

Physical Education and Physical Activity

**Exercise and recreation are as necessary as reading.
I will rather say more necessary,
because health is worth more than learning.**

—Thomas Jefferson



Thirty-six percent of Maine High School students report attending a physical education class on at least one day of an average week. This is 16 % less than in 1995.

— Maine Youth Risk Behavior Survey, 2005

Physical Education and Physical Activity

Physical Education and Physical Activity

DEFINITION

What is Physical Education?

Physical education is a curriculum and instructional delivery system taught by a qualified physical education specialist. A quality physical education program is critical to teach students the skills they need to be physically active for life. The program is developed and monitored by a trained physical education specialist to assist students with the biomechanical principles and physiological benefits of motor skill development, physical fitness, and development of personal social interaction skills. (MLR) Assessment for learning and of learning directs the instruction. A comprehensive physical education program includes moderate to vigorous physical activity on a daily basis with the accumulation of 150 minutes per week of physical education for elementary students; and 225 minutes per week for middle and high school students (NASPE, 2004). In addition to a comprehensive physical education program, opportunities for students to be physically active are encouraged throughout the school day, as well as before and after school.

What is physical activity?

Physical activity is any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that result in an expenditure of energy. Physical activity can be leisure time (i.e. recreation, sports, hobbies), household activity (i.e. sweeping floors, raking lawns), or occupational activity (i.e. regular walking, hauling, lifting, etc.). Physical activity provides health benefits to people who are active at an intensity that increases heart rate and requires heavier than normal breathing. The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE), recommends children accumulate at least 60 minutes and up, to several hours of physical activity per day while avoiding prolonged periods of inactivity. Regular physical activity and physical fitness make important contributions to one's health, a sense of well-being, and maintenance of a healthy body weight.

"Physical Activity is a behavior. Physical Education is a curriculum or class that includes physical activity. Students need both physical activity and quality physical education to develop lifelong, active-living habits."

—North Carolina's Recommended Standards document, pg. 3

RATIONALE

"Physical education is an integral part of the total education of a child" (National Association of State Boards of Education [NASBE], Fit, Healthy and Ready to Learn). Physical education includes a well-planned, well-implemented program that improves physical fitness; reinforces knowledge learned in other subject areas; involves self-discipline as well as skill development; provides experience in goal-setting, improved judgment, improved self-esteem and self confidence; aids in stress reduction; and strengthens peer relationships (National Association for Sports and Physical Education [NASPE]). Regular physical activity is linked to enhanced health and reduced risk for the development of many chronic diseases in adults.

Physical Education and Physical Activity

GUIDELINES:

1. Establish policies that promote quality physical education and promote lifelong physical activity.
2. Provide physical and social environments that encourage and enable safe physical activity during the school day (Centers for Disease Control, 1997).
3. Implement sequential, developmentally appropriate physical education curriculum and instruction (K-12) as indicated in the Maine Learning Results. This curriculum emphasizes increased participation in physical activity, and helps students to develop the knowledge, motor skills, and behavioral skills needed to adopt and maintain physically active lifestyles.
4. Provide extracurricular physical activity programs that offer diverse, developmentally appropriate activities - both noncompetitive and competitive - for all students.
5. Encourage parents and guardians to support their children's participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.
6. Provide training for personnel in teaching, coaching, recreation, health care, and other school and community fields that imparts the knowledge and skills needed to effectively promote enjoyable, lifelong physical activity among young people.
7. Assess the physical activity patterns of all children and youth, refer them to appropriate physical activity programs and services, and advocate for physical activity instruction and programs for young people.
8. Provide a range of developmentally appropriate programs that are attractive to all students.
9. Regularly evaluate physical activity instruction, programs, and facilities.

GUIDELINE 1: Establish policies that promote enjoyable, lifelong physical activity.
--

RATIONALE:

Policies are important because they define and establish the purpose, goals and safety guidelines of physical activity programs. Policies provide rules that guide schools and communities in planning, implementing, and evaluating physical activity programs for youth. Policies for the school's physical education program, extracurricular physical activity programs, and other school-based opportunities for physical activity promote enjoyable lifelong physical activity.

INDICATORS:

- A. Daily opportunities for physical activity are offered to all students from kindergarten through high school.
- B. School aged children and youth should participate in at least 60 minutes per day of moderate to vigorous physical activity. (NASPE, 2004b; Strong, et al., 2005; USDHHS & USDA, 2005)

Physical Education and Physical Activity

- C. Adolescents are required to engage in three or more sessions per week of activities that last 20 minutes or more at a time and that require moderate to vigorous levels of exertion. (NASPE)
- D. Adequate resources, including budget and facilities, are committed for physical education instruction and programs.
- E. Qualified and certified specialists are hired to teach physical education.
- F. Physical activity meets the needs and interests of all students, irrespective of their sex, race/ethnicity, health status, physical and cognitive ability or disability.
- G. Physical education programs are closely coordinated with other school health program components to ensure that daily physical activity is included in the overall school day.
- H. Physical education programs actively involve families as partners and collaborate with community agencies and organizations to provide opportunities for participation in physical activity beyond the school day.
- I. The use, or withholding, of physical activity as punishment is not allowed.
- J. Substitutions and waivers should not be allowed to fulfill physical education requirements. (NASPE position paper)

GUIDELINE 2: Provide physical and social environments that encourage and enable safe physical activity during the school day.

RATIONALE:

Cleanliness and safety of facilities and equipment help to ensure students' safe participation in physical activities.

INDICATORS:

- A. Access is provided to safe spaces and facilities.
- B. Procedures are implemented to prevent activity-related injuries and illnesses.
- C. All children in elementary schools should engage in at least one daily period of recess for at least 20 minutes per period. (NASPE position paper)

GUIDELINE 3: Implement sequential, developmentally appropriate physical education curriculum and instruction (K-12) as indicated in the Maine Learning Results. This emphasizes increased participation in physical activity, and helps students to develop the knowledge, motor skills, and behavioral skills needed to adopt and maintain physically active lifestyles.

RATIONALE:

A quality physical education program helps students develop an active lifestyle that will persist into and throughout adulthood through the development of knowledge, motor skills, and behavioral skills.

Physical Education and Physical Activity

INDICATORS:

- A. The physical education standards stated in the State of Maine's Learning Results for preschool through high school levels are aligned with physical education curriculum, instruction and assessment.
- B. Active learning strategies are used that emphasize increased participation in lifetime physical activities such as team building, Nordic walking, dancing, skiing, as well as cooperative activities, not just competitive team sports.
- C. Students are helped to develop the knowledge and skills they need to adopt and maintain a physically active lifestyle.
- D. Students are kept active for at least 50 percent of physical education class time.
- E. Physical education topics are coordinated with other content areas. For example, the benefits of being physically active may be linked with instruction about human growth, development, and physiology in science, and with instruction about personal health behaviors in health education.
- F. Students' scores on local assessments of physical education are used for program improvement.

GUIDELINE 4: Provide extracurricular physical activity programs that offer diverse, developmentally appropriate activities - both noncompetitive and competitive - for all students.

RATIONALE:

Interscholastic athletics, intramural sports, and sports and recreation clubs are believed to contribute to the physical and social development of young people. These activities can help meet the goals of comprehensive school health programs by providing students with opportunities to engage in physical activity and to further develop the knowledge, attitudes, motor skills, behavioral skills, and confidence needed to adopt and maintain physically active lifestyles.

INDICATORS:

- A. Programming is provided that meets the needs of all skill levels and physical abilities, including students with disabilities.
- B. Students are linked to community physical activity programs, and community resources are used to support extracurricular physical activity programs.
- C. Student-centered programs are established that consider the interests of all students.

Physical Education and Physical Activity

GUIDELINE 5: Encourage parents and guardians to support their children's participation in physical activity, to be physically active role models, and to include physical activity in family events.

RATIONALE:

Parental involvement in, and support of, physical activity programs are key to the development of an environment that promotes physical activity among young people. Involvement in these programs provides parents opportunities to be partners in developing their children's physical activity-related knowledge, motor skills and behavioral skills. Most young people participate in physical activity programs for fun and skill development. Parents may be able to influence quality, quantity and safety in a range of physical activities.

INDICATORS:

- A. Parents advocate for quality physical activity instruction and programs for their children.
- B. Parents support their children's participation in appropriate, enjoyable physical activities.
- C. Parents are physically active role models, and plan and participate in family activities that include physical activity.
- D. Families are actively involved in their children's education and provide family opportunities for physical activity beyond the school day.

GUIDELINE 6: Provide training for teaching, coaching, recreation, health-care, and other school and community personnel that imparts the knowledge and skills needed to effectively promote enjoyable, lifelong physical activity among young people.

RATIONALE:

The lack of trained personnel is a barrier to implementing safe, organized and effective physical activity instruction and programs for young people. Instructor training has proven to be efficacious; for example, physical education specialists teach lessons that are longer and higher in quality than those presented by personnel with less training. Training in active learning strategies, having hands-on practice in using these strategies and receiving feedback will likely increase teachers' use of these strategies (Centers for Disease Control, 1997).

Instruction on communication skills for interacting with parents and the community, as well as strategies for obtaining adults' support for physical activity instruction and programs, are beneficial. Teachers, coaches and school personnel should have the knowledge, skills, and materials for creating fact sheets for parents and assigning physical education and health education homework for students to compete with their families.

Physical Education and Physical Activity

INDICATORS:

- A. Teachers are trained to deliver physical education that provides a substantial percentage of each student's recommended weekly amount of physical activity.
- B. Teachers are trained to assess student achievement of the physical education standards in the Maine Learning Results.
- C. Teachers are trained to use active learning strategies needed to develop all students' knowledge about, attitudes toward, skills in, and confidence in engaging in physical activity.
- D. School and community personnel, as well as volunteers who coach sports and recreation programs for young people are trained on how to provide experiences for young people that emphasize fun, skill development, confidence-building, and self-knowledge, and on injury prevention, first aid, cardiopulmonary resuscitation, precautions against contamination by blood borne pathogens, and promotion of other healthy behaviors.

GUIDELINE 7: Assess the physical activity patterns of young people, refer them to appropriate physical activity programs, and advocate for physical activity instruction and programs for all children and youth.

RATIONALE:

Children with chronic diseases, risk factors for chronic diseases, and physical and cognitive disabilities have special physical activity needs. Physicians, school nurses, and other staff who provide health services to young people have a key role in meeting these needs and promoting healthy behaviors.

INDICATORS:

- A. The physical activity patterns of all children and youth are regularly assessed.
- B. Physical activity is reinforced for all children and youth.
- C. Inactive children and youth are counseled about physical activity.
- D. All children and youth are referred to appropriate physical activity programs.
- E. School faculty and staff, health care professionals, and parents advocate for physical activity instruction and programs that meet the needs of all children and youth.

GUIDELINE 8: Provide a range of developmentally appropriate programs that are attractive to all children and youth.

RATIONALE:

Community sports and recreation programs are integral to promoting physical activity among young people. Community programs can complement the efforts of schools and also provide an avenue for reaching out-of-school children and youth.

Physical Education and Physical Activity

INDICATORS:

- A. Diverse and developmentally appropriate community sports and recreation programs are provided for all children and youth.
- B. Community agencies and organizations collaborate to provide opportunities for all children and youth to participate in physical activity beyond the school day.

GUIDELINE 9: Regularly evaluate physical activity instruction, programs, and facilities.

RATIONALE:

Evaluation can be used to assess and improve physical activity policies, spaces and facilities, instruction, programs, personnel training, health services, and student achievement. Valid evaluations may increase support for and involvement in these programs by students, parents, teachers, and other school/community personnel.

INDICATORS:

- A. The implementation and quality of physical activity policies, curricula, instruction, programs, and personnel training are regularly evaluated.
- B. Students' attainment of physical activity knowledge, achievement of motor skills and behavioral skills, and adoption of healthy behaviors is measured.
- C. Facilities and equipment are maintained for safe participation and instruction.

MAINE RESOURCES AND CONTACTS

Physical Education Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment

Denise Preisser
Maine Department of Education
Tel: 624-6657
Fax: 624-6691
E-mail: denise.preisser@maine.gov

Asthma Management and Control

Desi-Rae Mason
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
Tel: 207-287-7302
Fax: 207-287-4631
E-mail: desirae.mason@maine.gov

Bicycle Safety Education Program Bicycle Safety for Teachers Training Safe Ways to School

Dan Stewart

Physical Education and Physical Activity

Maine Department of Transportation
Tel: 207-624-3252
Fax: 207-624-3251
E-mail: dan.stewart@maine.gov

Physical Activity

Amy Root
Muskie School IPSI
Tel: 207-287-4624
Fax: 207-626-5240
E-mail: amy.p.root@maine.gov

Physical Activity Promotion

Rebecca Drewette-Card
Physical Activity and Nutrition Program
Maine Center for Public Health
Maine Department of Health and Human Services
www.healthymainepartnerships.org/panp
Tel: 207-287-5084
Fax: 207-287-4631
E-mail: rebecca.drewettecard@maine.gov

Safe Routes to School - Maine DOT

Paul Niehoff
Maine Department of Transportation
Tel: 207-624-3254
Fax: 207-624-3251
E-mail: saferoutes.mainedot@maine.gov

NATIONAL RESOURCES

American Cancer Society

www.cancer.org

- Generation Fit Action Packet
- Improving School Health: A Guide to the Role of the School Health Coordinator
- Improving School Health: A Guide to School Health Councils

California Project LEAN

www.dhs.ca.gov/lean or phone: (916) 323-4742

Playing the Policy Game: Preparing Teen Leaders to Take Action on Healthy Eating and Physical Activity

National Association for Sports and Physical Education (NASPE)

www.aahperd.org/NASPE/

Physical Education and Physical Activity

800-321-0789

- Coaches' Code of Conduct
- Concepts of Physical Education: What Every Student Needs to Know
- Guidelines for School Intramural Programs
- Moving into the Future: National Standards for Physical Education
- National Standards for Beginning Physical Education Teachers
- Quality Coaches, Quality Sports: National Standards for Athletic Coaches
- Recess in Elementary School

National Athletic Trainers' Association

www.nata.org/

Guidelines on Lightning Safety

REFERENCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1997) Guidelines for school and community programs to promote lifelong physical activity among young people. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 46 (RR-6).

Marx, E; Wooley, S.F.; and Northrop, D. (1998) *Health is Academic: A Guide to Coordinated School Health Programs*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Move More: North Carolina's Recommended Standards for Physical Activity in Schools.
<http://www.ncpe4me.com>

National Association of State Boards of Education (NASBE). (2000) *Fit, Healthy and Ready to Learn: A School Health Policy Guide*. Alexandria, VA: NASBE.

Physical Education and Physical Activity
