



PHYSICAL EDUCATION



A planned, sequential, K-12 curriculum that provides cognitive content and learning experiences in a variety of activity areas such as basic movement skills; physical fitness; rhythms and dance; games; team, dual, and individual sports; tumbling and gymnastics; and aquatics. Quality physical education should promote, through a variety of planned physical activities, each student's optimum physical, mental, emotional, and social development, and should promote activities and sports that all students enjoy and can pursue throughout their lives. ¹

Physical Education positively impacts student achievement by:

- Increasing self-esteem
- Decreasing levels of anxiety and stress
- Improving academic performance
- Although less time was available for other academic subjects, standardized test scores were not effected

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH ²

Literature on youth ages 11-21 identifies the most constant relationships among psychological variables and physical activity in youth. Physical activity was consistently related to improvements in self-esteem, self-concept, depressive symptoms and anxiety and stress which are important predictors of academic performance and socialization. Several studies found that self-esteem, self-concept improved and stress and anxiety decreased in relation to physical activity. Self-concept was described as the “highest payoff” of physical activity.

POSITIVE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ³

Evidence that physical activity is positively associated with academic performance was found in two prominent studies, the School, Health, Academic Performance and Exercise (SHAPE) study and the Australian Schools Health and Fitness Survey (ASHFS) study. The results suggest that physical activity is positively related to scholastic rating and self-perceived health and saw no decrease in academic performance despite a reduction in class time. The 2-year follow-up suggests a possible advantage for arithmetic and reading among those in the daily physical activity program. Classroom behavior was consistently reported by teachers as improved among students engaging in physical activity.

DAILY PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND HEALTH ⁴

Fifth grade (10 yrs) students were evaluated after engaging in daily physical activity. The ability of students to perform physical work increased while their body fat decreased when they were compared with two control groups. In addition to the health benefits from daily exercise, students also saw an improvement in arithmetic and reading scores despite having 50 minutes less instruction each day.

INCREASING TIME SPENT ON PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IS NOT DETRIMENTAL TO ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT ⁵

Schools were evaluated to determine the effects of less time spent on academic subjects. Although less time, up to 109 minutes per week, was spent on academic subjects no reductions were found in academic achievement. Over 2 academic years, the average amount of time spent on physical activity was 57-76 hours. Although academic achievement did not increase, there was no detrimental effect of less time spent on academic subjects.

HABITUAL PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE ⁶

The famous Trois Rivieres Canadian experiment was reviewed to determine whether a regular physical activity program would improve or worsen academic performance. Students who participated in a regular physical activity program consistently out performed the control students in all grades. Interestingly, females out performed males in all grades showing an larger academic advantage from participation in physical activity.

REFERENCES

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