

PROMOTING Lifetime Activity for Youth



Arizona
Department of
Health Services

Arizona Department of Health Services
Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant
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This publication and the Promoting Lifetime Activity for Youth program are supported by the Preventive Health and Health Services Block Grant from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Its contents do not necessarily represent the official views of the CDC.

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The Arizona Department of Health Services (ADHS) would like to acknowledge the contribution of Robert P. Pangrazi, Ph.D., Arizona State University, in the development of Promoting Lifetime Activity for Youth.

"Hello - I'm Brittney B. Well with Teacher Information

Get moving the fun way!"

PROMOTING Lifetime Activity for Youth

INACTIVITY: A National Concern

As a nation, we are becoming more and more inactive in our daily lives. Modern technology causes us to be more sedentary at home, at work, at school, and at play. This is particularly true in youth and adolescents when you consider:

- The amount of time kids watch TV, use the computer, and play video games (average 4-7 hours a day).
- The number of schools that offer PE and recess are decreasing and those that do offer them are cutting back on the amount of time allowed for activity.
- The number of children who use motorized transportation to school instead of walking or riding a bike.

Nearly half of young people, ages 12-21 do not engage in physical activity on a regular basis. Among children and teens, lack of physical activity is considered to be the single biggest risk factor contributing to rising childhood obesity rates. In the past 30 years, the percentage of children and youth who are overweight has more than doubled and the incidence of obesity among young children has doubled in the last 10 years. Children are also being diagnosed with symptoms of heart disease, diabetes, and other diseases associated with physical inactivity.

Physical activity need not be strenuous to get health benefits! Based on the 2008 Physical Guidelines for Americans recommendations, adults need to accumulate at least 75 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate physical activity each week and children need to accumulate at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity daily. Activity does not have to be done all at one time, 10-minute bouts will do! Examples of moderate activity include; brisk walking, taking the stairs, swimming, tennis, gardening, and dancing.



A New Focus:

ACTIVITY

Focus of the Program

Regular activity in childhood increases the probability of an active lifestyle in adulthood. The Promoting Lifetime Activity for Youth program moves the focus from fitness to regular physical activity. Why the change in focus? Children who score well on fitness tests are not necessarily active and vice versa. Fitness performance is genetically controlled (Bouchard, 1993), in some cases as much as 70%. Fitness gains in pre-adolescents are growth-related.

The focus of this program is to encourage the accumulation of at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity throughout a child's day. By adding a 15-minute activity break to the school day, teachers offer students an opportunity to learn about lifestyle activity. The activity break teaches a wide variety of ways to accumulate activity in and out of school. The emphasis is on having students experience fun and positive feelings related to participating in physical activity. Feeling positive about activity is just as important as doing the activity. Recording activity is integrated into the program to help students develop an awareness about the quantity of activity they participate in on a regular basis, and to move toward a self-directed, active lifestyle.



Guiding Principles for

- * It is for all students.
- * Athletic ability and endurance are not required to participate.
- * It is based on accumulating moderate physical activity.
- * Students can personalize activity to meet their needs.
- * Students are encouraged to be active in their community and with their family.

Talking Points for Teachers. Please use these points as a guide for discussions with your students. Ask the questions and let the students reply before giving them the answers.

Benefits of Physical Activity

Why should we be physically active?

- Not being active can lead to heart problems, diabetes, high blood pressure and some kinds of cancer.
- Physical activity can increase energy.
- Being active helps us feel and look good.
- Physical activity is fun!

What are some physically active activities? (Teachers can list these and other ideas on the board)

- Taking a walk
- Taking a hike
- Playing on the playground
- Playing basketball
- Riding a bike
- Cleaning the house
- Playing tag
- Jumping rope
- Dancing
- Skate boarding
- Running
- Swimming
- Taking the steps rather than the elevator/escalator
- Parking at the far end of the parking lot and walking

What are the best activities to do?

- Ones that you enjoy and keep you moving



TV, Computer Games and Other Sedentary Activities

Why should we limit the amount of TV we watch and video games we play?

- ◆ These are sedentary activities.
- ◆ Your body does not get health benefits when you are inactive.
- ◆ Your body needs active movement in order for you to grow up to be a healthy adult.

Is it okay to watch TV and play video games?

- ◆ Yes, but you should limit the number of hours you watch TV or play video games to no more than 1-2 hours each day so you have plenty of time to be active.

What are some sedentary activities? (Teachers can list these and others on the board)

- ◆ Watching TV
- ◆ Playing video games
- ◆ Playing on the computer
- ◆ Riding in a car
- ◆ Taking the elevator
- ◆ Playing board games



Step One (one week)

Talk about the Promoting Lifetime Activity for Youth program and the importance of being physically active every day.

During Step 1:

- ▲ Discuss the importance of physical activity with your students.
- ▲ Discuss the importance of having fun while you are physically active. People who have fun and enjoy the activities they are doing are more likely to make physical activity a lifelong habit.
- ▲ Prompt all students in your class to move.
- ▲ Allow students to move at a pace that is acceptable to them.

Step Two (at least three weeks)

Introduce Teacher-Directed Activities

During Step 2:

- ▲ Direct a 15-minute activity break most days of the week and teach a variety of games and activities that are fun for the students.
- ▲ Teach students that any activity is good activity.
- ▲ Demonstrate that the school values participation in regular activity.

Step Three (at least eight weeks)

Introduce logging and explain that it will help students to reach their physical activity goals. Logging will help students become more aware of the physical activity choices they make.

President's Active Lifestyle Award - If the students have accumulated at least 60 minutes of activity for at least five days, for 6 weeks, they will earn a President's Active Lifestyle Award.

During Step 3:

- ▲ Encourage students to spend at least 60 minutes a day, at least 5 days a week being active.
- ▲ Gradually encourage students to take the responsibility to develop regular activity habits at school, at home and in their community.
- ▲ Each morning remind students to record their previous day's activities on their student log sheets.
- ▲ Place the classroom wall chart in a prominent place with each student's name listed. If they have logged their activities (whether physically active or not) they receive a stamp on the chart.
- ▲ Present the students who have earned it, with a President's Active Lifestyle Award.

