

**The Mediating Role of Perceived Motor Competence in the Relationship
Between Actual Motor Competence and Physical Activity in
Children**

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This study aimed to investigate the mediating role of perceived motor competence in the relationship between motor competence and physical activity in children as hypothesized by Stodden and colleagues (2008) in their conceptual model of motor competence. A total of 207 children aged 8-13 years (58.9% girls) took part in the study. Actual and perceived motor competence (i.e., overall competence, and competence in locomotor and object control skills) were measured using the Test of Gross Motor Development, 3rd Edition, and the Perceived Motor Competence questionnaire in Childhood, respectively. Physical activity was assessed using a self-report questionnaire. Mediation analyses revealed that the relationship between actual motor competence and physical activity was mediated by perceived motor competence. Specifically, a significant indirect effect of actual competence on physical activity through perceived competence was observed for overall competence ($\beta = 0.168$) and object control skills ($\beta = 0.178$). The present study provides evidence towards mechanisms underlying the relationship between motor competence and physical activity as postulated by Stodden et al. (2008). Moreover, findings indicate that perceived motor competence is important for physical activity promotion during childhood. As such, fostering perceived motor competence should be considered a key outcome in physical education and youth sport programs.