

A revised teaching assistant-led extracurricular physical activity programme for 8- to 10-year-olds: the Action 3:30R feasibility cluster RCT

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Plain English summary

The Action 3:30R feasibility cluster RCT

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Plain English summary

Many children are not physically active enough to stay healthy. The Action 3:30 intervention is an after-school club aiming to engage a range of pupils, be fun and increase physical activity. This study evaluated whether or not children who attend Action 3:30 clubs become more physically active.

A total of 335 Year 4 and 5 (aged 8–10 years) pupils in 12 schools across the south-west of England took part in the study. Two out of six schools assigned to the intervention arm did not run the club, meaning that four schools delivered the club; at least two teaching assistants in each school were trained to deliver an after-school club that ran twice per week for 15 weeks, and each session lasted 60 minutes. Six schools were comparison schools. Pupils in the 10 included schools wore an activity monitor for 7 days and completed surveys about their attitudes towards physical activity at two time points (before the start of the intervention and near the end). We also measured the cost of running the Action 3:30 club. We talked to pupils, teaching assistants, school staff and public health professionals about what they liked about the intervention and about potential improvements.

A range of pupils took part, including pupils with low levels of physical activity, and half of the pupils were girls. The results showed that schools found the intervention acceptable and that pupils enjoyed the club. Teaching assistants liked that the training provided them with professional development that they could use beyond the study. Club attendance was good in all four schools, with > 70% of pupils attending at least half of the sessions available to them. Using information from the activity monitor, there was no difference in the amount of activity between schools than ran the club and those that did not. The cost of running Action 3:30 was estimated at £1.64 per session per pupil.

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