

# Cognitive Benefits of Physical Education and Physical Activity

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School Newsletter

“Mind and body are one entity ... anything that happens to one will affect the other.”(2)



## Setting up your child for academic success...



Parents: Did you know one of the best ways you can set your child up for success is by having him/her live an active lifestyle? Time and time again we hear that being active or exercising is good for the body, it's good for people of all ages! But being active isn't just good for the body, it's good for the mind!

Throughout the United States physical education classes are being cut in order focus on core classes (thank you, *No Child Left Behind*), or subject areas in which state testing will be conducted. It is silly that in an effort to enhance students' academic achievement according to the standardized tests such a vital class for a student's mind and function is quickly being dismissed and cut-down or even cut-out.

According to the Surgeon General children should be participating in 60 minutes



of moderate to vigorous physical activity a day. And when most students say they receive their physical activity while in school, it is a scary figure that in 2006 just 3.8% of elementary schools provide daily physical education, 7.9% of middle schools, and 2.1% of high schools (3)

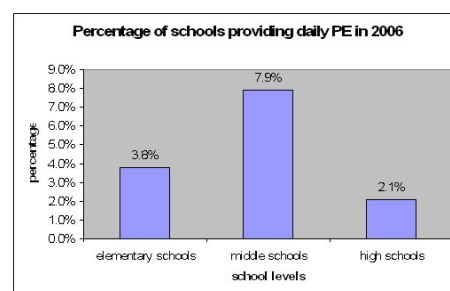
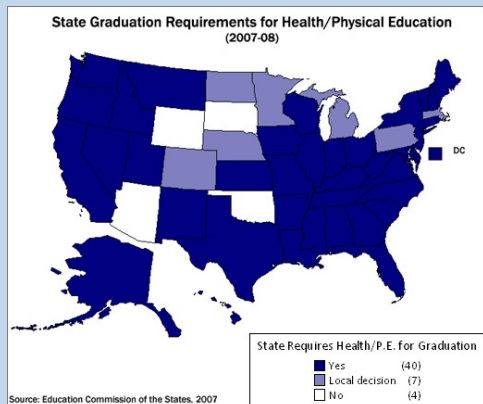


Figure 2: A graph of the percent of schools offering daily physical activity

Though school systems are trending this way it is not evident that increased classroom time will lead to increased academic performance. In fact in a national study conducted in 2006 that analyzed data collected from almost 12,000 adolescents across the U.S. to examine the relationship between physical activity and academic performance. Adolescents who reported either participating in school activities such as physical education and team sports, or playing sports with parents were 20% more likely than their sedentary peers to earn an "A" in math or English (3).

It must be recognized that students are not 'wasting' time in physical education and students must also receive encouragement from their parents/guardians to go outside and be active when they come home from school. In a large sum of studies focusing on this very subject such as the study mentioned above, it has most often been found that when a student is more physically active that he/she is more likely to achieve academic success.



## BENEFITING DOMAINS:

Adequate physical activity benefits your student's mind in two major different ways, **physically** and **learning/developmentally**. This means that by participating consistently in physical activity will increase blood flow to the brain, speed up the transmitter process allowing connections to be made faster, positive structural changes of the central nervous system such as reaction time, and increased stimulation when in the classroom.

Learning/Developmentally, it has been suggested in a number of studies that physical activity can provide a learning experience that will ultimately aid in the learning process. Opportunity for learning can be increase by having better behavior in the classroom. Students have the opportunity during physical activity (PA) to run around and have fun! In a n article by Coe, *Effect of physical education and activity levels on academic achievement in children*, by the American College of Sports Medicine Journal, It was found that PA can increase attention span and concentration (physiological benefit), increase classroom behavior and self-esteem, however it was stressed that the more physical activity the better the result!

### References:

1. Coe, D., Pivarnik, J., Womack, C., Reeves, M., Malina, R. (2006). Effect of Physical Education and Activity Levels on Academic Achievement in Children. American College of Sports Medicine, 1515-1519.
2. Sibley, B., & Ethier, J. (2003). The Relationship between Physical Activity and Cognition in Children: a meta-analysis. Pediatric Exercise Science, 243-256.
3. Trost, S.(2007). Active Education: Physical Education, Physical Activity, and Academic Performance, 1-3.

## Becoming Physically Active:

Get your child involved, and get involved with your child!!!!

- **Clubs**
- **School sports**
- **Club Sports**
- **Intramurals**
- **Town Recreation leagues**
- **Karate Class, Dance Class, etc.**
- **Set-up a basketball hoop outside your home**
- **Walk to school with your child**
- **Have fun, GO OUTSIDE!**

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