

Improving Physical Activity

How to offer at least 30 minutes of moderate, fun, physical activity for every child every day, including outdoor activity when possible

Use the following questions and the corresponding “things to think about” to identify new ways to improve physical activity. Item in [brackets] refer to things like sample policies and checklists provided in the binder. The **EV** symbols are tips and suggestions for everyone, no matter how you answer the question.

QUESTIONS

THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

Do you have outdoor space for physical activity?

NO

Consult a map for green space that may be nearby. Find a park. Take a walk or a jog around the block or campus. *[Joint Use of District and City Recreation Facilities]*

YES

Offer physical activity at the start of the afterschool day before it gets too dark or cold.

Do you have indoor space for physical activity?

EV

There are a lot of exercises that take up minimal space; even a classroom can become a dance or aerobics studio. *[Energizers: Classroom-based Physical Activities]*

EV

Convert cafeteria or classroom areas into space for physical activity. Develop relationships with school administration or anyone else that may be able to provide additional space. *[Joint Use Agreement: Opening Indoor and Outdoor School Facilities for Use During Non-School Hours]*

Is there at least 30 minutes of physical activity scheduled into each day?

NO

If necessary, you can divide the block into smaller chunks. You could do two 15 minute activity periods, or even smaller chunks during homework time, but be sure that you make time for transitions so students get the full 30 minutes of being active.

NO

Speak to whoever designs the schedule to see if changes are possible.

EV

Modify current favorite games to include more running, jumping or other high-intensity actions. Refer to the Physical Activity Tip Sheet for more moderate and vigorous activities.

EV

Offer structured free play with physical activity stations that kids can choose from. Allowing kids to make their own choices spur participation.

EV

Seek out community partners with special skills to lead activity classes like hip-hop and karate. This can give staff a break and get kids excited about something new!

Do all children participate?

EV

Try a “game taste test” where kids can try out different games and activities and then vote on their favorites.

EV

Make sure there are clear rules and remind students how to respect one another while playing games. *[Alternative solutions to Withholding Recess]*

EV

Avoid elimination games (like dodge ball and Simon says) which may discourage kids from participating and limit the amount of physical activity everyone gets.

Do staff join in the physical activity with children?

NO

See the Tip Sheet to Improving Staff Engagement.