

# Physical education is important

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DyEsha Robinson EDU 460 Motivational Paper September 23, 2009 Educators across the country are worried that kids aren't getting enough physical fitness. Kids in elementary school may be getting a lot of their activity on the playground at recess instead of P. E. classes. Most grade schools don't have P. E. teachers. Regular teachers can teach the kids physical education, but the state says many of them don't feel equipped to do that. Statistics prove more kids are becoming inactive and overweight. Among youth six to 19 years old, 16-percent are overweight.

That's more than 9-million kids across the country. To compound the problem, state officials say as schools strive to meet intense academic standards with programs like "No Child Left Behind", schools are de-emphasizing P. E. P. E. encourages kids to find something active they love to do, like dancing, swimming, hiking, even skateboarding, because then they're more likely to develop healthy habits. Put simply, at a time when every penny is being pinched by every school in every district in every county in every state, physical education is taking a beating.

The experts and educators say there is no doubt that the erosion of P. E. has been a major contributor to the skyrocketing obesity rates. And, of course, the more kids are unhealthy, the less they can exercise. This is their circle of life. Improving children's health may not be a convincing rationale for school administrators. A big argument for cutting back on P. E. is that it wastes time that kids need to be spending in academics, and that it will reduce test scores, which is the death knell for schools.

But a studies show that spending more time in P. E. does not interfere with academic achievement. In fact, in some studies, including ours, there is some evidence that it might even improve academic achievement. Other studies have shown that P. E. boosts brainpower (attention, test-score fanatics) if it's done right. That may be the key to fighting obesity as well— instead of just changing the amount of P. E. kids get, change the type. Learning to manage children's behavior in the outdoorenvironment might help with classroom management inside.

Going outside and participating in a physical activity provides a break from the brain drain of sitting in the desk, so perhaps the teacher benefits as much as the students and everyone goes back in more refreshed and with a more positive attitude. The U. S. Department of Education contends in a newly released study that 99 percent of public elementary schools have some type of physical education built into their curriculum in 2005. But how often students actually engaged in physical activity varies widely. Between 17 and 22 percent of students attended P. E. each school day.

Another 11 to 14 percent scheduled P. E. three or four days a week and 22 percent scheduled P. E. one day a week. Exercise creates more alertness in a classroom situation. It stimulates more of the natural uppers in brain, like dopamine, and it improves working memory and problem solving skills.

Sources <http://www.cnn.com/2006/HEALTH/08/20/PE.NCLB/index.html>  
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