



NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF ORGANISED PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS

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Abstract: Physical activity is associated with numerous academic and health benefits. Furthermore, schools have been identified as an ideal location to promote physical activity as most youth attend school regularly from ages 5-16. Unfortunately, in an effort to increase academic learning time, schools have been eliminating traditional activity opportunities including physical education and recess. Physical Activity Integrated into Classroom Lessons. Integrating physical activity within classrooms as part of planned lessons that teach academic subjects through movement can increase students' overall physical activity, improve work completion on time, and increase attentiveness. To overcome physical inactivity in children numerous organizations are promoting a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program to encourage academic achievement and overall health. Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs include five components and should be centered around 1) quality physical education, 2) physical activity before and after school, 3) physical activity during school 4) staff involvement, and 5) family and community engagement.

Keywords: Adolescence, Lifestyle, Emotional

Introduction:

Sport is a human right as per the article of the Charter of Physical Education and Sport adopted by UNESCO in 1978. The charter states: 'The practice of Physical Education and Sport is a fundamental human right for all'. Providing regular opportunities for physical activity and play enhance overall physical fitness and help to alleviate stress. Sport-based projects can contribute to the fulfillment of the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of health. The opportunity to participate in and enjoy sport and play is a human right that must be promoted, supported and advocated.

"Physical activity is an excellent stress-buster and provides other health benefits as well. It also can improve your mood and self image". This was expressed by Jon Wickham. Physical activity is central to health, and its importance clearly extends beyond its role in achieving energy balance to prevent and treat obesity and overweight. Research has been conducted to find the association between physical activity in children and its influence on academic achievement. Clinical and public health guidelines indicate that children need a minimum of 60 minutes per day of vigorous- or moderate-intensity physical activity to optimize health and development. Because many children spend maximum amount of time in school, we need to focus specifically

on the role schools can play in increasing physical activity among children and providing various opportunities.

Schools play a very important role in increasing physical activity by offering quality, daily Physical Education and other opportunities to be active but it also teaches them the skills to be active throughout their life-time. Thus, investing in quality Physical Education in all schools for all grades is a logical and important step towards improving the health of generations to come. Physical education ought to play an integral part of the school curriculum and equal importance is to be given to it in the school time. Schools should develop standards for student-learning in Physical Education that reflect national and state standards and norms.

Quality Physical Education



Physical Education, having components of health education, physical education and yoga are an integral part of school curriculum in India. Majority of the schools have Physical Education teachers at the secondary level (Classes 6-10) and hence physical education is not taught at the primary level whereas Sport and Play is one of the most distinctive features of early childhood. Through play, children both enjoy and challenge their current capacities, whether they are playing alone or with others. The value of creative play and exploratory learning is widely recognized in early childhood education. The PEC strategy is based on the premise that every child matters and also that physical education, games and sport can develop skills like observation skills, analytical skills, evaluation, leadership and team work skills, communication skills, emotional and intrapersonal intelligence and motor skills that are relevant in other areas of the curriculum for holistic development.

Sport-based projects can contribute to the fulfillment of the right of the child to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of health. With the enactment of the (RTE Act) all schools are required to provide free and compulsory child-friendly education to all 6-16 year olds across India. The importance of health and physical development has been emphasized in the National Curriculum Framework as: 'Physical development supports mental and cognitive development especially in young children.. Most schools have appointed physical education teachers/coaches in upper primary school but a huge gap that needs to be addressed is to build on the experiences of the work in primary schools to ensure a robust sports and physical education programme in upper primary and secondary schools.

Physical Activity during School

In addition to physical education, schools can offer physical activity in a variety of settings during the school day. The main ways students can participate in physical activity during the school day are recess, and physical activity integrated into lessons or classroom activity breaks. These opportunities can be offered to all classes. Schools can facilitate increased physical activity during the school day by encouraging students to be active; providing students with space, facilities, equipment and supplies that make participating in activity appealing; and providing organized

times and structured physical activities for interested students.

Physical Activity Integrated into Classroom Lessons

Integrating physical activity within classrooms as part of planned lessons that teach academic subjects through movement can increase students' overall physical activity and improve timebound completion of different tasks and attentiveness. Physical activity can be integrated into academic subjects for all classes, not just primary schools. This type of physical activity helps establish an active school environment, and enhance students' learning experiences. Examples of evaluated programs or interventions that have shown improvements in students' physical activity levels include the North Carolina Energizers (www.eatsmartmovemorenc.com/Energizers/Elementary.html) and Take 10! (www.take10.net/). A specific example of a Take 10! lesson can be completing imaginary jump roping while counting using odd numbers on every jump or completing addition or subtraction problems based on the number of jumps a student might complete.

Recess:

Recess offers an excellent opportunity for children to engage in free play or semi-structured physical activity during the school day, and allows them to apply skills learned in Physical Education classes. Recess should not, however, replace physical education or be used to meet time requirements set forth in PE policies. Recess has seen a reduction by more than 20% of school districts in order to allocate more time for English and Math and this trend has continued over the past decade. Participation in recess is associated with academic benefits, such as improving attentiveness, concentration, behavior, and completing assignments and projects on time in the classroom. Studies have shown that offering physical activity breaks during standard classroom instruction may have favorable associations with some indicators of cognitive functioning (e.g., attention/concentration); academic behaviors (e.g., classroom conduct); and/or academic achievement (e.g., test scores). Examples of physical activity breaks in the classroom include:

- Stretching or relaxation break.
- Walking around the classroom or hallway.
- Jumping with an invisible jump rope.

- Doing squats, push-up, or sit-ups.
- Passing a ball around the classroom.

Staff Involvement

Support for school employee wellness and leadership training contribute to the overall culture of physical activity at a school. Teachers and other school staff members can integrate physical activity into classroom academic instruction and breaks, and support recess, intramurals, and other physical activity offerings. Additionally, school employees can be positive role models for students by demonstrating active lifestyle choices in and out of school.

Family and Community Engagement

Family and community engagement in school-based physical activity programs provides numerous benefits. Research shows that child participation in physical activity is influenced by participation and support of parents and siblings. Parents, guardians, or other family members can support by participating in evening or weekend special events, or by helping physical education teachers or become physical activity volunteers. Physical activity homework from the classroom or physical education teacher might require the family to be active as part of the students at home assignments

Conclusion:

Children have to be made 'Physically Literate Individuals' to understand movements, concepts, principles, strategies, tactics.etc.; competent in motor skills & movement patterns; one who participates regularly, maintains health-enhancing level of fitness; exhibits responsible, personal and social behaviour; understands the importance to maintain a good health & hence enjoys the challenge in life. Playing in his school's cricket team taught him important lessons on leadership and teamwork early in life. CEO Satya Nadella told the "New York Times"

The present generation of school children in India, regardless of age group or gender or both, seem heading towards an unhealthy future. Their health and fitness levels are dipping. A little over 40 per cent lack a healthy BMI and endurance. Experts believe that the key reason for this is the lack of physical activity and outdoor games. It was found through study that 65 per cent of girls had healthy BMI scores, compared to 59 per cent for boys. But girls score lower than boys in other fitness parameters.

There is need for schools to raise play hours for children. "The lack of health and fitness among such a large number again proves that physical activity/sports in schools should be viewed as an important part of the curriculum, for the overall development of a child. There is a need for greater awareness about the importance of play and there must be more time allotted for the same.

There should be large scale changes that should be holistic, incorporating changes in lifestyle, diet and physical activity. A combined approach should also be undertaken so that strategies are implemented at the home and family level, at school and within the community. Curriculum time should be given for physical activity, and schools should embrace policies that encourage participation in physical activity. Improvements should also be designed to be inclusive of all children, and adequately trained, motivated personnel should be involved in these programs. Overall, a sustainable health promotion program which is directed at physical activity should be able to achieve positive social, behavioral, cognitive and physical or biological outcomes.

References:

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