

Importance of Certified Physical Education Teachers

Did you know?

- Only certified physical education teachers should be given the responsibility of teaching the skills and providing the motivation our young people need to adopt and maintain a physically active lifestyle.¹
- School programs provide the skills, knowledge, and attitudes that help children stay active for the rest of their lives.
- Establishing and implementing high-quality physical education (PE) programs can provide students with the appropriate knowledge, skills, behaviors, and confidence to be physically active for life.
- High-quality PE is the cornerstone of a school's physical activity program.²
- Studies have found that, compared with classroom teachers, certified physical education specialists teach longer and higher quality classes in which students spend more time being physically active.³
- Further studies suggest that certified physical education teachers seem to be more effective than generalist teachers in delivering physical education lessons. This is true even when the learning environment, the curriculum, the number of children per teacher, and the facilities and available equipment in a physical education class is the same. Certified physical education teachers seem to deliver more effective lessons of seemingly higher intensity and have a consequently stronger positive effect on children's motor development.⁴

Inclusive Physical Education for all Students

- The certified physical education teacher plays an important role in the inclusion of all students in order to comply with The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, (IDEA) Public Law 105-17.
- Special education is specially designed instruction designed to meet the unique needs of an individual student and includes instruction in physical education. Schools are responsible for determining on at least an annual basis whether a student's disability adversely affects his/her performance in the regular physical education class
- It is vital that a certified physical education teacher takes part in the development of the Individualized Education Plan, since they will be responsible for implementing the physical education goals.
- It is important to note that related services, such as physical or occupational therapy, cannot take the place of adapted physical education.

Currently...

- 40 states (78%) require all who teach elementary school physical education to be certified/licensed.⁵
- 42 states (82%) require all who teach middle school/junior high school physical education to be certified/licensed.⁶
- 46 states (88%) require all who teach high school physical education to be certified/licensed.⁷

What is the Healthy Schools Program?

- The Healthy Schools Program is an initiative of the Alliance for a Healthier Generation, a partnership between the American Heart Association and the William J. Clinton Foundation.
- The Healthy Schools Program focuses on helping schools:
 - improve the food and beverages during the regular and extended school day
 - increase physical activity

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- improve the quality of health and physical education programs
- establish wellness programs for school employees
- Participation in the Healthy Schools Program is an excellent way to jump start the implementation of the district wellness policy at your school and to be recognized for your efforts. By joining the program, your school will gain access to best practice tools and resources through telephonic and online support. Examples of support include: online trainings with a cadre of experts, toolkits on a variety of topics, and tangible resources to help with implementation.

The Healthy Schools Program team can help your school every step of the way!

For more information, please contact Dana Roberts at Dana.Roberts@HealthierGeneration.org

¹ McKenzie TL, Sallis JK, Kolody B, Faucette FN. Long-term effects of a physical education curriculum and staff development program: SPARK. *Research Quarterly on Exercise & Sport*. 1997; 68: 280-291

² US Department of Health and Human Services. 2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. Washington, D.C.: US Dept of Health and Human Services; 2008

³ Starc Gregor, Strel Janko. Influence of the quality implementation of a physical education curriculum on the physical development and the physical fitness of children: Published online. *BMC Public Health*. 2012;12:61.

⁴ Starc Gregor, Strel Janko. Influence of the quality implementation of a physical education curriculum on the physical development and the physical fitness of children: Published online. *BMC Public Health*. 2012;12:61.

⁵ National Association for Sport and Physical Education & American Heart Association. (2012). 2012 Shape of the Nation Report: Status of Physical Education in the USA. Reston, VA: American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance.

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