

The Importance of Your Child's Physical Education



Children need Physical Education

FACT: The Department of Health (2011) recommends that all children and young people (aged 5-18 years) should engage in moderate to vigorous intensity physical activity for at least 60 minutes and up to several hours every day.

FACT: Vigorous intensity activities, including those that strengthen muscle and bone, should be incorporated at least three days a week.

FACT: All children and young people should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

FACT: A positive attitude to health and exercise will lead to the strong physical development of your child, and will increase the possibility of a long healthy life.

FACT: Physical education will help improve your child's self-confidence and develop social skills too.

Quite simply: Physical education can contribute to making your child healthier and happier - that's a fact!

What is Physical Education?

All children and young people (aged 5 – 18) should experience regular high quality physical education (PE). The medical evidence is too strong to not have PE as a compulsory subject in the curriculum. Your child is entitled to a broad and balanced programme of physical education with activities designed to be enjoyable, vigorous, purposeful and regular. Through providing positive experiences, a lifelong interest in physical activity can be encouraged.

The range of physical activities is wide and the PE curriculum may include athletics, dance, games, gymnastics, swimming and outdoor education. A high quality programme is designed to satisfy the needs, abilities and interests of all individual children and young people. There will be some children and young people that prefer individual activities to competitive team games and others that enjoy aesthetic movement.

Children and young people are given many opportunities to develop their interests through a planned PE programme that aims to develop knowledge, understanding, skills and above all, positive attitudes towards sport and physical activity.

Within the broad philosophy that taking part is more important than winning, individual talents and sporting attitudes will be encouraged, together with those social and personal qualities inherent in both team and individual activities. These include the acceptance of responsibility, loyalty and cooperation, determination, tolerance and the enjoyment of success as well as simply taking part.

Together with other subjects, PE helps to prepare pupils for adult life and contributes to the development of a wide range of physical, personal, social, learning and thinking skills.

Opportunities also exist in PE for pupils to progressively be given more responsibility to plan, lead and organise events and develop the right attitudes to competition – to be positive in defeat and gracious in victory. PE can help your child to develop positive attitudes which lead to success.

Helping your child's physical education

Your child can experience many benefits, both mentally and physically, as a direct result of their participation in some form of physical education – and higher level of participation can often lead to greater rewards. Parents can do much to help their child gain the greatest benefit from physical education by taking an interest, offering encouragement, and if possible joining in.

Taking an Interest

Try to take one of the many opportunities offered throughout the academic year (at parent evenings, sports events and school open days, etc.) to visit the school, meet staff, and discover more about what your child is doing and what is on offer.

Be prepared to discuss any problems your child may have with an activity with their teacher.

If your child is requested to provide kit for certain activities, make sure it is available, clean and in good repair. (Your child's teacher will be happy to discuss in confidence any problem arising from this request.)

Encouragement

Always be ready to encourage your child whenever they experience difficulty, and give praise for effort.

Remember: praise when your child has done their best is as important as praise for being the best.

Accompany your child to sporting events and festivals whenever you can, particularly if he or she is a competitor.

Participation

The benefits of physical education need not be restricted to your child at school. The whole family can enjoy good health and physical well-being with gentle, regular exercise. A brisk, half-hour walk three times a week is better for you and less dangerous than some other activities. Gradually build up your fitness by walking, jogging, cycling or swimming.

You never know, it could be fun getting fit with family and friends, and it would make the world of difference to your health.

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