

Daily Physical Education

Overview

Are your students receiving quality physical education each day? A quality PE program that meets national guidelines is the cornerstone for a physically active school and helps support improved classroom behavior, physical fitness, and standardized test scores. Physical education programs provide standards-based daily learning opportunities, age- and developmentally-appropriate instruction, meaningful content and ongoing assessment. The skills, knowledge, and behaviors learned in PE help kids to establish and maintain active lifestyles well into adulthood.



Physical education is best and most impactful when instructed by a certified or licensed physical education teacher. SHAPE (Society for Health and Physical Educators) America recommends that schools provide 150 minutes of instructional PE for elementary students and 225 minutes for middle and high school students per week for the entire school year. Because physical education is based on a comprehensive, content-specific instructional curriculum, it should not be compared to or confused with other school-based physical activities such as recess, intramural sports, brain breaks or classroom energizers.

Take Action

Follow these suggestions to incorporate daily physical education into your school.

- Check out your state's physical education mandates and ensure that your school is meeting or exceeding the specific guidelines.
- Leverage your school health team to advocate for quality physical education that meets 150 minutes weekly for elementary school children and 225

minutes weekly for middle and high school students.

- Read through your district's Local School Wellness Policy.
 - Check to see if your school specifies a required number of instructional PE minutes each week.
 - Determine if students are permitted to sign [opt out waivers for physical education](#). If so, work with the school administration and School Board to decrease the number of waivers granted or to deny waivers entirely.
 - Look for language requiring PE to be taught by licensed or certified physical education teachers.
- Use a comprehensive and age-appropriate physical education curriculum. SHAPE America provides a guide to help align your curriculum with national standards.
- Ensure the teacher/student ratio in physical education is similar to other classroom sizes for optimal instruction and student safety.
- Conduct an inventory of your physical education environment and equipment. Consider activities that can be easily implemented in various areas outside a traditional school gymnasium such as the hallway, classroom, and outside.
- [Apply for a grant](#) from Action for Healthy Kids to enhance your PE program and equipment needs.
- Make this activity inclusive for all abilities: Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) that include physical education goals and objectives should be available for all students with identified disabilities.

Social Emotional Health Highlights

Activities such as these help students explore...

Self-Awareness & Self-Management: Daily physical education provides opportunities for children to identify and manage their emotions through movement. Endorphins from movement enhance our moods and prepare us to use our brains in creative ways, – positively impacting student health and academic success.

Social Awareness and Relationship Skills: The great part about daily physical education is the ample opportunities for team sports and games that it provides! Including more team and partner work into class teaches children how to be respectful team members inside and outside of the classroom. Many games require skills in communication and social engagement, which are valuable assets for children in all walks of life.

Tips



Work to have students moderately to vigorously active for at least 50% of each physical education class. Simple strategies include reducing class size, implementing instant activities, assigning routines, and utilizing PE technology such as heart rate monitors or pedometers.



Scheduling can be tough. If your school is unable to schedule daily PE, consider reworking your schedule so that all students receive the recommended minutes of weekly instruction.



An important component of a quality PE program is an adapted PE program to support all students. Be sure to create ways for all students to participate!



Remember that daily PE should complement your [Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program \(CSPAP\)](#).



Engage your students! Ask your older students to help plan or lead a day of physical education.



Engage [parents in physical education](#). Invite them to participate with their students for a day to highlight the importance of daily PE.



Engaging volunteers has a wide range of benefits. Volunteers can offer new perspectives and make a lasting impact and contribution



Encourage staff to attend physical education for their own workout! This supports [staff as role](#)

through their knowledge base and support. Volunteers can provide an extra helping hand or a needed, valuable skill set. Who in your network has skills or interests that complement your needs? Brainstorm ways to engage individuals, organizations or businesses as volunteers to help.

[models](#) for students and helps create a healthy school culture.

For more activities and ideas like this one, be sure to [sign up for our news and updates](#). And if you like what you see, please [donate to support our work](#) creating more ways to help build a healthier future for kids.

Additional Resources

[Online Physical Education Network \(OPEN\)- Free online curriculum for physical education \(US Games\)](#)

[National Physical Education Standards \(SHAPE America\)](#)

[Guide to Including PE Language in Wellness Policies \(SHAPE America\)](#)

[PE Program Checklist \(SHAPE America\)](#)

[Strategies to Improve PE Quality \(CDC\)](#)

[PE Lesson Plans \(SPARK\)](#)

[Fit & Flourish Manual- Lesson plans, worksheets and tips for more activity during PE \(Illinois Public Health Institute\)](#)

[PE Lesson Plans Focused on Running \(New York Road Runners\)](#)

[Nutrition Education Movement Activities](#)

[for PE \(New York Road Runners\)](#)

Related Activities

Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs

A Comprehensive School Physical Activity Plan (CSPAP) is a multi-component approach for schools to provide opportunities for students to be physically active for 60 minutes each day.

Open Gym

Is your school looking for ways to increase physical activity before or after school? Consider hosting open gym!

Fitness Testing

Fitness testing is a great way to monitor and assess students' ability as it relates to aerobic fitness, strength, and flexibility.

Avoiding PE Opt Out Waivers

Does your school have a waiver that allows students to opt out of physical education? If so, take action today!