organized physical activity sessions for children and adolescents: rationale and description of the 'SAAFE' teaching principles

[David R. Lubans](#) , [Chris Lonsdale](#), [Kristen Cohen](#), [Narelle Eather](#), [Mark R. Beauchamp](#), [Philip J. Morgan](#), [Benjamin D. Sylvester](#) & [Jordan J. Smith](#)

*International Journal of Behavioral Nutrition and Physical Activity* **14**, Article number: 24 (2017) | [Cite this](#)

Supportive, Active, Autonomous, Fair, Enjoyable

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Illustration of the PAMIA principles

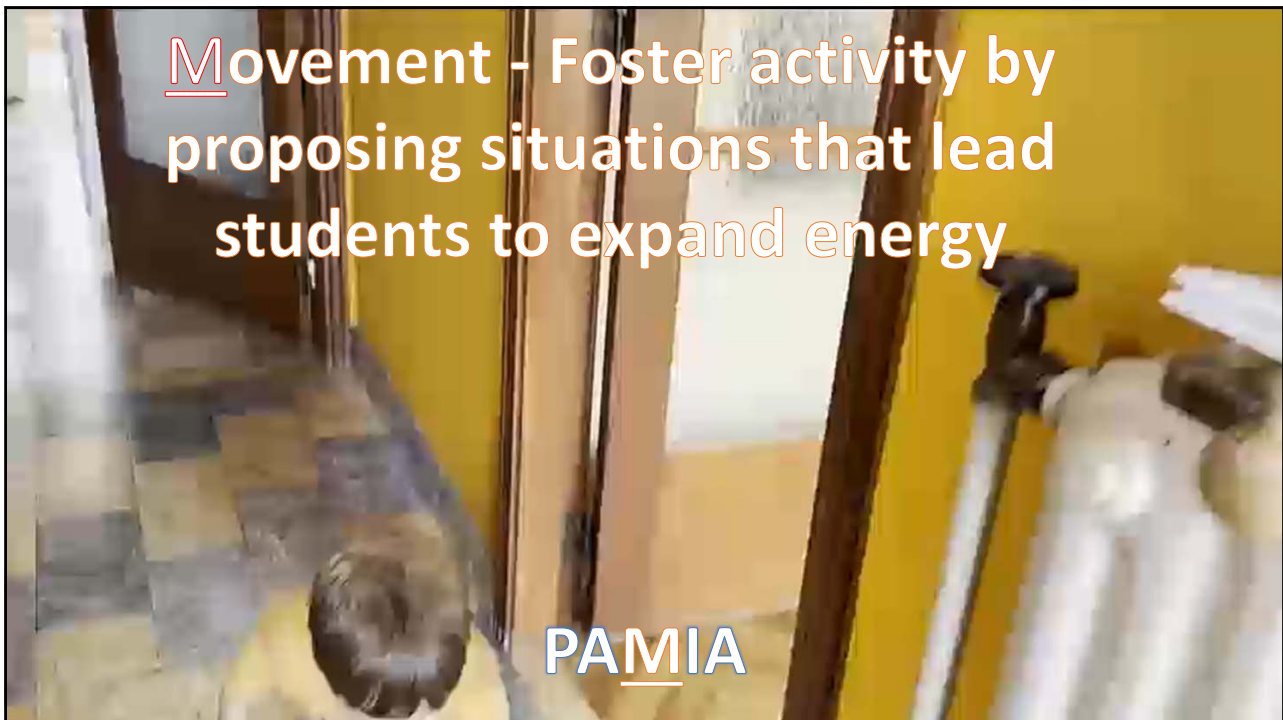
Pleasure - Foster enjoyment by giving  
meaningfulness and positive climate

PAMIA

Achievement - Foster self-esteem and  
learning by guaranteeing  
«delicious uncertainty»

PAMIA









What about your PAMIA examples?

## Propose your personal examples



Context: family, child care, health sector ...

Principle: pleasure, achievement, movement, interaction, autonomy

Short description: in as few words as possible



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## Propose your personal examples

PAMIA



Pleasure

PAMIA



Achievement

PAMIA



Movement

PAMIA



Interaction

PAMIA



Autonomy



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## Five key messages



PAMIA principles can be applied during young children activities

## Five key messages



Any adult taking care of young children can find ways to apply the PAMIA principles

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## Five key messages



Principles can overlap according to the proposed activity

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## Five key messages



Educators should learn to answer to the PAMIA questions

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## Five key messages for PETE



The priority is the children well-being and spontaneity

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<https://hdl.handle.net/2268/335267>



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