

Total Reaction Screen - The Benefits for Children

Of real concern to all stakeholders is the lack of children exercising voluntarily and the decline in the number of children playing sport. The emerging trend is no doubt exacerbated by the boom in computer styled and augmented reality games. In parallel to this phase, is the escalation of poor fitness and obesity in what were once healthy children. Whilst diet plays an important role in the fight against obesity, its essential partner is exercise. Fitness, health and proper diet create leaner bodies with stronger muscles and bones and improve personal fitness and wellbeing. Fitter children face less risk of suffering from the lifestyle diseases and other potential emotional issues than do obese children.

It is a fact of nature that some children are naturally gifted with coordination whereas other children lack the most basic coordination skills. Many children do not play sports because they feel they are not good enough or are humiliated by their lack of ability. It is arguable that participation in sport is reduced because some people are embarrassed at their lack of ability and the prospect of being ridiculed for their inability to take part in a match to an acceptable standard. Imagine the prospect of greater sport participation through the improvement in participant's confidence and self-esteem and having a better mental outcome and a healthier body.

So, what is the role of the TRS in improving health and wellbeing of children? The TRS when used as a training aid for school children, offers an interesting and fun way to exercise and improve fitness levels. It is particularly beneficial for those children with learning or attention difficulties as it maintains their interest in involvement throughout its use. Exercise drills can be used in game like situations to make its use even more interesting and entertaining whilst improving a child's hand/eye coordination as well as their response and reaction times. The TRS is designed to focus the user's attention on what is about to happen. This requires both mental and physical preparation and concentration to a degree that leads to improved balance and anticipation. The aggregation of development of these fundamentals results in improvement in reaction/response times and in so doing ensures the users hand/eye coordination is improved.

Existing exercise programs may not be accepted by children as they are too mundane and fail to retain their interest. In Perth, Western Australia, trialling of 7 to 11-year-old students using the TRS confirmed that they found the concept appealing and interesting. They enjoyed using it and wanted to use it.

The results were:

- children participating in exercise without objection.
- children enjoying what they are doing – just having fun
- children gaining skills and improving coordination.

The TRS can make the difference in involving more children in exercise and co-ordination programmes with potential for greater participation in sport.

Achievement through challenge.