

Developing Happier, Healthier, and Smarter Children

BY BROOKE SYDNOR
CURRAN



Best Practice #3: Physical education that's inclusive and gets all students' heart rates up.

Physical education (P.E.) is a great equalizer. It's a chance for all kids to get healthier, happier, and smarter. According to the National Academy of Sciences, making aerobic-based

P.E. a priority during the school day may improve physical health and, in turn, maximize a child's potential to be academically successful. For some kids, it may be the only opportunity they have to be active and meet the CDC-recommended 60 minutes of exercise for the day.

As you would anticipate, research finds that kids who have daily P.E. not only have improved fitness, but also an improved attitude towards school and better academics. A study of 311 fourth-grade students in southeastern

RunningBrooke offers 5 Best Practices for how to implement effective physical activity into the school day and week. This is the third in a five-part series to explain these practices and show how to find small pockets of time to get Alexandria's youth moving to meet the CDC-recommended 60 minutes of daily activity.

Massachusetts found that students who received 56 or more hours of PE per school year scored significantly higher on standardized test scores in English and language arts than did students who received 28 hours of PE per school year.

It is imperative that P.E. is inclusive and gets all students' heart rates up. To be inclusive, P.E. should be aerobic-based and development focused, not sports and skills focused. Not all children excel in organized sports, but all children need to get their heart rates up through physical activity to elevate their moods and boost brain power for when they return back to the classroom. When schools across the country have shifted their focus to aerobic-based P.E., they have reported an increase in standardized test scores as well as a decrease in

behavior-related incidents reported by teachers.

RunningBrooke is pleased to be working alongside teachers and educators, including in Alexandria City Public Schools (ACPS), to help enhance the work already in place to make Alexandria's P.E. inclusive and heart-rate elevating.

Mike Humphreys, an NBCT instructional specialist for Health, Physical Education and Family Life Education in the ACPS Office of Curriculum Design and Instructional Services says, "ACPS P.E. teachers work very hard to meet students where they are according to both fitness levels and skill levels. This differentiation results in a myriad of P.E. experiences occurring at the same time, depending on a given student's abilities. They see the importance in not only exposing students to a variety of movement forms hoping one or

two will stick with them, but also of providing all students with moderate to vigorous movement during their time together."

Please look for next week's piece

about Best Practice #4: Making the most out of recess: an active recess where everyone participates in a variety of activities, including free play. See www.runningbrooke.org.