

## KINDERKINETICS: AN INVESTMENT IN THE TOTAL WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN

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### ABSTRACT

*The total well-being of children entails sound development in all dimensions of their overall development. The young child has comprehensive developmental needs of which sound motor and physical development are main areas that needs to be addressed by experts in their fields. Motor abilities are one of the key areas of the school readiness make-up of young children, while the health of children have a strong relationship with physical activity patterns. Physical activity in children is not only advantageous for children's current health, but also provides a stronger platform for the maintenance of good health throughout life. High percentages of childhood obesity and motor backlogs among South African children reflects modern tendencies among youth of inactivity and the use of technology, and sets the basis for the development of chronic diseases and an unhealthy nation. Specialists of the movement needs of children are therefore essential to address the special needs children have regarding sound motor and physical development. Kinderkinetics emerged as a new specialized field from Human Movement Science to address the needs of children in this area, but also play an important role in the maintenance of a healthy body and mind. The aim of this article is to describe this development, to justify the need towards such a profession from a scientific point of view and to identify future challenges for this profession.*

**Key words:** Physical activity; Adapted physical activity; Motor; Children; Health; Kinderkinetics.

### INTRODUCTION

Any civilization should place a high priority on the health of children, as they will be society's next generation of workers, leaders and parents. As a result, their survival, health, nutrition and educational progress should be key issues to which attention should be paid in order to ensure their productivity as future citizens (Mandela, 1996). The Medical Research Council of South Africa (Steyn, 2007) reports that health services currently spends 8 billion rand per annum involving direct and indirect costs related to lifestyle related diseases such as heart disease and stroke. Disease prevention is therefore just as important as the treatment thereof and should receive high priority. Strategies to prevent diseases should therefore be in place from a very young age as research clearly indicates that exposure to health risks due to inactivity already begins in childhood, although the consequences are only experienced in mid- to later life. Figure 1 indicates the key stages in the development of lifestyle related diseases throughout the life course, where the bottom line indicates those who maintain a low illness risk due to an active lifestyle in contrast to those who are inactive (top