

Teaching physical education

Physical activity and physical education are not the same.

Physical education is an instructional curricular **program** that focuses on students learning about physical activity and gaining motor skills and health-related fitness. Physical education focuses on the whole child, including cognitive and affective as well as psychomotor aspects. The instructional program helps develop the fundamental skill needed to be physically active. The goal of physical education is participation in health-enhancing physical activity for a lifetime.

Physical education programs should provide a significant amount of time for all students to actively participate. Physical activity is also promoted outside the school setting as an outcome of choosing a healthy, satisfying lifestyle.

TEACHER ACTION

Teachers have developed a number of ways to help every child, not just the highly skilled, to enjoy physical activity.

1. Mistakes-OK-Here Zone

One of the ways to help children feel good about themselves is to assist them to realize that learning inevitably involves mistakes. Teachers can do this by declaring the playground or gym a “mistakes-OK-here zone“. It is expected that everyone, including the teacher, will make mistakes from time to time.

2. Provide alternatives

When children are asked to play in a game that singles them out, any feelings of inadequacy and incompetence are reinforced. Caring teachers create environments in which children are not embarrassed in front of the class.

3. Audiotaping

Another technique that a teacher can use is to audiotape a class. When you listen to the tape after the lesson, try to hear what you communicate to the children. For example:

- Do you sound supportive? Encouraging? Understanding?
- Do you sound too demanding or critical?
- Do you communicate a tone of warmth and caring to the children?

4. Building positive feelings

- feelings about one's self
- feelings about others
- feelings of joy
- feelings of satisfaction
- feelings of pleasure
- feelings of self-accomplishment
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