

Foundations for High-Quality Early Learning Programming

Early Learning Readiness (Pre-K – Kindergarten)

Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Physical Activity and Wellness

In grades **Kindergarten-5**, not less than 30 minutes of physical education, including physical exercise and age appropriate physical activities, for not less than three days a week shall be provided as per W. Va. Code §18-2-7a. At least 50 percent of class time for physical education will be spent in moderate to vigorous-intensity physical activity. Schools that do not currently have the number of certified physical education teachers or required physical setting may develop alternate programs to enable current staff and physical settings to be used to meet this requirement. Alternate programs shall be submitted to the WVDE and the West Virginia Healthy Lifestyle Council for approval.

Physical Education

In grades **Kindergarten-5 physical activity** in the form of recess or informal physical activity will be provided for no fewer than 30 minutes daily for all students.

Physical Activity

WV Universal Pre-K classrooms are required to offer no less than 60 minutes of daily outdoor activity, weather permitting. A combination of indoor time may be utilized when weather conditions are conducive. Physical activity is provided through an integrated approach as part of the comprehensive curricular framework as defined by WVBE Policy 2525.

Pre-K and Kindergarten should focus on the development of social skills, a basic understanding of personal health issues, injury prevention, the exploration of nutritious foods and the development of motor skills and movement concepts which are critical to future learning. The Pre-K and Kindergarten classrooms are responsible for classroom instruction that integrates learning skills, technology and physical activity.

Critical Considerations to Help Assure Developmentally Appropriate Practices for Physical Health and Wellness

- The early education years of Pre-K and Kindergarten build the foundation for health literacy and an appreciation for lifelong physical fitness. It is critical that children learn to adopt healthy behaviors at an early age so they can develop sound habits before being faced with health concerns later in life.
- High quality recess and other physical activity offerings should ensure multiple activities are offered to foster universal participation, playgrounds have designated zones for different types of play, and quality equipment is provided. Administration should ensure effective training is provided to designated playground staff, who facilitate and lead group games and activities.
- Before providing recess and other physical activity offerings to students, the staff must teach positive playground and classroom physical activity behaviors so students have a clear understanding of the rules and expectations.
- Time spent in recess and classroom physical activity breaks are associated with improved cognitive performance, classroom behavior, and educational outcomes.
- Students in early learning years of Pre-K and Kindergarten develop motor skills and movement forms to enhance physical development.

Implications

- Early Learning classrooms build a foundation for practicing good health habits. **Ask Yourself:** *How do I emphasize good health habits daily like hand washing, cough etiquette, tooth brushing, toileting, manners, treating others with respect, acceptance, respect for other, etc.?*
- Early Learning students should have multiple opportunities to engage in movement experiences throughout the instructional day, enhancing the critical link between physical activity and brain functioning. **Ask Yourself:** *Do I integrate physical activity into the early learning classroom and curriculum to enhance brain function?*
- Health and Wellness activities **cannot** be used as punishment for students. **Ask Yourself:** *Do I foster a positive environment free of practices using physical activity as punishment?*
- Health and wellness activities **should not** be withheld as a behavioral consequence. **Ask Yourself:** *Do I foster a positive environment that encourages physical wellness? Do I provide opportunities for **all** students to have the required amount of daily physical activity?*



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Selected Resources

CDC Physical Activity Facts at <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/physicalactivity/facts.htm>.

CDC Safe and Healthy Kids and Families at <http://www.cdc.gov/family/kids/>.

CDC Health and Academic Achievement at http://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf

Early Childhood Education in Community Schools at
http://www.communityschools.org/about/early_childhood_education_in_community_schools.aspx.

Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center <http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc>

Health in Mind: Improving Education Through Wellness at
http://www.nasmhpd.org/docs/PreventionResources/Health_in_Mind_Report.pdf.

Institute of Medicine Report. (2013). *Educating the Student Body Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School*. *The National Academy of Sciences*. Retrieved on February 4, 2014 from
http://www.iom.edu/-/media/Files/Report%20Files/2013/Educating-the-Student-Body/EducatingTheStudentBody_rb.pdf.

WVDE-Office of Early Learning Website. (2014). <http://wvde.state.wv.us/oel/>.

Related Policies

Policy 2419	Regulations for the Education of Students with Exceptionalities
Policy 2510	Assuring the Quality Of Education: Regulations For Education Programs
Policy 2520.55	21st Century Wellness PreK-4 Content Standards and Objectives for West Virginia Schools
Policy 2525	West Virginia's Universal Access to an Early Education System
Policy 2520.15	Early Learning Standards Framework: Content Standards and Learning Criteria for West Virginia Pre-Kindergarten (WV Pre-k)
Policy 4373	Expected Behavior in Safe and Supportive Schools

