

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INFORMATION

What is Pathways PE?

Pathways Physical Education offers instruction and practice in a realistic number of diverse skills and activities appropriate for third grade children. The curriculum is chartered to take best advantage of developmentally appropriate activities without overwhelming students or teachers. Repetition within classes and within units allows students to develop sufficient skills so they become comfortable with an activity.

Pathways includes only activities that can be realistically implemented in a variety of school settings, including those that have limited space, equipment, and supplies. Only activities that are manageable in diverse settings and produce substantial opportunities for children to actively engage in moving and learning sport and dance skills are included. Inactive games and drills, as well as activities requiring specialized equipment (e.g. formal gymnastics) are excluded. The curriculum has been implemented successfully by both physical education specialists and classroom teachers.

What is the Pathways Physical Activity Intervention?

The Pathways Physical Education (PE) curriculum, recess, classroom and exercise breaks are designed to help students develop a physically active lifestyle. You can help most by encouraging regular participation in physical activity in PE class and recess.

The primary objective of the physical activity component is to increase caloric expenditure in children participating in Pathways in order to reduce the gain of excess body weight and prevent or reduce obesity.

The physical education units taught in Pathways PE are from a very successful program called SPARK (Sport, Play and Active Recreation for Kids) that was developed to increase physical activity during PE class in ways that are creative and fun for both students and teachers. SPARK has been shown to dramatically increase 50% or more time engaged in “moderate to vigorous” physical activity per class. SPARK achieved this goal and is one of the most thoroughly evaluated physical education programs ever. This curriculum has received many honors, including being designated as an “Exemplary Program” from the Program Effectiveness Panel, National Diffusion Network, U.S. Department of Education.

The Pathways PE will be scheduled 3-5 days per week for 30 minutes, with a minimum of three days per week. In addition, free-play recess will be offered daily for 20 minutes; classroom exercise breaks will be implemented daily for 3-5 minutes; and students will participate in a *Modified American Indian Games* unit.

Why should our students develop and maintain acceptable levels of physical fitness?

Individuals who are physically fit and who engage in physical activity on a regular basis generally enjoy better health, have more energy to devote to activities of daily life, and learn physical skills easier and are more successful at them.

Individuals who are skilled and enjoy success in movement activities are more likely to have a wide choice of activities to pursue for exercise and personal enjoyment, lead active lives and maintain their level of fitness throughout life, and have increased opportunities for experiencing personal meaning through being physically active.

What kind of activities does Pathways involve?

Pathways emphasizes health-related fitness activities, however, it is also designed to reach other traditional physical education outcomes, including the attainment of motor skills, knowledge, and social values. The focus during class time, however, is on children being actively engaged in developmentally appropriate movement.

The physical education curriculum consists of two types of activities:

- Type 1 - Health-Related Fitness
- Type 2 - Skill-Related Fitness

Equal time is recommended for the two types of at least fifteen minutes each during a lesson. Game play is regularly incorporated into each type.

Warm-up and cool-down activities that require little explanation are integrated into the main lesson, rather than being separate components. For example, children can warm up for a tag game by first using walking as the locomotion skill and then progress to running. In this manner, Pathways reduces both the number of different activities a teacher needs to plan and the possibility of inactivity due to these transitions.

Pathways promotes quality, daily, physical education for students. However, due to the time constraints of a classroom teacher, and the reduced role of many physical education specialists, the Pathways yearly plan suggests the following minimum: three days a week for at least thirty minutes a class throughout the entire school year.

How can I help make the Pathways PE successful?

Children enjoy being active if they know they can be successful. It is important that they be able to choose activities that make them feel good about their involvement and positive about themselves. Your positive feedback, encouragement, and personal example of being active will greatly influence the attitudes and behavior of your class towards physical activity.