

# The pros and cons to physical education

[Sport & Tourism](#), [Fitness](#)



The Pros and Cons of Physical Education Most of us remember gym class. For many of us, it was the most hated or the most anticipated class. Those that were a little bit heavier or not as athletically inclined may remember the class as a nightmare, while others may remember it as the most exciting time of the day. Either way, physical education was required. Today, however, the necessity of physical education classes is up for debate. Parents, faculty, council members, and even the government are weighing the pros and cons of allowing physical education in school.

I believe that even though the funding being used to pay for equipment and gymnasiums could be better spent on books and materials for other classes, physical education should stay in school because it provides healthy exercise for children and teens. It also gives the less fortunate but deserving children a chance to play and excel in sports. Obesity is a huge concern in America today. We see more children, teens and adults eating unhealthy foods and not receiving enough exercise than any other point in history.

According to the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry website, in 2008 between 16% and 33% of children and teens were considered obese. That is approximately one in four children who is over the suggested body fat limit for their age. What causes these children and adolescents to become overweight? Lack of exercise and a healthy diet are the main reasons. " In the 2009 edition of America's Health Rankings™, it is estimated that obesity will cost the United States about \$344 billion in medical-related expenses by 2018, eating up about 21 percent of the nation's health-care spending. (National Association for Sport and Physical Education. 2009) Though school system cannot control what these children

do and eat at home but they can control the food they eat at school. The school system can also provide the minimum amount of exercise needed in a child's life. By insisting that they attend and participate in at least 60 minutes of physical education a day, the school system is ensuring that each child is given a chance to exercise and a chance at a healthier lifestyle. Children, especially when started at a young age, are easy to mold.

If they participate in daily physical exercise they are more inclined to establish a lifelong habit of daily exercise that will help to prevent obesity in adulthood and reduce the chance of expensive medical bills due to health issues in the future. There is, of course, a down side to physical education. Many children, but especially teens have self-esteem issues. If they happen to be a little bit overweight or advancing through puberty more rapidly than others or sometimes, for no reason at all these children feel the need to hide themselves.

Unfortunately, a class like physical education is not the best place to hide. No parent wants his or her child to be miserable, which is why some parents are saying that they believe the physical education class should not be mandatory. JoAnne Matthews-Saunders, a creative movement specialist, states that "few individuals, whether or not they have a disability, are willing to try new concepts, and they are even less likely to try them while surrounded by their peers. The idea of "failing" is not a concept that anyone embraces. I, as an adult, have a difficult time when it comes to failing or not measuring up to some of my peers, especially when it concerns sports. Teens and children are the same but many, as yet, do not have the skills to accept the fact that they will not always be the best. This leads to feelings of

defeat and again, low self esteem . Added to that, there is always peer criticism, which is very hard at any age but imagine a young person entering middle school or high school and being told that they would have to shower and dress with the other students of their gender .

That alone could cause anxiety but for those students with self-esteem issues, in their mind it would be close to torture . There are, however, parents, teachers and other professionals who believe that physical education will raise a child's self-esteem. Professionals have stated that “ youth receiving additional physical activity tend to show improved attributes such as increased brain function and nourishment, higher energy/concentration levels, changes in body build affecting self esteem, increased self esteem and better behavior... (Cocke, 2002)(Tremblay, Inman, & Willms, 2000) (Dwyer, Coonan, Leitch, Hetzel, & Baghurst, 1983)(Shephard, 1997)(Scheuer, Mitchell, 2003). As one can see, there are conflicting opinions on the subject of allowing students to choose whether they want to participate in physical education. It would seem that the health benefits outweigh other arguments but parents and psychologists still suggest that the physical education class raises psychological issues. Another issue that has been raised is the cost of physical education classes.

Many parents, faculty and concerned taxpayers believe that the money used to provide gym equipment, uniforms, fields, gymnasiums and the like could be better spent in different areas of the school There are so many schools that are lacking in materials, books and computers , the money being spent in physical education classes could be used to provide these items and perhaps give a child a better education than he or she may have otherwise

received . According to the 2010 Federal Budget Update on US Department of Education Grants, the President is proposing a \$78, 000, 000 budget towards the Carol M.

White Physical Education Program. The website does state, however, that “ the President has proposed a budget, but no Congressional action has been taken on the 2010 Education budget yet. At this point in the process, it we do not yet know which programs will materialize and at what amount. Congress may reject or change part or all of the proposed budget, though the President’s suggestions do seem to be more in line with Congressional efforts in recent years than the previous administration’s education proposals . ” (2009) As one may be able to see, even Congress is debating the cost of school programs.

There is no information stating how much of that funding would be going toward physical education classes but the question still remains of whether it should be used toward providing for other programs. While the placement of funding is still up for debate the fact that physical education classes provide a chance to play sports is not. At the private school I attended the school paid for the field and transportation for our sports but equipment, such as soccerballs, had to be donated or we would need to provide our own. My uniform, for example, and all other equipment I needed for my position as goal keeper, my parents had to purchase.

Policies are different at every school and most state-funded schools supply the equipment needed. Even though some schools may, not every school provides transportation to and from home to extracurricular activities. For children whose families are unable to shuttle them back and forth to their

<https://assignbuster.com/the-pros-and-cons-to-physical-education/>

practices and games when other transportation is unavailable, physical education is the only time they have any chance to play a sport. It provides children and teens a chance for competitive exercise, companionship, teamwork and a desire to participate in sports and healthy activities outside of school.

In the end everything boils down to the same question: Should physical education be mandatory? According to a report from Education.com "physical activity produces overall physical, psychological and social benefits. Inactive children are likely to become inactive adults. Physical activity helps children with controlling weight, reducing blood pressure, raising HDL ("good") cholesterol, reducing the risk of diabetes, and improved psychological well-being, including gaining more self-confidence and higher self-esteem." (n. d. This statement as well as others that have been provided show that there are more benefits to mandatory physical education in schools such as health benefits, sports, and teamwork but the cost of the class and possible emotional stress still leave many questioning its necessity. I personally believe that the class should be mandatory. Children and teens should be allowed to make certain choices in their young lives but in this case I believe that it is in their best interest to participate physical education classes.