

INCREASING PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY: A FRAMEWORK FOR SCHOOLS

2017



National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion
Division of Population Health



Introduction

Schools are in a unique position to help children and adolescents get the nationally recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day.^{1,2} Through the Whole School, Whole Community, Whole Child (WSCC) model, schools can provide many opportunities for students to be physically active.³ The WSCC model includes physical education and physical activity. It also helps to promote:

- The opportunities offered to students to be physically active before, during, and after school.
- The policies and practices schools use to provide physical education and physical activity before, during, and after school.

A **Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP)** is a framework for planning and organizing activities for school physical education and physical activity.⁴ It can help schools be strategic in addressing this aspect of the WSCC model. The goal of a CSPAP is to increase physical activity opportunities before, during, and after school and to increase students' overall physical activity and health. Healthy and physically active students tend to have better grades, school attendance, cognitive performance (e.g., memory), and classroom behaviors (e.g., on-task behavior).^{5,6}

This document explains the CSPAP framework for school physical education and physical activity and identifies key professional development opportunities and resources to help schools implement this framework.

Physical activity is defined as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure.⁷ Examples include walking, running, swimming, and yoga.



Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP)

Components of the Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program Framework

The five components of the CSPAP are explained in the graphic below. This graphic shows how these components can be integrated into the school environment. It also illustrates the many ways that students can be physically active before, during, and after school.



PHYSICAL EDUCATION is a K–12 academic subject that provides standards-based curricula and instruction that is part of a well-rounded education.⁸ Physical education is designed to develop the knowledge and behaviors for physical activity, physical fitness, and motor skills in students.⁸ It serves as the foundation for equipping students to be physically active in other areas of the school and beyond.⁴



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DURING SCHOOL includes classroom physical activity and recess.⁴ Classroom physical activity includes any physical activity done in the classroom (e.g., stretching, jumping, dancing) during the school day.^{2,9} Recess is a regularly scheduled period within the school day for physical activity and play that is monitored by trained staff and volunteers.¹⁰



PHYSICAL ACTIVITY BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL provides opportunities for students to be physically active and practice what they have learned in physical education class.^{2,9} Activities might include walking or biking to and from school, physical activity clubs, intramural programs (sports organized by the school or community in which any child can participate), interscholastic sports (competitive sports between schools), and physical activity in before-school and after-school extended day programs.⁴

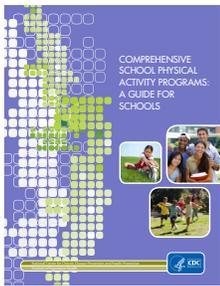


STAFF INVOLVEMENT means that school staff members serve as positive role models for wellness and integrate physical activity into classroom instruction and breaks. It also means that staff members support recess, clubs, intramural programs, and other physical activity offerings.^{4,9} Schools can also provide employee wellness programs to encourage physical activity among school staff.⁹



FAMILY AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT in physical activity means that parents, school staff, and community members work together to increase physical activity opportunities before, during, and after the school day.⁹ Family and community members can also work with schools to promote opportunities for physical activities inside and outside of the school building.¹¹ Community organizations can establish shared use agreements with schools that allow them to use school facilities for physical activity opportunities or events.^{2,9}

Support for the Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program Framework



Schools can use the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) *Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs: A Guide for Schools* to engage in a step-by-step process to develop, implement, and evaluate a CSPAP.⁴

This process helps schools develop a yearly plan for physical education and physical activity that they can implement and evaluate. In addition, the CSPAP framework—as a whole or as individual components—can be included in local wellness policies and school improvement plans to further support and provide guidance on school physical education and physical activity policies and practices.

Resources to Support the Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program Framework

Schools can use the following resources (available online) to establish physical education and physical activity opportunities that address the needs of students, staff, families, and community members. Many public and private partnerships have also been created to support the CSPAP framework. See the [Active Schools interactive infographic](#) for information about additional resources and grants.

General School Physical Education and Physical Activity Resources

Action for Healthy Kids

Resources and tools for schools. Free registration required to access these tools.

Active Schools

Resources, tools, and grant opportunities to create an Active School environment where physical activity is integrated before, during, and after school for at least 60 minutes every day.

Alliance for a Healthier Generation

Information about the Healthy Schools Program and resources for schools, including tools for physical education and physical activity. Free registration required to access these tools.

CDC: *Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs: A Guide for Schools (2013)*

Provides step-by-step guidance to schools and school districts to develop, implement, and evaluate comprehensive school physical activity programs.

CDC: *Health and Academic Achievement (2014)*

Provides a series of resources—including a Health and Academic Achievement overview document, public use PowerPoint slides, and podcasts—to help make the case for improving school physical activity and nutrition policies and practices to support health and learning.

CDC: *School Health Guidelines (2011)*

Serves as the foundation for developing, implementing, and evaluating school-based healthy eating and physical activity policies and practices for students.

CDC: *School Health Index (2014)*

Provides an online self-assessment and planning tool to help schools improve health and safety policies and practices, including those on physical education and physical activity.

CDC: *Secular Changes in Physical Education Attendance Among U.S. High School Students (2016)*

Explains the long-term trends in physical education attendance among US high school students over the past 2 decades.

CDC: *Tips for Teachers (2014)*

Provides information on low- and no-cost ways that teachers can support healthy eating and physical activity in the classroom.

[CDC: The Association Between School-Based Physical Activity, Including Physical Education, and Academic Performance \(2010\)](#)

Examines the existing research on the relationship between school-based physical activity, including physical education, and academic performance.

[National Association of Chronic Disease Directors: State School Health Policy Matrix \(2014\)](#)

Outlines and provides a direct link to relevant state policies in all 50 states for competitive foods and beverages, physical education and physical activity, and administration of medication in the school environment.

[National Association for State Boards of Education: Fit, Healthy, and Ready to Learn, Chapter D on Policies to Promote Physical Activity \(2012\)](#)

Provides guidance on developing a multifaceted set of policies aimed at establishing comprehensive school-based physical activity opportunities.

[National Physical Activity Plan Alliance: National Physical Activity Plan \(2016\)](#)

Provides a comprehensive set of policies, programs, and initiatives designed to increase physical activity in all segments of the US population. It specifically provides a section on the education sector.

[Rudd Center for Food Policy & Obesity: WellSAT 2.0 \(2015\)](#)

Measures the quality of written school district wellness policies.

[SHAPE America](#)

Information about and resources to support a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program from the national professional association for health and physical educators.

[Presidential Youth Fitness Program](#)

Information and resources to support the implementation of this program to help schools achieve excellence in physical education through quality fitness education and assessment practices.

Targeted Professional Development Opportunities

[Alliance for a Healthier Generation's Training Center](#)

Provides trainings on physical education and physical activity and provides opportunities to participate in online discussions facilitated by the Alliance's national advisors. Free registration required.

[CDC: e-Learning Course on Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs: A Guide for Schools](#)

Provides an overview of the five components and process (develop, implement, and evaluate) of a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program. The course provides continuing education units (45–60+ minutes).

[Physical Activity Leader \(PAL\) Learning System](#)

Prepares school staff and other champions to be advocates for physical education and physical activity in their community. This half-day workshop provides online follow-ups with participants on a quarterly basis.

[Presidential Youth Fitness Program Online and In-Person Training Modules](#)

Includes topics that range from strategies for program implementation to the role of fitness education and assessment in whole school wellness programming and best practices for administering FitnessGram® assessments and use of resulting data. Free registration required for the online modules. In-person opportunities offered by certified state trainers.

Key Resources by Topic

Physical Education

[CDC: Physical Education Curriculum Analysis Tool \(PECAT\) \(2006\)](#)

Helps school districts conduct a clear, complete, and consistent analysis of written physical education curricula, based on national physical education standards.

[SHAPE America: National Standards for K–12 Physical Education \(2013\)](#)

Defines what a student should know and be able to do as result of an effective physical education program.

[SHAPE America: The Essential Components of Physical Education \(2015\)](#)

Identifies the critical policies and practices that guide school districts and schools in developing an effective school physical education program.

Physical Activity During School: Recess

[CDC and SHAPE America: Recess Planning in Schools: A Guide to Putting Strategies for Recess into Practice \(2017\)](#)

Provides a guide to help schools develop a written recess plan.

[CDC and SHAPE America: Recess Planning Template \(2017\)](#)

Provides a customizable template for schools to use to document the strategies they will use in their school recess plan.

[CDC and SHAPE America: Strategies for Recess in Schools \(2017\)](#)

Describes 19 evidence-based strategies for planning and providing recess in schools.

[Playworks Playbook](#)

Provides a recess checklist for the playground, stories about experiences on the playground, ideas for games and activities to play with students.

[SHAPE America: Guide for Recess Policy \(2016\)](#)

Identifies policies for recess and includes recommended language, accountability measures, and rationale for each recess policy.

[SHAPE America: Recess Website](#)

Provides an electronic tool kit that identifies additional resources that schools can use to help address 19 evidence-based strategies.

Physical Activity During School: Classroom Physical Activity

[Active Academics \(2013\)](#)

Provides classroom teachers with practical physical activity ideas that can be integrated into regular classroom content areas.

[GoNoodle](#)

Provides free online resources for teachers to use for physical activity breaks for students.

[North Carolina's Energizers \(Classroom-Based Physical Activities\) \(2015\)](#)

Provides ideas for physical activity and physical activity breaks that can be integrated with classroom content.

Physical Activity Before and After School

[Alliance for a Healthier Generation: Healthy Out-of-School Time Assessment \(2011\)](#)

Gives out-of-school sites a tool to assess policies for promoting healthy eating and physical activity and resources to help sites use the assessment results to develop an action plan.

[Alliance for a Healthier Generation and National Recreation and Park Association: Healthy Out-of-School Time Wellness Policy Implementation Guide for Parks and Recreation Agencies \(2016\)](#)

Provides real-life examples, best practices, and steps to help implement a wellness policy and create sustainable changes at out-of-school sites.

[Healthy Kids Out of School: Youth Sports Website](#)

Provides materials for youth sports organizations and videos for helping coaches increase the time children and adolescents are moving during practice. These materials can be used by anyone who engages young people in playing sports and team games.

[Healthy Out-of-School Time Coalition: National Afterschool Association Standards for Healthy Eating and Physical Activity \(2011\)](#)

Provides up-to-date, evidence-based, and practical quality standards for providing children with healthy food, beverages, and physical activity during out-of-school time.

[SHAPE America: Before- and After-School Physical Activity and Intramural Sport Programs \(2013\)](#)

Provides an overview of the goals and guiding principles for before-school and after-school physical activity and intramural sport programs.

Staff Involvement

[Kaiser's Thriving Schools: School Employee Wellness Resource Page](#)

Provides ideas on how to add physical activity to the school environment to support school staff.

Family and Community Engagement

Action for Healthy Kids: Parent Tool Kit (2012)

Provides a parent leadership series that includes handouts, tip sheets, and planning forms that help parents learn how to work collaboratively within their school communities to improve policies and practices related to school nutrition and physical activity.

CDC: Parent Engagement: Strategies for Involving Parents in School Health (2012)

Defines and describes engagement between parents and school staff and identifies specific strategies for all three aspects of parent engagement in schools: connect, engage, and sustain.

CDC: Parents for Healthy Schools (2015)

Provides a set of resources that educates parents about school nutrition, physical activity, and chronic health conditions. Provides parents with strategies and actions to improve the school health environment. Provides suggestions for ways to track progress in engaging parents.

References

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9. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. School health guidelines to promote healthy eating and physical activity. *MMWR Recomm Rep*. 2011;60(No. RR-5).
10. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; SHAPE America—Society of Health and Physical Educators. *Strategies for Recess in Schools*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Dept of Health and Human Services; 2017.
11. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Parents for Healthy Schools: A Guide for Getting Parents Involved from K–12*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Dept of Health and Human Services; 2015.

To download an electronic copy of this document and access the resources listed in this document, go to www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/PEandPA.

Suggested Citation

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Increasing Physical Education and Physical Activity: A Framework for Schools*. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, US Dept of Health and Human Services; 2017.

This document was prepared by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's School Health Branch in collaboration with other national organizations in the fields of health and education.

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