

FIT TO LEARN TIP SHEET

# Physical Activity



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**Physical activity during the school day helps students focus better in the classroom, increases social skills and encourages an active lifestyle. Activity in the classroom is also a great way to get students' minds moving. During class time, teachers can integrate physical activity into lessons.**

### Why is This Important?

Physically active students are better prepared for school and for life. Research shows that physical activity benefits children's cognitive health. It affects perception, memory, judgment, focus and reasoning as well as scores on verbal and mathematics tests. In fact, the Institute of Medicine recommends that all children participate in a minimum of 30 minutes of physical activity during the school day. The new CPS Wellness Policy states that schools should discourage extended periods (two hours or more) of time when a student is not physically active and that schools should provide all students with additional daily opportunities for moderate to vigorous physical activity before, during and after school in addition to recess and PE.

Students are more successful in learning new information

when they're able to actively participate. Using movement in lessons, or sensory-based learning, helps students retain and understand information.

Physical activity helps improve:

- Motor skills
- Academic performance
- Academic readiness
- Learning
- Cognition (mental processes of perception, memory, judgment and reasoning)
- Scores on verbal and mathematics tests
- IQ
- Concentration
- Perceptual skills (identification, spatial awareness, visual-sensory integration)

### Get Started

Meet with school staff and have the school principal agree to encourage teachers to incorporate 10 to 15 minutes of daily physical activity in the classroom by following these guidelines:

- Choose developmentally appropriate and safe activities, modifying for students with disabilities.
- Portray physical activity in a positive manner and never as a punishment.

- Be engaged and model healthy behavior.
- PE teachers and classroom teachers should work together to come up with safe, developmentally appropriate breaks of physical activity.
- Be consistent and have a set plan for your in-class physical activity breaks.



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## Try These Quick Tips

- Practice spelling words while getting some exercise! Have students spell words aloud, doing one jumping jack for each letter. This works with reciting the alphabet, too.
- Review any subject in a fun, active way! Have students form a circle, with one holding a playground ball. Ask a review question. The student will have to answer correctly before tossing the ball to a classmate of their choice.
- Turn a true-false quiz into an activity! Line students up opposite you. State a fact you have studied. If students think the fact is true, they will take one step forward; if they think it is false, they will take one step back. Alternatively, you could have students do jumping jacks or hop on one foot to indicate true/false or yes/no
- Incorporate walking breaks! Take your class for a walk while discussing with students what they learned during the previous lesson.
- Transition with activity! After long, sedentary periods, transition to a new lesson with an activity break.
- Incorporate exercise! Use a weekly calendar with different morning and afternoon exercises for each day.

## Learn from Success Stories

Rufus M. Hitch Elementary School, Chicago: Yoga

**A first-grade teacher incorporates yoga into the classroom. For example, the teacher leads students in yoga stretches while they are waiting in line.**

McCormick Elementary, Chicago: Active Math

**One kindergarten teacher found countless ways to bring activity and healthy messages into the classroom. The teacher leads students through their math exercise by using movements. Students happily jumped through different movements to match different sets of numbers, exercising their brains and their bodies at the same time. The teacher explained that students are more open to doing work and finishing their tasks after they are physically active and found that students have more energy and get through the problems more quickly.**



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## Physical Education at Chicago Public Schools

### PE Policy

In 2017, CPS adopted a PE Policy that states schools shall offer physical education programming in accordance with CPS Physical Education Policy of 150 of PE per week. The updated Wellness Policy also requires the integration of

physical activity on a daily basis, instead of a weekly basis, and a provision to to increase opportunities for physical activity.

### CPS Resources

The CPS Office of Student Health and Wellness has compiled a variety of resources to help your school provide daily quality PE.

the quality of PE. Please contact the PE Help Desk at [physicaleducation@cps.edu](mailto:physicaleducation@cps.edu) or 773-553-3560.

Resources include:

- CPS PE Toolkit. This toolkit provides practical tips and ideas. Available in the CPS Knowledge Center.
- CPS Physical Education Scope and Sequence. This guide illustrates the range of topics and skills to be taught and in what sequence for grades pre-K-12. The Scope and Sequence can be modified to meet the needs of each CPS school's student body and personnel as well as issues with facilities and equipment. Available in the CPS Knowledge Center.
- Physical Education Section on the Knowledge Center. Visit the PE page on the Knowledge Center to download the Physical Education Policy Manual and access short webinars, best practices and communications templates. Teachers can log into the CPS knowledge center at [kc.cps.edu](http://kc.cps.edu) for more information.
- Specialized assistance can be provided to individual instructors and/or administrators in an effort to improve

### Beyond PE

Schools can also develop a Comprehensive School Physical Activity Program (CSPAP), a roadmap for increasing students' physical activity before, during and after school. The CSPAP approach recommends five components of school-based physical activity: Physical Education, Physical Activity During School, Physical Activity Before and After School, Staff Involvement and Family and Community Involvement. Learn more at [letsmoveschools.org](http://letsmoveschools.org).



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## CONNECT TO RESOURCES

### Chicago Organizations + Resources

The following resources have been reviewed and approved by the Health and Wellness Materials Review Board convened by the Office of Health and Wellness at Chicago Public Schools. Please note; this list of resources is constantly being updated as more nutrition education resources and providers undergo the review and approval process set forth by CPS.

The Office of Student Health and Wellness aims to remove health-related barriers to learning such that students may succeed in college and career. To learn more, please contact the Office of Student Health and Wellness at [studentwellness@cps.edu](mailto:studentwellness@cps.edu).

#### Active Transportation Alliance

[activetrans.org](http://activetrans.org)

312-427-3325 / [admin@activetrans.org](mailto:admin@activetrans.org)

Education plays a vital role in the mission of the Active Transportation Alliance. It aims to give teachers and parents the tools needed to educate children about biking and walking, and also to guide communities to implement smarter school policies and safe routes to school. Active Transportation can provide technical assistance to schools on a variety of topics and can advocate for policy changes that promote walkable and bikeable schools.

#### America Scores

[americascores.org/affiliates/chicago](http://americascores.org/affiliates/chicago)

312-666-0496 / [chicago@americascores.org](mailto:chicago@americascores.org)

Founded in 2000, America SCORES Chicago inspires urban youth to lead healthy lives, be engaged students, and have the confidence and character to make a difference in the world. America SCORES partners with urban schools to provide a high quality, team-based program that integrates soccer, poetry, and service learning. Its innovative approach improves students health, academic achievement and civic engagement.

#### Calm Classroom

[calmclassroom.com](http://calmclassroom.com)

Jai Luster / 847-748-7482 / [jai@calmclassroom.com](mailto:jai@calmclassroom.com)

Luster Learning Institute provides its school-wide “Calm Classroom” program training and year-round support services and materials to CPS. Teachers are trained to facilitate short breathing, stretching, focusing and relaxation techniques in the classroom, three to four times daily. Students and teachers develop the habit of using these self-reflective, self-regulatory techniques when needed in school and beyond. Student outcomes include: improved academic success, focus and stress management, and reductions in overall code of conduct violations and misbehavior.

#### Chicago Safe Routes Ambassadors

[.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdot/provdrs/ped/svcs/safe\\_routes\\_ambassadors.html](http://.cityofchicago.org/city/en/depts/cdot/provdrs/ped/svcs/safe_routes_ambassadors.html)

Cody McChane / 312-744-3019 / [cody.mcchane@activetrans.org](mailto:cody.mcchane@activetrans.org)



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Chicago's Safe Routes Ambassadors are Chicago's pedestrian and bicycle safety outreach team. Ambassadors meet with thousands of Chicago students each year, teaching kids about safe walking and biking behavior, talking about the benefits of active transportation, and helping communities implement Safe Routes to School activities. The Safe Routes Ambassadors are a free city service through the Chicago Department of Transportation, and are available to visit any elementary school in Chicago.

### Chicago Run

**[chicagorun.org](http://chicagorun.org)**

**773-961-8470 / [info@chicagorun.org](mailto:info@chicagorun.org)**

Chicago Run works with schools on an individual basis in order to help them increase the amount of physical activity their students receive on a weekly basis. Chicago Run uses physical fitness, nutrition education, and digital learning as a means to get students excited about their over-all health and wellness, as well as provide them with the opportunity to learn about surrounding communities and to take pride in their own!

### Dancing with Class

**[dancingwithclass.org](http://dancingwithclass.org)**

**Margot Toppen / 773-635-3000 / [margot@dancingwithclass.com](mailto:margot@dancingwithclass.com)**

Dancing with Class introduces students to different forms of ballroom/partner dance. Programs bring together dance, cultural learning and character education into one seamless package.

### Enlace

**[enlacechicago.org](http://enlacechicago.org)**

**Simone Alexander / 773-703-9272 / [salexander@enlacechicago.org](mailto:salexander@enlacechicago.org)**

Enlace Chicago is dedicated to making a positive difference in the lives of the residents of the Little Village Community by fostering a physically safe and healthy environment in which to live and by championing opportunities for educational advancement and economic development.

### Girls in the Game

**[girlsinthegame.org](http://girlsinthegame.org)**

**Allison Liefer / 312-633-4263 / [aliefer@girlsinthegame.org](mailto:aliefer@girlsinthegame.org)**

Girls in the Game provides and promotes sports and fitness opportunities, nutrition and health education, and leadership development to enhance the overall health and well-being of girls.

### Girls on the Run

**[girlsontherun.org](http://girlsontherun.org)**

**Kristen Kainer-Turner / 773-342-1250 / [kristen@gotrchicago.org](mailto:kristen@gotrchicago.org)**



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Girls on the Run is a transformational physical activity based positive youth development program for girls in 3rd-8th grade. It teaches life skills through dynamic, interactive lessons and running games. The program culminates with the girls being physically and emotionally prepared to complete a celebratory 5k running event. The goal of the program is to unleash confidence through accomplishment while establishing a lifetime appreciation of health and fitness.

### JumpBunch

**[jumpbunch.com](http://jumpbunch.com)**

**Ali Anjum / 312-835-7724 / [aanjum@jumpbunch.com](mailto:aanjum@jumpbunch.com)**

JumpBunch provides an experienced coach and necessary equipment to make it easy for schools to add structured sports and fitness to their curriculum or to round out after-care programs. The curriculum introduces the rules and skills through hands-on exercises, so kids begin playing and improving right away. The goals are to help make every student comfortable trying new sports, to give them a basic understanding of popular sports and to help them appreciate the fun and rewards of regular physical activity.

### Mindful Practices

**[mindfulpracticesyoga.com](http://mindfulpracticesyoga.com)**

**708-408-0393 / [admin@mindfulpracticesyoga.com](mailto:admin@mindfulpracticesyoga.com)**

Mindful Practices offers innovative professional development, after-school and recess programming in yoga and wellness strategies. Mindful Practices works with schools across the country to honor the needs of the whole child through mindful classroom management practices that bring relaxation, movement and breath work to the classroom. Programming offerings for early elementary, elementary, middle school and high school include Hip-Hop Yoga, Cool Corps, Kindness Lab and Cool Down Club, which is a specialized program for students with aggressive behavior and/or special needs. All programs are offered as options for recess, after school or embedded day programs. Mindful Practices also offers effective and engaging professional development workshops for faculty, staff and parents.

### Playworks Chicago

**[illinois.playworks.org](http://illinois.playworks.org)**

**Colleen Harvey / 312-324-0280 / [charvey@playworks.org](mailto:charvey@playworks.org)**

Playworks is a national nonprofit organization that transforms schools by providing play and physical activity at recess and throughout the school day. Through on-site direct service and trainer-led professional development workshops, Playworks restores valuable teaching time, reduces bullying, increases physical activity and improves the school and learning environment. Playworks teaches children to resolve their own conflicts that arise at recess and carry over to the classroom, improving school climate both on and off the playground. Playworks helps transform recess into a safe, fun and inclusive time that gets students active and engaged so they can return to the classroom focused and ready to learn.

### Stretch-n-Grow

**[stretchngrownorth.com](http://stretchngrownorth.com)**

**773-486-3540 / [sngrow@yahoo.com](mailto:sngrow@yahoo.com)**



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Stretch-n-Grow is a fun fitness and nutrition program for children ages 2-13. Kids work up a sweat to upbeat music as they learn about the importance of living a healthy lifestyle. The Stretch-n-Grow Program covers health topics including proper nutrition, hygiene, sleep and more.

#### Urban Initiatives

**[urbaninitiatives.org](http://urbaninitiatives.org)**

**April Lillstrom / 312-715-1763 / [info@urbaninitiatives.org](mailto:info@urbaninitiatives.org)**

Urban Initiatives offers sports-based youth development programming including a health and education soccer program, structured recess program and a four-week soccer camp. The mission of Urban Initiatives is to motivate Chicago's children to improve their academic performance, physical fitness, health, and character through collaborative programs.

#### Action for Healthy Kids

**[actionforhealthykids.org](http://actionforhealthykids.org)**

**Heidi Knoblock / 312-878-2712 / [hknoblock@actionforhealthykids.org](mailto:hknoblock@actionforhealthykids.org)**

Action for Healthy Kids addresses childhood undernourishment, obesity and prevention by working with schools to help kids learn to eat right and be active every day. This focus is because of the unique position and influence that schools have on children and their families, in addition to their responsibility to provide nutrition and physical education and their many opportunities to promote healthy eating and active living.

#### Alliance for a Healthier Generation

**[schools.healthiergeneration.org](http://schools.healthiergeneration.org)**

**Erin Rasler / 773-857-1276 / [erin.rasler@healthiergeneration.org](mailto:erin.rasler@healthiergeneration.org)**

Alliance's Healthy Schools Program takes a comprehensive approach to helping schools create healthier environments by working with them to improve access to healthier foods; increase physical activity opportunities before, during and after school; enhance nutrition education; and establish school employee wellness programs.

#### University of Illinois Extension

**[web.extension.illinois.edu/cook](http://web.extension.illinois.edu/cook)**

**Michele Crawford / 773-768-7779 / [mcrawfrd@illinois.edu](mailto:mcrawfrd@illinois.edu)**

University of Illinois Extension Cook County is an outreach effort of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Illinois Nutrition Education Program (INEP) staff work with a variety of community organizations to ensure that low-income families have access to information on good nutrition and physical activity. INEP staff provide classes that teach participants how to use their food dollars wisely, select healthy foods for their families, prepare and store food safely, and balance food intake with physical activity. INEP offers nutrition education for pre-K through 5th grade youth and adults.

#### Westside Health Authority



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**[healthauthority.org](http://healthauthority.org)**

**Morris Reed / 773-378-1878**

The Health Promotions Program at Westside Health Authority (WHA) focuses on seven health priorities to enhance the overall health and well-being of the community: Active Lifestyles, Nutrition Education and Healthy Eating, Breast Health, Sexual Health, Health Literacy, Diabetes and School Health. The Move “N” Crunch program is a model fitness and nutrition program for schools. The “move” component is led by a partner organization, Chicago Run, which implements free running programs with the help of on-site school staff. The “crunch” component is led by WHA and includes 12 nutrition classes focused on how a specific fruit or vegetable is grown, why it benefits our bodies, and how it tastes.

McCormick YMCA

**[ymcachicago.org/mccormicktribune](http://ymcachicago.org/mccormicktribune)**

**Adriana Stanovici / [astanovici@ymcachicago.org](mailto:astanovici@ymcachicago.org)**

The McCormick Tribune YMCA’s Active Green Space seeks to impact health and wellness with a focus on childhood obesity and diabetes in the Logan Square, Humboldt Park and Hermosa neighborhoods of Chicago. The Active Green Space has created a “hybrid space”, combining a physical activity area, an outdoor classroom, a community garden and a green energy education component. The Active Green Space project is critical to positively impacting health and wellness now and in the future.

YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago

**[ymcachicago.org](http://ymcachicago.org)**

**312-932-1200**

The YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago is an inclusive, charitable association, founded on Christian principles and dedicated to building strong kids, strong families and strong communities through programs that develop spirit, mind and body. Initiatives include: nutrition education, physical activity/fitness, health education, family life, diabetes, character development; values-based leadership development.

## **National and Online Resources**

Take 10!

**[take10.net](http://take10.net)**

Try out a searchable database of classroom-based physical activity lessons for K-5.

Active Academics

**[activeacademics.org](http://activeacademics.org)**

Gain practical ideas for integrating physical activity in K-5 math, reading/language arts, health/nutrition, and physical education classes.



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### Activity Bursts for the Classroom

[davidkatzmd.com/abcforfitness.aspx](http://davidkatzmd.com/abcforfitness.aspx)

Elementary schools can learn how to restructure physical activity into multiple, brief episodes throughout the day without taking away valuable time for classroom instruction.

### Energizers

[letsgo.org/toolkits](http://letsgo.org/toolkits)

Find classroom-based physical activities for grades K-8 that integrate physical activity with academic concepts.

### Winter Kids Outdoor Learning Curriculum

[winterkids.org](http://winterkids.org)

Discover lessons aligned with national education standards that are interdisciplinary and in a variety of subjects for grades K-12. The site features an adapted component for disabled children.