



Physical Activity for Children: New Recommendations

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) has recently released a document entitled *Physical Activity for Children: A Statement of Guidelines for Children Ages 5-12*, authored by Drs. Charles B. Corbin and Robert P. Pangrazi of Arizona State University. The purpose is to provide guidance to those promoting physically active lifestyles for children: parents, physicians, physical education teachers, classroom teachers, school administrators, and others. (<http://www.aahperd.org>)

Why is there so much interest in this topic? Inactivity seems to play a major role, along with poor food habits, for the increasing prevalence of obesity in our children. National Data indicates that 30 percent of children, ages 6-19, are either overweight or at-risk of overweight. The number of overweight children has tripled in the past thirty years from about 5 percent in early 1970s to 15% currently. Obesity increases risk for chronic diseases like heart disease and type 2 diabetes.

Physical Activity Guidelines for Children Ages 5-12

- Accumulate at least 60 minutes (and up to several hours) on all, or most days of the week.
- Participate in several bouts of physical activity per day, each lasting 15 minutes or longer.
- Participate in age-appropriate physical activity to achieve health, wellness, fitness and performance benefits.
- Avoid extended periods of inactivity (periods of two hours or more), especially during the daytime hours.

Guidelines for Physical Education

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Teachers

- Expose children to a wide variety of physical activities.
- Teach physical activity skills to promote a lifetime of good health and fitness.
- Encourage self-monitoring to determine how active they are and to set their own goals.
- Individualize intensity of activities.
- Focus feedback on process of a student doing his/her best rather than on product.

After-school Time Slot from 3-6 p.m.

- Encourage children to be active during this time period.
- Reduce sedentary-type activities such as watching television and computer time.
 - Research has documented that children who watch more television, weigh more compared to those who view less.
 - Educational programming on television has some benefits.
 - Entertainment television programming has not been shown to have any benefits for children.
- Locate safe, supervised opportunities for children to participate in active games and physical activity.
 - Look for after-school programs with multiple types of activities and sports.
 - Include non-competitive type physical activities such as walking, biking, skating, active play.
 - Require all members of the family to help with age-appropriate household chores.

Links to physical activity resources

These sites provide practical ideas for getting kids active in the home, school, and community.
<http://www.cdc.gov/youthcampaign/materials/activity.htm>

For more information on this and other topics, see:
www.ag.ndsu.edu

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