

# MEDIA RELEASE

NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TASMANIA

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ATTENTION: Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

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## A simple CrossMove may help build kids' brains

A University of Tasmania researcher is looking at using modern gaming technology to investigate ways of improving motor skills which could lead to more rewarding participation in sport for some children.

The simple act of reaching your right hand across your body to pick up an object on your left side seems like second nature to most, but this movement can be difficult for some children.

Dr Scott Pedersen, from the UTAS Faculty of Education, is an adapted physical educator who has significant experience teaching physical activity to children with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) and other developmental disabilities.

While teaching, he noticed that young children, children with general motor awkwardness, and children with developmental disabilities had trouble with movements that involve crossing the midline of the body.

“I believe that if children don't acquire this particular skill by the age of 10, they may experience less success in certain physical activities, which may lead to an early withdrawal from participation in sports,” Dr Pedersen said.

“There might be a chance to teach children how to incorporate midline crossing movements into their activities of daily living and that this might facilitate their overall brain processing.

It may lead to children being better suited to participate in developmentally appropriate physical activity and sport.”

To investigate this theory, Dr Pedersen started Project CrossMove, at the Skill Acquisition Laboratory on the UTAS Launceston campus. The project explores the effect of movement training programs on the speed at which children are able to initiate midline crossing movements.

Some of the training programs used by Dr. Pedersen will incorporate popular gaming consoles such as the Nintendo Wii, that simulate real exercise movements, such as simulating hitting or throwing a ball.

Parents of children between the ages of seven and 13 interested in participating in this study will need to contact Dr. Pedersen to schedule a day to visit the UTAS Launceston campus.

During the visit the child will play a fun arm and leg speed game, before and after either a traditional or simulated movement training program. This will take approximately one and a half hours.

**For more information, interviews, or to participate in Project CrossMove, please contact Dr. Pedersen phone (03) 6234 3554 email: [Scott.Pedersen@utas.edu.au](mailto:Scott.Pedersen@utas.edu.au)**

For more information on the project, see:  
<http://www.educ.utas.edu.au/ProjectCrossMove>

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