

Healthy Active Children Policy
Questions and Answers Regarding Physical Education and Physical Activity

- Q. Are schools to implement 150 minutes of elementary physical education and 225 minutes of middle school physical education?
- A. No. This remained a recommendation of the State Board of Education with 225 minutes of Healthful Living rather than just physical education.
- Q. Are schools to implement 30 minutes daily of physical activity?
- A. Yes. This policy passed in March of 2005 and will take effect in the fall of the 2006-2007.
- Q. Does this 30 minute requirement replace physical education?
- A. No. Physical education is a component of Healthful Living Standard Course of Study. As part of the Basic Education plan, Healthful Living should be offered to every student. In physical education, students should be taught, have time to practice, and be assessed on skills and knowledge that create active adults.
- Q. What is the difference in Physical Education and physical activity?
- A. Physical education is a curriculum. It is the environment in which students are taught skills, knowledge and concepts that enhance a physically active lifestyle. In other words, physical education teaches us how to be physically active. Think of yourself as an adult, whom did not learned the skills for volleyball, softball, tennis, or pacing your self while running/walking. Most likely, you would not continue to participate in physical activity or recreational programs as an adult. Physical education builds skills, confidence and self-esteem to be physically activity. However, physical activity is a behavior that is being shaped. Physical activity can be done anywhere. Students may receive physical activity in a physical education class. However, students may not be comprehensively physically educated through physical activity.
- Q. How are schools supposed to implement this without extra time in the day?
- A. This policy is not an "add on." Physical activity can be provided in physical education classes, through recess, intramurals, integrated through physical activity based curriculum for classroom teachers and other creative ways. One creative way some schools are integrating activity is through the TVs in the classroom. In one school, the Physical Education teachers lead classroom teachers through 10 minute activities while the classroom teacher monitors for safety. Another school has developed videos that each classroom teacher utilize to lead activity. Finally, some schools are being creative in their teaching methods to make their classroom lessons interactive while teaching their curriculum. Think of this as we do "physical activity across the curriculum" and not an add on of 30 minutes to the school day.

Q. Does the 30 minute physical activity have to be in one time?

A. No, the physical activity can be broken down into three 10 minute blocks of time. The Center of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that health benefits can be gained in 10 minute increments. Therefore, this 30 minute time can be accumulated during three times throughout the school day. However, less than 10 minutes at moderate to vigorous activity levels, will not gain the health benefits that physical activity provide.

Q. Why is this so important?

A. The US Surgeon General declared an obesity epidemic in America. One in five NC students is overweight or obese. Type 2 Diabetes has increased significantly with the Hispanic and African American population at the most risk. Childhood depression, bipolar, schizophrenia, learned helplessness, and ADD/ADHD are just some of the learning differences that are more prevalent today than ten years ago. In addition, physical activity has been linked to decreases discipline referrals, increased attendance, reducing stress and improved academic performance. Research says that exercise, proper diet, rest and hydration have links to improving each of these conditions.

Q. What is "moderate" activity?

A. A brisk walk can be moderate physical activity. Moderate is when students will get their heart rates up just a little above normal. It does not have to be fast or hard exercise.

Q. If we can not take recess and physical activity away as punishment, what are we supposed to use?

A. There is no doubt that this is a classroom management issue. However, holding students in from physical activity as punishment or using severe or inappropriate exercise as punishment only provide negative inferences for students toward activity. Students tend to act up for several reasons. One of them is that they need physical activity and other reasons include being stressed and unbalanced natural chemicals in the body. Yet, other reasons for discipline problems are boredom or loss of attention. Good management techniques include getting to the root of why students are acting out and providing the basic hierarchy of needs.

Q. If we keep one student in for extra tutoring, does that count as punishment?

A. The general rule is, if one student gets physical activity or recess, ALL students get physical activity and recess. By keeping one students in, it becomes punishment.

Q. What if a parent requests that the students not have physical activity?

A. It is a State Board policy that every child receives at least 30 minutes of physical activity per day and it is not something that students can opt out. However, this does not mean that modification in the activity is not needed. Students should have modifications based on their physical needs, including special needs students.