Wide variations seen in adherence to core principles of The Daily Mile may limit its effectiveness in real world settings.

Schools implement features of the intervention that appear more feasible and may need support to adhere to those recommended for effectiveness to increase physical activity.

Implementation of active mile interventions that are promoted in UK policy to prevent obesity and raise children's physical activity should be monitored.

Adherence to The Daily Mile's ten core principles for effective implementation in primary schools across Greater London

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About the research

- The Daily Mile, a popular school based active mile intervention which has a global reach, involves children running or jogging for 15 minutes every day or at least three times a week.

- There are ten core principles for successful implementation of The Daily Mile, of which three are key for effectiveness to increase children’s physical activity. These three key principles are:
  - that it is quick (15 minutes),
  - the whole school participates, and
  - that it takes place in the school day during lessons (excluding physical education lessons and scheduled breaks) at least three times a week

- Understanding implementation of interventions is crucial to identifying the potential impact and feasibility of scalable interventions in real-world settings.

- Qualitative studies report that schools adapt implementation of The Daily Mile intervention to suit their needs.

- Previous studies assessing the effects of The Daily Mile on children's health do not always report how it is implemented or to what extent its core principles are practised.

What we did

We sent a survey to 1,717 state-funded primary schools in Greater London to identify how many adopt The Daily Mile, and of those that do, whether they adhere to the principles – especially the three key principles recommended for effectiveness.

Policy implications

- Wide variations seen in adherence to core principles of The Daily Mile may limit its effectiveness in real world settings

- Schools implement features of the intervention that appear more feasible and may need support to adhere to those recommended for effectiveness to increase physical activity

- Implementation of active mile interventions that are promoted in UK policy to prevent obesity and raise children's physical activity should be monitored

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Key findings

1717 surveys distributed to all state-funded primary schools in Greater London

369 schools (at least two from every London borough) completed our survey

196 schools reported adopting The Daily Mile (at least one school in every London borough)

Adherence to The Daily Mile principles¹ implemented by schools in Greater London

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>% Schools</th>
<th>Simple</th>
<th>Fun</th>
<th>No change of clothes/shoes</th>
<th>Run/jog at own pace</th>
<th>Route and Risk² (i.e., safe)</th>
<th>Quick (15mins)</th>
<th>All weathers</th>
<th>100% participation</th>
<th>When to go³</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>87</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

³The Daily Mile ten core principles: [https://thedailymile.co.uk/steps-to-success/]; ²The Route and Risk principles were combined in the survey; ³‘When to go’ is recommended during curricular lessons (excluding physical education lessons) and at least 3 times a week (separately: 87% schools report in curricular time; 67% x3 per week)

- **55 (28%)** schools reported adherence to at least 6 principles (in various combinations)
- **19 (10%)** schools adhered to all 3 key principles recommended for effectiveness for increased physical activity
- In practice, principles that are more feasible are more likely to be implemented than those required for effectiveness

Further information
Ram B, et al. (2023) Real-world application of a scalable school-based physical activity intervention...PLOS ONE

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