



PUBLIC HEALTH INSTITUTE  
OF ICELAND

***everything affects us***  
*especially ourselves*

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## Everything affects us, especially ourselves!

is a project of the Public Health Institute of Iceland and 25 municipalities in Iceland. It did formally start 2005; the first part of the project will conclude two years later and the second part after six years.

**Goal:** The goal of the project is to promote healthy lifestyles of children and their families by emphasising increased physical activity and improved diet.

## Cooperation is the keyword

The circumstances of children and youths are shaped by society as a whole. If the plan is to improve the lifestyle of young people, cooperation is the keyword. In this respect, school and other educational institutions, the healthcare service, sports and youth programmes, the economy and social organisations play an important role, not to mention the family itself.

Fig. 1. Several Factors influencing the well-being and health of children



## **Municipalities' role**

Each municipality formulates its own policy and action plan regarding children's lifestyle, with emphasis on increased physical activity and improved diet. The approach can differ in accordance with different circumstances in municipalities. In each municipality an interdisciplinary task force has been formed to keep track of implementation of the project in its area.

## **Public Health Institute of Iceland's role**

Jórlaug Heimisdóttir is the project manager of *Everything affects us, especially ourselves* under the auspices of the Public Health Institute of Iceland. She supervises the project, works on its build-up and is the contact person for the municipalities. The project manager has the support of an interdisciplinary council, which provides consultancy and support in accordance with the wishes of each municipality. The Public Health Institute of Iceland organises courses for interested parties and holds joint meetings with municipalities. The centre's home page will provide a communications network for the project.

There has been developed a checklist that the municipalities can use to evaluate their status with respect to physical activity, nutrition and the related environment. Separate indicators have been developed from this checklist for community planners, primary school, kindergarten, parent-teacher organizations, school health services, sport clubs. Based on the list, it should be possible to map what is being done, where special emphases are required with respect to cost and other factors

In the attached picture (4) are shown Indicators for community planners. The Radial Profile Graphs can be used to identify areas for action in the municipality. Also each municipality can see where they stand compared to other municipalities. The Radial Profile Graph can be generated yearly or every second year to assess the progress

## Evaluation

The Public Health Institute evaluates the project in each participating municipality. A status assessment was done in the spring 2005 and it will be done again 2007 and 2010. The evaluation will be based on four different approaches:

1. Questionnaires are sent to school principals, both of kindergarten and elementary schools emphasizing the following elements:

- ◆ Availability of physical activity and sports at the school and the degree of students' participation.
- ◆ Availability of food in schools, wholesomeness of the food and the degree to which students eat the food offered by the school
- ◆ Instruction on healthy lifestyle in schools for students and parents.
- ◆ Environment of schools, walking and biking paths, instructions from the schools on modes of travel to and from school.
- ◆ Schools' instructions about sack/box lunches.

2. Survey of health-related lifestyles of children and youths, aged 11, 13 and 15.

- ◆ Mental well-being of the child
- ◆ Physical well-being of the child
- ◆ Food habits and utilisation of the school cafeteria
- ◆ Child's leisure time habits with the family and friends
- ◆ Attitudes toward leisure time, games and sports.
- ◆ Mode of travel to and from school

3. Survey on parents attitudes and experiences concerning obstacles to healthy eating and physical activity of their children

4. The height and weight of children age 6, 9, 12, and 15 will be obtained from the school nurse's electronic files.