

DEVELOPMENTALLY-APPROPRIATE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Adopted by Convention Delegates May 1999
Reviewed and deemed relevant November 2017

- WHEREAS,** California State PTA believes a quality physical education program that operates cooperatively within a school's comprehensive health program is essential to the well-being of youth, and,
- WHEREAS,** Physical activity promotes positive, lifelong, healthy attitudes, improves muscular strength, flexibility, and endurance, helps in weight reduction, improves self-confidence, self-esteem, self-control and helps children establish and strive for achievable personal goals, and
- WHEREAS,** Promotion of developmentally-appropriate physical activity for children and adolescents is one of the most effective means of improving health and enhancing function and quality of life, preventing obesity and other cardiovascular risk factors, and
- WHEREAS,** Children experience stress in their daily lives and a quality physical education program reduces stress, anxiety, tension and depression, and
- WHEREAS,** It is recognized that participation in physical activity can lead to multi-cultural and international understanding while providing the opportunity for enjoyment, self-expression and communication, and
- WHEREAS,** Improved physical fitness also enhances school morale, class behavior, and leads to a healthy lifestyle; and
- WHEREAS,** Only about one-half of United States young people (ages 12-21 years) regularly participate in vigorous physical activity, one-fourth report engaging in no vigorous physical activity, and classtime spent in physical education is rapidly decreasing, now therefore be it
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA encourage its units, councils and districts to urge their local school districts to provide quality, age and developmentally-appropriate physical education programs in grades Kindergarten through 12 instructed by qualified teachers, and be it further
- RESOLVED,** That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts offer information to parents, teachers and students about the importance of physical activity to physical, emotional and mental development and to the promotion of healthy lifestyles, and be it further

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RESOLVED, That the California State PTA and its units, councils and districts urge schools at all levels to develop and encourage positive attitudes toward physical exercise, provide opportunities to learn physical skills, and perform physical activities for all students in grades Kindergarten through 12.

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BACKGROUND SUMMARY

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently released new guidelines urging schools, parents and communities to promote physical activity programs for young people that will provide lifelong benefits. Physical activity is defined as “any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that results in energy expenditure...and is done to improve or maintain physical fitness.” Its key finding is that people of all ages can improve the quality of their lives through a lifelong practice of moderate physical activity.

School and community programs that promote regular physical activity among young people could be among the most effective strategies for reducing the public health burden of chronic diseases associated with sedentary lifestyles. A program of physical education should provide students with developmentally-appropriate activities and use a variety of teaching methods based on each student’s individual needs and ability.

A recent study reported that even though 97 per cent of elementary school students take physical education classes, they spend only three minutes, or less than 10 per cent of class time, engaged in moderate to vigorous activity.

Participation in all types of physical activity declines strikingly as age or grade in school increases. Only 19 per cent of all high school students report being physically active for 20 minutes or more in daily physical education classes, and many schools eliminate the physical education requirement in grades 11 and 12.

Parents must be urged to encourage their schools to make physical education taught by certified physical education specialists a mandatory daily class for all students. The Physical Education Framework adopted in September 1992 provides philosophical direction and perspective on curriculum development. It is an important resource for curriculum planners, decision makers, teachers and parents. Through a united effort we can prepare our children to lead healthy and fit lives.

To quote Herophilus (300 BC), personal physician to Alexander the Great, When...”health is absent, wisdom cannot reveal itself, art cannot become manifest, strength cannot fight, wealth becomes useless, and intelligence cannot be applied.”