

Increasing Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity in Physical Education

National experts recommend that children and youth participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity each day and that a variety of activities be offered to ensure that the youngsters can find an activity they enjoy. Schools should insure that students at all age levels take part in at least 30 minutes of moderate-to-vigorous physical activity (MVPA).

Most traditional physical education classes yield somewhere between 10 and 40 percent of class time in MVPA. Current recommendations are for students to spend at least 50 percent of physical education class time in MVPA. Teachers who utilize modified lesson content and structure and implement aspects of the “new PE” can provide an increased opportunity for students to reach the recommended physical activity levels without adding more classes to existing schedules. The surgeon general recommends that all youth participate in 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity most or all days of the week and physical education is a venue that can provide some of that time.

Appropriate physical education instruction focuses more on the acquisition of lifetime skills and knowledge and exposes students to a wide variety of physical activities that can be engaged in for a lifetime. Traditional physical education is centered on team sports and often activities that exclude students who cannot perform at a high level.

What Schools Can Do

- Adopt and implement a curriculum that is designed and proven to increase MVPA
 - CATCH
 - SPARK
- Utilize best practice teaching strategies in each physical education class that are known to increase MVPA
 - Classes start with an instant activity
 - Students warm up during roll call
 - Instructions are brief and concise
 - Existing activities are altered to increase PA (relays, team sports, elimination games)
 - High interest, high activity games/sports/skill practice are added
 - Individual or small group practice is utilized
 - Student/equipment ratio doesn't exceed 3 to 1 during skill practice or 6 to 1 during game/activity play
 - Challenges to motivate students during skill practice/game play are provided
 - Equipment is appropriately managed to minimize students waiting to obtain equipment
 - There is a focus on lifetime activities
 - Teaching is based on research based curriculum

Resources

- [Promoting Physical Activity in Children and Youth: A Leadership Role for Schools, A Scientific Statement from the American Heart Association Council on Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Metabolism \(American Heart Association\)](#)
- [SPARK PE](#)
- [CATCH PE](#)