

# INTEGRATE CLASSROOM PHYSICAL ACTIVITY IN SCHOOLS

## What is classroom physical activity?

Classroom physical activity serves as a strategic opportunity to promote physical activity during the school day. It limits sedentary time among students and boosts academic achievement.

### Classroom physical activity defined:

- Any physical activity done in the classroom.
- Takes place at any time and occurs in one or several brief periods of time during the school day.
- Offered in addition to physical education for all school levels (K-12).
- Offered in addition to recess for all school levels (K-12).

### There are two primary approaches:

- 1) Physical activity integrated into planned academic instruction.
- 2) Physical activity outside of planned academic instruction.

Adding opportunities for physical activity during the school day does not take away from learning. Classroom physical activity improves students':

- Concentration and attention
- Classroom behavior
- Motivation and engagement in the learning process
- Academic performance



## What's happening currently?

Across the nation, schools, school districts, and states have different policies and practices that affect classroom physical activity opportunities.

**No states** require classroom physical activity breaks in middle or high schools.<sup>1</sup>

**Only 11%** of school districts require elementary schools to provide regular classroom physical activity breaks\* during the school day.<sup>2</sup>



This percentage is **lower** for middle schools (8%) and high schools (2%).<sup>2</sup>



Colorado is the only state that requires classroom physical activity breaks in elementary schools.<sup>2</sup>

**Only 45%** of schools have students participate in regular physical activity breaks\* during the school day. Specifically:



**43%** of elementary schools<sup>3</sup>  
**64%** of middle schools<sup>3</sup>  
**27%** of high schools<sup>3</sup>

*\*For elementary schools, this is defined as "outside of physical education class and recess." For middle schools and high schools, this is defined as "outside of physical education class."*



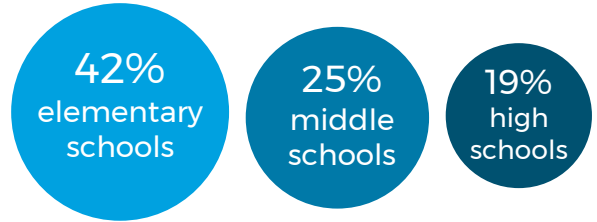


## Only 37%

of classes or courses, across all school levels, had teachers who received professional development on helping classroom teachers integrate physical activity into their classrooms.<sup>3</sup>



As the school levels go up, this percentage decreases:<sup>3</sup>



## What are ways to improve classroom physical activity?



### National guidance for classroom physical activity in schools

The following can help enhance the benefits of classroom physical activity:

- Incorporate classroom physical activity into the planning for a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program.
- Do not replace physical education and recess with classroom physical activity.
- Integrate physical activity into planned academic instruction to reinforce academic concepts.
- Provide physical activity, such as physical activity breaks, outside of planned academic instruction.
- Use classroom physical activity as a way to reinforce skills learned in physical education.
- Ensure that barriers to classroom physical activity, such as lack of equipment or available space, are minimized.
- Do not withhold classroom physical activity from students as a disciplinary approach.
- Provide teachers with ongoing professional development on classroom physical activity.

### Practical strategies and resources

Every classroom is unique, and there are many evidence-based ways to integrate physical activity into the classroom outside of physical education and recess.



[Strategies for Classroom Physical Activity in Schools](#)



[Integrate Classroom Physical Activity in Schools: A Guide for Putting Strategies into Practice](#)



[Online Platform: Integrate Classroom Physical Activity in Schools](#)

[www.schoolspringboard.org/classroomphysicalactivity](http://www.schoolspringboard.org/classroomphysicalactivity)

### SOURCES:

<sup>1</sup> SHAPE America - Society of Health and Physical Educators. *Shape of the Nation Report*; 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *School Health Policies and Practices Study 2016*.

<sup>3</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *School Health Policies and Practices Study 2014*.



Health Resources in Action  
Advancing Public Health and Medical Research

Springboard to Active Schools is an initiative of the National Network of Public Health Institutes (NNPHI) and Health Resources in Action (HRIA) through Cooperative Agreement CDC-RFA-DP16-1601 (NU1ADP003094) with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

[www.schoolspringboard.org](http://www.schoolspringboard.org)