



## Section 1: Introduction

### Organization

This section includes information about Daily Physical Activity (DPA) and the DPA School Handbook and is organized into the following topics:

- **What Is Daily Physical Activity?**
- **Why Is DPA Important?**
- **Overview of the DPA School Handbook**

Several Web sites are listed in this document. These sites are listed as a service only to identify potentially useful ideas for teaching and learning. Alberta Education is not responsible for maintaining these external sites, nor does the listing of these sites constitute or imply endorsement of their content. The responsibility to evaluate these sites rests with the user.

**Note:** All Web site addresses were confirmed as accurate at the time of publication but are subject to change.

### What Is Daily Physical Activity?

Daily physical activity refers to the planned and spontaneous physical activity that people do on a daily basis, for example, walking, sports, gardening, running or jogging, household chores, active games and play, and stretching. Being physically active on a daily basis is crucial to the health and wellness of all Canadians, especially children.

*Canada's Physical Activity Guides to Healthy Active Living for Children and Youth* (Health Canada) recommend that, over several months, children and youth (aged 6–14 years) should build up at least 90 minutes of daily physical activity per day and reduce sedentary activities like playing video games and watching television by 90 minutes per day.

For healthy growth and development, children and youth need at least 60 minutes of moderate physical activity (e.g., brisk walking) and 30 minutes of vigorous physical activity (e.g., running, soccer) each day.

#### Resources



For more information, see Alberta Education's *Daily Physical Activity Guide for Children and Youth: A Review and Synthesis of the Literature* at [http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/K\\_12/curriculum/bySubject/dpa.asp](http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/K_12/curriculum/bySubject/dpa.asp).

For more information, see the *Physical Activity Guide* at [www.paguide.com](http://www.paguide.com) or look under "Healthy Living" at <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca>.

### Provincial Support for DPA

Alberta Education has prepared this school handbook to help teachers and administrators select age-appropriate activities that can be done almost anytime and anywhere. Daily physical activity can be as simple as walking, running, jogging, bending and stretching, or as involved as teachers wish to make it—bearing in mind local circumstances, the age of the students and their physical capabilities. Based on Health Canada's recommendations, Alberta Education has developed the following policy regarding daily physical activity.

## Alberta Education's Daily Physical Activity (DPA) Policy Statement

***School authorities shall ensure that all students in grades 1 to 9 are physically active for a minimum of 30 minutes daily through activities that are organized by the school.***

### **Guiding Principles:**

*Schools have the responsibility of creating and nurturing a learning environment for students that supports the development of the lifelong habit for daily physical activity and for healthy lifestyles.*

*Daily physical activities should:*

- *vary in form and intensity*
- *take into account each student's ability*
- *consider resources available within the school and the larger community*
- *allow for student choice.*

### **Procedures:**

1. *School authorities have the flexibility to use instructional and/or noninstructional hours to implement DPA.*
  - a. *Physical education classes are an appropriate strategy to meet the DPA requirement.*
  - b. *DPA should be offered in as large a block of time as possible but can be offered in time segments adding up to the minimum 30 minutes per day; e.g., two fifteen minute blocks of time for a total of 30 minutes.*
  - c. *DPA can be incorporated throughout the day and integrated into other subject areas.*
2. *School authorities will monitor the implementation of DPA to ensure that all students are active for a minimum of 30 minutes daily.*
3. *Exemptions from DPA may be granted by the principal under the following conditions:*
  - a. *religious beliefs—upon written statement from the parent to the principal*
  - b. *medical reasons—certification to principal by a medical practitioner indicating in which activities the student is not able to participate.*

**Alberta Education 2006, pp. 44–45.**

## Why Is DPA Important?

### **What the Research Tells Us**

Strong evidence exists that physical activity contributes to the overall well-being of all individuals. People of all ages can substantially improve their health and quality of life by including a moderate amount of physical activity in their daily routines. Participation in physical activity contributes to physical, mental and social well-being, providing benefits to the individual and the community.

Physical activity is vital to all aspects of normal growth and development. Students do not automatically develop the requisite knowledge, skills and attitudes that lead to active, healthy lifestyles, and such learning should begin in childhood. Administrators and teachers can help provide physical activity opportunities and develop a desire for lifelong participation in physical activity.

## Quick Physical Activity Facts about Canadians



Physical inactivity is considered to be an even greater health problem than cigarette smoking—26% of Canadians are smokers, whereas more than 35% of Canadians are inactive. More than two-thirds of Canadians are not active enough to derive positive benefits of healthy living and are putting themselves at risk for a number of life-threatening diseases (Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute 1998).



Regular physical activity can reduce the risk of colon cancer, diabetes and osteoporosis. In addition, there is evidence that physical activity during adolescence may protect against later development of breast cancer in women (Heart Health Coalition 1997).



Active students are less susceptible to stress, exhibit positive attitudes about school and themselves, are less aggressive and play better with fellow students (Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance 1992).



In 2000–2001, four out of five Canadian youths were not active enough to meet international guidelines for optimal growth and development (Canadian Population Health Initiative 2004).



In 1998, Canadians 15 years and older spent an average of 15 hours per week watching television compared to only seven hours per week in active leisure pursuits (Canadian Population Health Initiative 2004). Time spent playing video games by Canadian children is amongst the highest in the world.



Children and youth who participate in regular physical activity are less likely to smoke or consume alcohol or drugs (Stephens and Craig 1990).



Physically active people make fewer visits to physicians, have lower hospital usage and require less medical attention overall than less active individuals. A 10% reduction in the number of inactive Canadians would save \$5 billion in health care costs (Rock 1998).



Over the past two decades, the number of overweight and obese children has nearly tripled in Canada. Obese children and adolescents have a greater occurrence of hypertension, high cholesterol levels and a greater incidence of Type 2 diabetes (Canadian Population Health Initiative 2004).

## Facts about the Impact of Physical Activity on Academic Performance



Available data suggest that the rate of academic learning per unit of class time is enhanced in physically active students and lack of curricular time is not a valid reason for avoiding daily physical education (Shephard 1997).



Research demonstrates that a reallocation of curricular time toward Physical Education has no negative impact on academic performance and may in fact facilitate academic performance (Mackenzie 1972, Shephard 1996).



Moderate to vigorous physical activity favourably enhances performance in classroom functions such as arithmetic, reading, memorization and categorization (Keays 1993).



A 2001 study of almost 8000 children between the ages of 7 and 15 years observed significant positive correlations between self-reported physical activity and results of standardized fitness tests with academic performance (Dwyer et al. 2001).



Regular participation in physical education and physical activity is related to improved self-esteem, which in turn is related to better academic achievement, especially in young girls (Tremblay, Inman and Wilms 1998).



Results from the California Physical Fitness Test (2004) reveal strong positive relationships between physical fitness and academic achievement (California Department of Education 2004).



Athletic participation is associated with fewer incidences of smoking, drug use, unwanted pregnancy, delinquent behaviour and dropping out of school (Kerr 1996).



Students who had physical education five times per week outperformed the control group in academic coursework (Shephard and Trudeau 2000).

## Overview of the DPA School Handbook

The Daily Physical Activity School Handbook is designed to provide information, ideas and inspiration for developing a successful Daily Physical Activity plan. The Handbook is divided into the following sections:

### Section 2: Teachers

Contains information on:

- **Considering the Needs of Students;** e.g., students with special needs, student safety
- **Female Students and Physical Activity;** e.g., facts about girls and physical activity, tips for increasing participation
- **Planning for Implementation;** e.g., ways to change student behaviour and attitudes, linking to seasonal themes and events, lesson planning
- **Linking Cross-curricular Outcomes;** e.g., examples of cross-curricular linking to physical activities
- **Involving Parents/Guardians and the Community;** e.g., parent/guardian roles in a school's daily physical activity program, ideas for daily physical activity at home, community participation in daily physical activity, community guest speakers for your school
- **Active Living for Staff;** e.g., facts and ideas about living actively
- **Walking Ideas and Information;** e.g., staff wellness and student motivation

### Section 3: Physical Activities

Contains:

- **Introduction**
- **Index of Physical Activities**

And sample activities divided into the following categories:

- **Classroom or Small Space**
- **Gym or Open Space**
- **Outdoors**
- **Whole School and Large Group**

Each activity includes a step-by-step description, equipment needed and may include suggestions for cross-curricular links.

### Section 4: Administrators

Contains information on:

- **Suggested Roles for Supporting Daily Physical Activity;** e.g., descriptions of the suggested DPA roles of school authorities, principals, teachers, parents/guardians and communities
- **Promising Practices;** e.g., tips for getting started and sustaining a DPA program
- **Developing a School DPA Implementation Plan;** e.g., a process for developing a successful DPA implementation plan
- **Support for Daily Physical Activity;** e.g., descriptions of supporting organizations for DPA
- **Monitoring the DPA Plan;** e.g., tips on monitoring DPA achievements
- **Tips for Encouraging Staff Physical Activity**

### Section 5: Appendices

Contains various blackline masters and resources for:

- teacher planning and reflection
- student self-monitoring and goal setting
- activity and background information
- developing a school's Daily Physical Activity implementation plan

