

# 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>

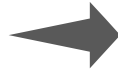
\*For elementary schools, this is defined as "outside of physical education class and recess." For middle schools and high schools, this is defined as "outside of physical education class."



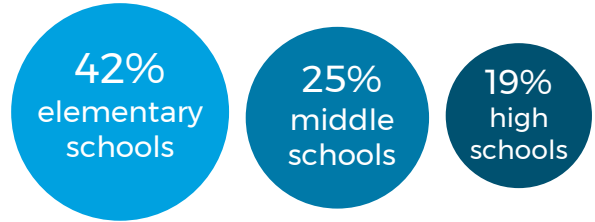


## Only 37%

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*.



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