

# Make Action:

An Easy-To-Use Toolkit To  
Advocate for Physical Education  
in Your Child's Elementary School



DEVELOPED BY THE ATKINS CENTER FOR WEIGHT AND HEALTH  
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# INTRODUCTION

## WHY SHOULD I CARE ABOUT PE IN MY CHILD'S ELEMENTARY SCHOOL?

The benefits of improved physical education (PE) in elementary schools are well-known:

- Being active helps the body and brain work better
- Active students do better in school
- Active and fit students are healthier overall

However, schools face various barriers to ensure that quality PE reaches all students on a daily basis. In fact, about half of California's elementary schools do not comply with the PE minute requirements (100 minutes of PE per week). Some of the barriers for schools include:

- Academic pressures
- Lack of appropriate teacher training and staffing
- Limited guidance on PE content and quality

But, there are practical steps that parents and other advocates can take to improve PE in their elementary schools. When it comes to physical activity it's best to start early, so elementary schools are a great place to promote lifelong health and wellness. And given that PE reaches all children, including children who do not have any other opportunities for physical activity in their daily lives, it's the right thing to do!

## WHAT CAN I DO?

The Atkins Center for Weight and Health at UC Berkeley developed an easy-to-use resource toolkit for parents and other advocates. This toolkit is informed by the latest knowledge about the benefits of PE; challenges and issues schools face; and practical recommendations to improve PE and, in turn, the overall health and wellness of all students. Parent groups and other champions can use this toolkit to advocate for improving elementary school children's PE programs.



## HOW CAN I GET STARTED?

Here are some practical steps you can take to get started:

- Learn about your school wellness policy ([Handout 3](#))
- Talk to others about PE in elementary schools ([Handout 4](#))
- Use a case study to see how others have succeeded ([Handout 5](#))
- Host a parent meeting on PE ([Handout 6](#))
- Make a presentation to a local group [ex: school board, local PTA] ([Handout 7](#))
- Use notes to PPT slides when presenting ([Handout 8](#))
- Suggest PE activities for your school ([Handout 9](#))
- Reference your resource list ([Handout 10](#))

# LEARN ABOUT YOUR SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY

## Q: WHAT IS THE LOCAL SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY?

**A:** The school wellness policy advocates for and encourages student health and wellness with the goals of decreasing childhood obesity and ensuring that school meal nutrition guidelines are being met.

## Q: WHO IS REQUIRED TO IMPLEMENT AND FOLLOW THE SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY?

**A:** Under the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, any school district that participates in a federally-funded school meal program must develop the school wellness policy to address physical activity and nutrition requirements.

## Q: WHAT DOES THE SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY INCLUDE?

**A:** The school wellness policy includes goals for nutrition education and physical activity that promote student wellness that are both realistic and specific to the school/district (districts consider school size, school location, languages spoken in school, and socioeconomic status of students in developing the policy).

- Includes goals for school-based activities that promote student health
- Includes nutrition guidelines for all foods and beverages available on the school campus
- Includes monitoring of school lunch program regulations
- Includes a plan to measure the success of the school wellness policy
- Includes participation from all community members: parents, students, representatives of school authority, school administrators and school board

## Q: HOW CAN WE USE THE SCHOOL WELLNESS POLICY TO PROMOTE PHYSICAL EDUCATION?

**A:** Review your school/district local wellness policy to familiarize yourself with its components.

Refer to [www.teamnutrition.usda.gov](http://www.teamnutrition.usda.gov) for sample policies from several states and use them as a foundation for creating the local wellness policy or to improve upon an already created local wellness policy.

Get involved with the development of the local wellness policy and make sure that your school/district is addressing the most important issues in your district and complying with all of the policy's requirements.



## TALK TO OTHERS ABOUT PE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

*“Simply put, ‘advocacy’ is an ‘ask.’ Advocacy is asking for something and making it happen through actions and efforts. ‘Advocates’ speak on behalf of a group regarding an issue that affects people’s lives. The result of successful advocacy is a change in a practice or policy.”*

— Parents In Action! A Guide to Engaging Parents in Local School Wellness Policy by California Project Lean



### BEFORE YOU TALK TO OTHERS ABOUT PE

(Sources: California Project Lean and California Medical Association Foundation)

- Prepare to be an advocate:
  - Understand the issue
  - Know your audience
  - Frame your message
  - Propose solutions
  - Partner and collaborate
- Start with an assessment of your school and/or school district:
  - Assess the school’s PE environment and identify areas that need work.
  - Identify the policy players and other decision-makers who can help you or oppose your efforts.
  - Determine current parent and community stakeholder involvement and ways to reach out to them.
  - Reach out to parents and help them understand the PE issues identified and proposed solutions.

### COMMUNICATING WITH OTHER PARENTS

- Make your PE messages compelling, using data on the benefits of PE and physical activity.
- Emphasize to parents that every child deserves to have PE daily: it’s the right thing to do and it’s the law.
- Focus on the quality of PE: tell parents to ask their children about PE and/or visit their children’s PE class.
- Encourage parents and other community members to contact board members to show support.



## COMMUNICATING WITH TEACHERS/EDUCATORS

- Highlight the benefits of PE and physical activity: kids focus better, feel more confident, perform better academically, and behave better in the classroom.
- Ask teachers for ideas about adequate PE training, competency, and support for teachers.
- Urge teachers to form alliances with parents to organize around PE and fitness activities.
- Ask teachers to send home play assignments so that the whole family can participate in physical activity.

## COMMUNICATING WITH SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

- Ask administrators how they can support PE and what kind of support they need from parents.
- Invite school officials and administrators to observe a PE class.
- Propose whether the school or the teachers can offer/receive incentives for offering PE every day.
- Ask the school to offer after-school wellness programs and a family or community night.

## COMMUNICATING WITH SCHOOL BOARDS

(Source: Community Action Kit)

- Get to know the school board, including their priorities and support for PE.
- Tailor the PE information to each board member's key concerns.
- Attend and testify at school board meetings, emphasizing that parents really want PE in elementary schools.

## COMMUNICATING WITH THE MEDIA

(Source: California Medical Association Foundation Media and Advocacy Toolkit)

- Call local newspapers, radio, and TV stations to ask which reporters cover health and education.
- Plan the messages that you want to reach the public by creating a media pitch.
  - An effective media pitch is a message that includes broadly appealing stories; controversial issues; accurate information; experts (like you!); and novel issues and approaches (often referred to as "the hook").
- Write a letter to the editor and/or a press release.
  - Letter to the editor: This is one of the quickest and most accessible ways to get your issue out to the public through the media. Letters to the Editor should be timely and in response to something in the paper. If you are responding to an article, send your letter soon after the piece appears in the paper, preferably within 1-2 days. Short letters are more likely to be published than longer ones. Check with your newspaper about the word limit. Be sure to keep the tone objective and the content focused on information. Include facts, if possible, and reference them, and make sure to include your name along with your contact information. Do not be discouraged if your piece is not published. You can submit similar letters to multiple sources and future pieces to newspapers that may not have published your piece the first time.
  - Press release: Also known as a "news release", a press release is simply a written statement to the media. Press releases can be used in generating a feature story. Reporters are more likely to consider a story idea if they first receive a release.
  - For tips on writing press releases, please see the following link: <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Press-Release>
- After you receive media coverage, make a sure to get a copy of the article or recording so you can later use it when you contact a decision-maker.
- Remember that you can make your own media, including blogs and online videos.

## USE A CASE STUDY TO SEE HOW OTHERS HAVE SUCCEEDED

### SAMPLE CASE STUDY OF A SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGN TO IMPROVE PE

#### *Physical Education Is A Right: The Los Angeles Unified School District Case Study*

Excerpt taken from a monitoring report produced by Samuels & Associates at the following: [http://www.samuelsandassociates.com/samuels/upload/ourlatest/FINAL\\_LAUSDPE\\_Policy\\_Report\\_Oct2011.pdf](http://www.samuelsandassociates.com/samuels/upload/ourlatest/FINAL_LAUSDPE_Policy_Report_Oct2011.pdf)

Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the largest public school district in California and the second largest in the nation, was audited several times between 2004 and 2009, and each audit found that the district did not enforce physical education minute requirements. In 2007, a diverse coalition of teachers, parents, community activists, health advocates, attorneys and school officials united in a strategic campaign to improve the quantity and quality of physical education in the district and alleviate health disparities.

The physical education campaign consisted of five major components:

- United Teachers of Los Angeles (UTLA), the teacher's union in the district, worked with The City Project, a nonprofit legal and policy advocacy organization, and others to raise awareness among students, parents, teachers, principals, and district officials about the value of physical education, the lack of physical education in district schools, and the health disparities.
- Parents, teachers, youth groups, and health advocacy organizations, in consultation with attorneys at The City Project, filed administrative complaints to require the district to provide quality physical education under education and civil rights laws.
- In response to the campaign, the board of education unanimously passed a resolution to comply with physical education and civil rights requirements.

- The district adopted the plan designed to ensure that schools meet the physical education minute requirements, provide properly credentialed physical education teachers, maintain reasonable class size averages, provide quality facilities for physical education and comply with education and civil rights laws and principles.
- Advocates presented evidence-based social science research documenting the value of physical education, and disparities in health and access to physical education based on race, color, national origin, income, and poverty, to support each of the other elements of the campaign.

Community organizing and coalition building were critical to the success of the campaign. The campaign provided fliers, news articles, speakers, social media materials including YouTube videos and other messaging that mobilized the community to become involved. Alliances were built between parents, teachers, youth groups, health advocates and lawyers to strengthen the chances for providing physical education. Advocates relied heavily on evidence-based social science research to educate school board members and community members about the value of physical education and health disparities.

Stakeholders felt the campaign was ultimately successful, with advocates overcoming significant challenges. The campaign has achieved notable successes, despite these challenges. Throughout the campaign, members of the community were actively empowered to take on the leadership of this issue. Parents and teachers are ultimately the stakeholders who have the most direct contact with students and are best able to impact their education and well-being. A campaign to enforce physical education in the school district cannot readily be sustained without stakeholders who are directly involved with the students. The success of the campaign was amplified by its alignment with other school-based health initiatives taking place during the same time period, such as removing soda and junk food from school campuses.

# HOST A PARENT MEETING ON PE



## GOAL

Convene a group of parents and other community stakeholders who are interested in advocating for physical education (PE) in elementary schools.

## OBJECTIVES (MAY BE USED AS AGENDA ITEMS)

- Learn facts about the state of PE in California's elementary schools.
- Review the known benefits of PE and physical activity for young school children.
- Identify recommendations to increase PE in local elementary school(s).
- Agree on actionable next steps.

## MATERIALS

- Learn about school wellness policy.
- Talk to others about PE.
- Use a case study.
- Make a presentation (PowerPoint).
- Notes to slides.
- Resource List.
- Reference: Physical Activity Assessment/Inventory <http://www.aahperd.org/letsmoveinschool/tools/upload/ES-PA-Inventory-Final.docx>.
- A dry-erase board or large sheets of paper.
- Markers.

## PREPARATION

- Research your school's or school district's school wellness policy (if available).
- Ask your school about the number of minutes students spend in PE class per week.
- Visit your school to observe a PE class.
- Become familiar with the content of all handouts prior to the meeting.
- Photocopy the PowerPoint presentation and other materials for each participant.

## CONDUCT MEETING

- Ask parents to describe some of the health benefits of PE for their children. Write the responses on the board or sheet of paper. Ask participants to compare the responses listed on the board or sheet of paper with the information in the handouts.
- Distribute the PowerPoint Presentation and other handouts to each participant, and review the information.
- Review the PE portion of the Reference Physical Activity Assessment/Inventory and think about how your school is doing in each of the identified PE areas (California PE requirements are 200 minutes every 10 days, or 100 minutes per week).
- Discuss with participants some strategies to advocate for increased PE in your school(s).
- Identify groups and/or meetings where you can make a presentation (ex: school board, PTA meeting).
- Invite another parent or community member to present with you.

# USE NOTES TO PPT SLIDES WHEN PRESENTING

## (SLIDE 2)

Introduce yourself with your name and your role (parent, community member, educator, other).

- I am here to present some information and recommendations to help promote physical education (PE) in our local elementary schools. I will cover the following:
  - **Background**  
Brief background and purpose of this presentation
  - **What are the goals for PE in California?**  
Overview of PE proposed guidelines and requirements
  - **What's the reality about PE in California?**  
Overview of the state of PE
  - **Why should we care about PE?**  
Description of the benefits of PE in schools
  - **What can schools do to improve PE?**  
Key recommendations about what schools can do to improve PE
  - **What can parents and other advocates do?**  
Actionable steps that parents and other advocates can take
  - **Resources and links to sample programs and activities**

## (SLIDE 3)

Background

- The purpose of this presentation is to highlight the urgency to improve PE in our schools.
- The presentation will cover these points: benefits of PE, what's going on in schools now, and what schools and parents/advocates can do to create change.

## (SLIDE 4)

What are the goals for PE in CA?

- The take away point in these slides is that even though California's PE requirements (20 minutes/day) fall below the national proposed guidelines (30 minutes/day), many of our schools still fail to comply with or meet PE requirements. This leads to low levels of fitness among our children, as well as other negative effects.

## (SLIDES 5-7)

What's the reality about PE in CA?

- There are many reasons why schools fail to comply with the PE requirements. Here are some reasons based on observations made by researchers, as well as feedback directly from school staff and other stakeholders:
  - Schools value academic courses more than PE
  - Schools sacrifice PE to satisfy academic pressures
  - Teacher training and staffing are inadequate, especially at the elementary level
  - Facilities and equipment may not be adequate to encourage physical activity
  - Not all school personnel consider school wellness initiatives a top priority
  - Schools are not required to report information about the quality of PE programs
- Here is a news clip (YouTube) about whether our children are getting enough PE in school.



## (SLIDES 8-9)

### Why should we care about PE?

- There are many benefits of physical activity for children. These benefits are backed by research and direct observations. The most important benefits for children in school:
  - **Being active helps the body and brain work better**  
It reduces stress and improves attention and energy levels
  - **Active students do better in school**  
They have better performance and classroom behavior
  - **Active and fit students are healthier overall**  
Children are healthier, leading to reduced absences and higher self-confidence
  - **It's best to start early**  
Younger children are more receptive and easier to engage in PE
  - **It's the right thing to do**  
PE reaches all children, especially children who are disadvantaged and/or who have no other opportunities to engage in physical activity.

## (SLIDES 12-16)

### What can schools do to improve PE?

- Here are some key recommendations for what schools can do to improve PE:
  - **Improve PE programs**  
Take steps to comply with PE requirements, such as
    - Include the required minutes of PE in schools' master schedules
    - Inform teachers of the state's PE requirements
    - Make the PE requirements an essential part of training for new teachers
  - **Make sure all students participate in PE**
  - **Provide incentives for participating in PE**
  - **Restructure PE programs to maximize time spent being active**
- Prioritize training and professional development
  - Provide continuing training to PE specialists and classroom teachers
  - Facilitate access to PE professional development opportunities
- **Improve infrastructure**
  - Make changes to the playground environment
- **Obtain staff and community support**
  - Seek support from administrators, teachers, and staff
  - Involve families
  - Report back on progress

## (SLIDE 12)

### What can parents and other advocates do?

- Here are some steps that we parents and other advocates can take to improve PE:
  - **Learn about schools' wellness policies**
  - **Talk to other parents and stakeholders about PE**
    - Visit schools to assess PE environment
    - Reach out to parents, teachers, administrators, boards, and the media
    - Host a parent meeting on PE
    - Make presentations to local groups
    - Suggest PE activities for schools
    - Follow-up on efforts and document successes
- The PE Toolkit developed by the Atkins Center for Weight and Health provides free handouts with information and resources for each of the steps identified above.

## (SLIDE 13)

### Resources

- Here are some resources that provide more information about PE in elementary schools, as well as sample PE programs.
- Thank you for your time and commitment to improving the well-being of our children!

# SUGGEST PE ACTIVITIES FOR YOUR SCHOOL

## THINGS YOUR SCHOOL CAN DO TO IMPROVE PHYSICAL EDUCATION

### DURING PE CLASS

- **Incorporate fitness challenges that are fun and exciting and involve multiple obstacles and several team members.**

**Ex:** “Survival Challenge”— Give each group member a task card with a challenge; the group to finish all challenges first and correctly wins (*SPARK*: <http://www.sparkpe.org/physical-education/3-6/curriculum/table-of-contents/>).

**Examples** of challenges could include:

1. Jump rope on one foot (and then do the same on the other foot).
2. Have half of the team do ten push-ups and another half do ten sit-ups and see which can complete the set fastest.
3. Have two team members simulate the motion of a moving snake with a jump rope and the other team members jump over without touching the rope (if one teammate touches the rope, everyone must start over).
4. Pass a beanie bag down the line of team mates without using your hands or dropping the bag.
5. Have students complete a circuit of varying upper and lower body exercises with resistance bands if available (like bicep curls or leg raises with the band).



- **Incorporate jump rope contests, makeshift bowling games, activities with music, dancing, obstacle courses and creative games.**

**Ex:** “Grocery Shopping”— Label bean bags as different fruits and vegetables with different prices and have students go around in pairs picking up foods that total to \$5. One student throws the bean bag, while the other catches it into the grocery basket (*Active Academics*: <http://www.activeacademics.org/index.asp>).

- **During instruction times, have students engage in stretching or warm-up exercises to maximize time and energy used.**



## OTHER THINGS YOUR SCHOOL CAN DO TO PROMOTE PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

### IN THE CLASSROOM

#### **Incorporate classroom activities that involve rotations or moving between different stations.**

**Ex:** Take students on a virtual tour of California and at each station have the student act out a certain activity, i.e. surfing in the Pacific Ocean, climbing up a Redwood Tree, marching across the Golden Gate bridge or shooting a 3-pointer at the Staples Center.

(Active Academics: <http://www.activeacademics.org/index.asp>)

#### **Engage in physical activities as periodic classroom breaks (dancing, agility drills, etc.).**

**Ex:** Musical chairs or having each student demonstrate a dance move and then testing students on how many moves they remembered in total.

**Ex:** Create a secret word that is linked to a physical activity (like jumping jacks) and establish a time when the students can use the secret word (like after a handout is passed out in class).

#### **Incorporate physical activity into daily curriculum.**

**Ex:** Have students spell words by making shapes with their bodies or read books and have students act out scenes/events.

### DURING RECESS

#### **Ensure that a supervisor is present at all times during recess breaks who both monitors and encourages participation in PE activities.**

#### **Set up timed stations with different games and activities.**

**Ex:** Jumping rope, dancing, tag, relay races, hopscotch, handball, etc.

**Ex:** Have students play a game of around the world with a basketball in teams of 3 or 4.

#### **Supervisors should provide materials and equipment (jump ropes, balls, chalk, etc.) and monitor participation and timing via the use of a whistle, stopwatch, etc.**



### DURING ROLL CALL

#### **Increase efficiency of roll call to decrease wasted time.**

**Ex:** Have students stand on numbers or spots to increase attention and make roll call more interesting.

**Ex:** Have the teacher explain a set of various stretches that students must do during roll call as they wait for their name to be called.

#### **Incorporate learning about nutrition and physical activity into the roll call process.**

**Ex:** Have students name a fruit, vegetable, sport or physical activity that starts with the same first letter of their name when their name is called during roll.

## REFERENCE YOUR RESOURCE LIST



### OTHER SAMPLE TOOLKITS

**American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance (AAHPERD):  
Let's Move! Toolkit**

This toolkit can be used to assess the current state of physical education in one's school and then to create a program intended to increase PE and overall school activity

<http://www.aahperd.org/letsmoveinschool/tools/pta-ptd-toolkit.cfm>

**Network For a Healthy California: Toolbox for Community Educators**

This toolkit contains informative nutrition and physical activity handouts, lesson plans, evaluation tools and fun interactive activities that can be used to teach children about the importance of PE and healthy eating as well as motivate kids to be active

<http://www.network-toolbox.cdph.ca.gov/en/Overview.asp>

**Center for Disease Control and Prevention: Youth Physical Activity Guidelines Toolkit**

This toolkit outlines the recommended physical activity guidelines for children and includes useful handouts and presentations geared toward schools, communities, and families

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/physicalactivity/guidelines.htm>

**Let's Move! Campaign: Toolkit for Faith-Based and Neighborhood Organizations**

This toolkit includes detailed background information on the current state and benefits of physical activity and nutrition among children as well as physical activity challenges and activities

[http://www.hhs.gov/partnerships/resources/Pubs/lets\\_move\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.hhs.gov/partnerships/resources/Pubs/lets_move_toolkit.pdf)



## Reference Your Resource List



### OTHER RELATED INFORMATION & SAMPLE PE CURRICULUM/ACTIVITIES

#### **PlayWorks: Resources**

PlayWorks aims to better incorporate recess time and in-class play into school systems and the website provides many resources and training methods that can be used to do so

<http://www.playworks.org/make-recess-count/educators/resources>

#### **Coordinated Approach to Child Health (CATCH): Activity Kit**

CATCH activity kits contain numerous cards with various physical activity exercises designated by categories such as "Cool Down" and "Muscular Strength" among others

<http://catchinfo.org/catch-pe-resources-for-the-physical-educator/>

#### **Sports, Play, and Active Recreation for Kids (SPARK): Physical Education Programs**

SPARK provides sample lesson plans and examples of fun physical activities geared toward both K-2 grades and 3-6 grades as well as tools for evaluating the success of these plans

<http://www.sparkpe.org/physical-education/>

#### **Melinda Sothern: Trim Kids Book/Program**

This book outlines a 12-week program designed to improve the health of children through healthier eating, fun activities and ultimately behavior/lifestyle change

[http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/reviews/parenting\\_books/trim\\_kids.html](http://www.keepkidshealthy.com/reviews/parenting_books/trim_kids.html)



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## FITNESS CHALLENGE

**FITNESS CHALLENGE:** Divide the class into two teams. Each team gets four different fitness challenges. The team to finish all challenges first and correctly wins.

### SNAKE



- Each team selects two members to simulate the motion of a moving snake with a jump rope.
- The other team members jump over without touching the rope.
- If one teammate touches the rope, everyone must start over.
- See which team can complete the challenge fastest.

## FITNESS CHALLENGE

**FITNESS CHALLENGE:** Divide the class into two teams. Each team gets four different fitness challenges. The team to finish all challenges first and correctly wins.

### PUSH-UPS & SIT-UPS



- One team does ten push-ups followed by ten sit-ups.
- Another team does ten sit-ups followed by ten push-ups.
- See which team can complete the challenge fastest.

## FITNESS CHALLENGE

**FITNESS CHALLENGE:** Divide the class into two teams. Each team gets four different fitness challenges. The team to finish all challenges first and correctly wins.

### HANDSFREE TOSS



- Each team forms a straight line or a circle.
- Each team member passes a bean bag ball or a soccer ball down the line of team mates (or around the circle) without using their hands or dropping the ball.
- See which team can complete the challenge fastest.

## FITNESS CHALLENGE

**FITNESS CHALLENGE:** Divide the class into two teams. Each team gets four different fitness challenges. The team to finish all challenges first and correctly wins.

### ONE FOOT



- Each team member jumps rope on one foot ten times.
- Each team member then does the same on the other foot.
- See which team can complete the challenge fastest.





# IMPROVING PHYSICAL EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

UC Berkeley  
Center for Weight and Health

# + WHAT'S INSIDE

- Background
- What are the goals for PE in California?
- What's the reality about PE in California?
- Why should we care about PE?
- What can schools do to improve PE?
- What can parents and other advocates do?
- Resources



# BACKGROUND

- There is an urgent need to address the issues of inactivity, obesity, and low academic performance among our children.
- The benefits of physical activity in general, and physical education (PE) in particular, are well-documented.
- **But**, the state of physical activity and PE in California schools is neglected.
- **So**, we need to protect our children's health and future by improving PE in our schools.

# What are the goals for PE in CA?

- The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) recommends that school-age children get at least **60 minutes of total physical activity** per day.
- In order to achieve this goal for total physical activity, NASPE recommends that schools provide 150 minutes of physical education per week (**30 minutes of PE per day**) for elementary school children.
- California requires that students in elementary school get **100 minutes per week** of physical education (**20 minutes per day**).



# What's the reality about PE in CA?

- The requirements in California **fall short** of NASPE recommendations for PE
- **Half of elementary school kids** don't get the required 100 minutes per week
- **One in six** 9-11 year olds say they don't have PE at all
- Kids are only **active** for about **12 minutes** of 30 minute PE classes
- Many kids don't meet minimum standards for aerobic capacity, body composition, upper body strength, and flexibility

# What's the reality about PE in CA?

*continued*

- **Why do schools fail to meet PE requirements?**
  - Schools value academic courses more than PE
  - Schools sacrifice PE to satisfy academic pressures
  - Teacher training and staffing are inadequate, especially at the elementary school level
  - Facilities and equipment may not be adequate to encourage physical activity
  - Not all school personnel consider school wellness initiatives a top priority
  - Schools are not required to report information about the quality of PE programs

# Why should we care about PE?

## ■ **Being active helps the body and brain work better:**

- It improves memory, concentration, and intellectual performance
- It can reduce stress and improves attention and energy levels

## ■ **Active students do better in school:**

- They have better academic performance and classroom behavior
- They are absent less, which means more money for the schools
- Taking time for PE has no negative effects on grades or test scores

## ■ **Active and fit students are healthier overall:**

- They get sick less
- They make fewer risky choices
- They are more confident
- They become healthier adults

# Why should we care about PE?

*continued*

## ■ It's best to start early

- Younger children are more receptive to PE
- Habits that start early tend to stick with children through adolescence
- Starting early fosters an active lifestyle throughout children's lives

## ■ It's the right thing to do

- PE reaches all children, especially children who don't have other opportunities for physical activity
  - For instance, minority children have a 50% higher incidence of obesity compared to white children. They may most benefit from improvements to PE programs since they may not have other opportunities for physical activity in their neighborhoods.

# What can schools do to improve PE?

## ■ **Improve PE Programs**

- **Take steps to comply with requirement of 100 minutes of PE per week:**
  - Include the required minutes of PE in schools' master schedules
  - Inform teachers of the state's PE requirements
  - Make the PE requirements an essential part of training for new teachers
- **Make sure all students participate in PE without excuse**
- **Provide incentives for participating in PE:**
  - Have students receive grades for their performance in PE
  - Give rewards to teachers who meet PE goals
- **Restructure PE activities to maximize class time and minimize time spent on sedentary activities (roll call, waiting during games)**

## ■ **Prioritize Training & Professional Development**

- Provide at least 15 hours of continuing training to PE specialists and classroom teachers
- Facilitate access to PE-specific professional development opportunities for all teachers



# What can schools do to improve PE?

*continued*

## ■ Improve Infrastructure

- Make changes to the playground environment that promote physical activity, such as painting games on the blacktop, adding play structures or providing game equipment

## ■ Obtain Staff and Community Support

- Seek support from a variety of stakeholders such as administration, classroom teachers, and food service staff
- Involve families through workshops, family homework assignments, or newsletters
- Report progress on monitoring and enforcement of PE requirements to the state, parents, and the community

# What can parents and other advocates do?

1. Learn about schools' wellness policies
2. Talk to other parents and stakeholders about PE
  - Visit schools to assess PE environment
  - Reach out to parents, teachers, administrators, boards, and the media
3. Host a parent meeting on PE
4. Make presentations to local groups
5. Suggest PE activities for schools
6. Follow-up on efforts and document successes

# RESOURCES

## ■ Guidelines and Other Sample Toolkits:

- Let's Move!

[http://www.hhs.gov/partnerships/resources/Pubs/lets\\_move\\_toolkit.pdf](http://www.hhs.gov/partnerships/resources/Pubs/lets_move_toolkit.pdf)

- Network for a Healthy California

<http://www.network-toolbox.cdph.ca.gov/en/index.asp>

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<http://www.cdc.gov/HealthyYouth/physicalactivity/guidelines.htm>

## ■ Recommended PE Programs & Activities

- PE Toolkit (UC Berkeley-Center for Weight and Health)

- SPARK (<http://www.sparkpe.org/physical-education/>)

- CATCH

([https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/catch/curriculum\\_pe.htm](https://sph.uth.tmc.edu/catch/curriculum_pe.htm))