

What can I do, as a parent?

Fortunately, parents can do several things to increase their child's physical activity at school and home. You can:

- »» Talk with your child's teacher to make sure they are giving students the minutes of PE required by law.
- »» Talk with your child's principal to make sure that PE is taught by qualified teachers, and that teachers are following the recommended guidelines (PE standards).
- »» Set a positive example by leading an active lifestyle yourself.
- »» Take children to places where they can be active, such as public parks, community baseball fields or basketball courts.
- »» Be positive about the physical activities in which your child participates in and encourage them to be interested in new activities.
- »» Make physical activity fun. Fun activities can be anything your child enjoys, either structured or non-structured. Activities can range from team sports or individual sports to recreational activities such as walking, running, skating, bicycling, swimming, playground activities or free-time play.
- »» Instead of watching television after dinner, encourage your child to find fun activities to do on their own or with friends and family, such as walking, playing chase or riding bikes.
- »» Be safe! Always provide protective equipment such as helmets, wrist pads and knee pads and ensure that physical activity is age-appropriate.

To learn more, go to publichealth.lacounty.gov/physact

Benefits of an effective physical education program:

- »» Helps children feel better about themselves
- »» Helps children get better grades and test scores
- »» Improves attendance
- »» Teaches work skills, like planning, goal setting, teamwork, problem solving, and decision-making
- »» Lowers the risk for depression and the effects of stress
- »» Lowers the risk for diabetes, heart disease and other chronic conditions caused by obesity
- »» Helps children prepare to be productive, healthy members of society
- »» Improves children's overall quality of life

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health Division of Chronic Disease and Injury Prevention's Choose Health LA initiative is supporting teachers in providing high-quality Physical Education in schools where there are high levels of childhood obesity.

Learn more about what students should know and be able to do according to their grade level in the Physical Education Model Content Standards for California Public Schools:

cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/pestandards.pdf

PARENT'S GUIDE TO

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Growing a Healthier Generation of Students



Why is Physical Education (PE) important to include in a school curriculum?

More children have diabetes and high blood pressure now than ever before because they are at an unhealthy weight. In fact, if the childhood obesity epidemic does not change, this will be the first generation of children that have a shorter life expectancy than their parents. This is in large part because students spend more time sitting and less time being active at school and at home than they did in the past. If schools do not offer quality physical education, children will be less likely to learn the basic skills and positive attitude they need to be more active.



Minutes of Physical Education Required By Law:

Elementary grades (1-6) require a minimum of 200 minutes each ten school days, and Secondary grades (7-12) require a minimum of 400 minutes each ten school days.

Who can teach Physical Education?

By law, only teachers may provide PE instruction. Coaches, instructional aides, paraprofessionals and volunteers may only assist teachers. The only exception is for the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp (JROTC) instructors, who are typically not credentialed teachers, but may give students PE credits for participating in high school JROTC programs. It is important to note that JROTC students do not receive instruction in all required physical education areas.

Physical Education (PE) is an academic subject, just like science. People often think that PE is the same as physical activity. But it is not. PE teaches physical skills like catching and throwing a ball. It provides knowledge such as game rules and how exercise improves health. PE can help students enjoy and have a good attitude about being active. This is a starting point for creating healthy, life-long physical activity habits.

Physical activity is any type of body movement. This includes recreational activities like jumping rope, playing soccer or lifting weights. But it also includes daily activities like walking to the store, riding a bicycle, taking the stairs or doing chores.



Grading

Just like with other subjects, PE grades should be based on how well a student learned the teacher's lessons. For PE, this means learning skills like throwing or catching and knowledge like game rules or how activity affects health. Grades should not only be based on dressing, effort, participation, work habits or behavior.

What are the PE requirements for high school students?

The law requires a minimum of two years of PE for a high school diploma. But this can increase to four years for those students in high school who do not pass 5 of the 6 items of the California Physical Fitness Test (FITNESSGRAM®) in the 9th grade. School districts establish the PE curriculum for students. Some school districts may require more than the two years regardless of students' FITNESSGRAM® test results.

High school students must receive instruction in eight areas:
How physical activity effects health / Gymnastics and tumbling /
How muscles, bones, and tendons help the body move /
Water sports / Individual and two-person activities /
Rhythms and dance / Team activities / Combatives (like self-defense)

Some high schools let certain classes like marching band, cheer, and sports substitute for physical education class. Usually, they do this because these classes involve some physical activity. However, these classes typically do not cover the eight areas. So, they do not teach students the basic skills and knowledge required for PE.