

Getting a move on:

Putting your daily physical activity program in place

■ by Kara Smith

Daily physical activity – 20 minutes per day for all students – is the new rule in Ontario schools. To make this a positive experience for everyone, we as teachers need to work together and share great ideas and successful activities.

Combined with the resource materials released by the Ministry of Education, the daily physical activity mandate is a great first step toward ensuring a healthier generation of kids. It will contribute to the creation of a culture that promotes and supports active, healthy living in each school community.

Children love to move. Studies show daily physical activity improves students' memory, observation, problem-solving and decision-making, as well as significantly enhancing attitudes, discipline, behaviour and creativity.¹ It provides an outlet for the release of stress and extra energy.

Children who learn to participate in daily physical activity in a caring and supportive environment that also provides positive and successful experiences, will enjoy that activity. They are also more likely to continue participating in physical activities outside of school and go on to lead healthy, active lives as adults.

Here are the steps to putting your program in place:

Step 1: Familiarize yourself with the guidelines

The Ministry policy² stipulates that daily physical activity (DPA) must:

- Consist of at least 20 minutes of daily activity, which raises and maintains the heart rate for the physical activity period (It can consist of two 10-minute segments, but 10 minutes is the minimum time per session.)
- Be scheduled during instructional time (Not during lunch, recess or breaks.)

- Be provided on days when physical education is not scheduled
- Not replace physical education classes
- Include a warm-up and cool-down.

Classroom teachers, specialists and even school administrators can help lead the students in DPA. It can occur in a variety of locations including the classroom, multi-purpose rooms, outside and in the gymnasium.



Photos - Catherine Cochio

Step 2: Consult the Ministry's resource guides

Daily Physical Activity in Schools, Grades 1 to 3, Grades 4 to 6 and Grades 7 and 8, are guides developed by teachers for teachers. They contain ready-to-use lesson plans. They also include steps and strategies to set up a quality program for all students, adaptations for students with special needs, and information on safety, scheduling, timetabling and maximum use of facilities.

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Every Ontario elementary teacher and principal should have received a copy of the guide in March. Administration and Board guides were distributed shortly thereafter. English and French versions are also available on the Ministry of Education website, edu.gov.on.ca. Please see your administration if you have not yet received your guide.

Step 3: Think about safety

In addition to the common safety guidelines in the Ministry guides, staff members must also be aware of and adhere to safety guidelines and policies put in place by their boards. Be sure to consult your safety documents prior to starting your program. Be sure to consult your school administration or your school board's health and physical education contact if you have any specific concerns.

School boards are working on a variety of strategies to help schools implement DPA. Some boards are asking experi-

enced physical education teachers, or those with a keen interest, to serve as mentors for teachers who are leading a program for the first time. Other boards are planning in-service training and have distributed resources. Contact your board's health and physical education department for more details about local training and supports.

Step 4: Gather your resources

- Ophea's H&PE Curriculum Implementation Support Documents include lesson plans, daily physical activity ideas, and black line masters.
- **activ8** is a free, curriculum-based program with eight pre-planned lessons for each grade with physical activity challenges that engage all students. Visit activ8.org or call Ophea at 1-888-446-7432.
- **Ophea.net** provides activity ideas, programs and services, and articles.

- 1 J.J. Keays and K.R. Allison, "The Effects of Regular Moderate to Vigorous Physical Activity on Student Outcomes: A Review", *Canadian Journal of Public Health*, 86, no. 1, January/February 1995, p.64.
- 2 Memorandum 138, Daily Physical Activity is available on the Ministry website at edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/138.html



Space Mission

Division: Primary/Junior/Intermediate

Physical Activity Level: Moderate/Vigorous

Space: Limited to large space

Equipment: None

Time: 10 or 20 minutes

Safety Considerations

Teachers should ensure that students have enough room to move safely. Remind students to be aware of others during the “mission.”

Warm Up (2–3 minutes)

The Wave: Students form a circle. The teacher or a student leader starts “the wave” by walking on the spot while the others stand still. Then the student to the right of the leader starts walking and the next student follows, creating a wave effect until everyone is walking on the spot. The leader then starts a new move such as jogging on the spot. Students continue to walk until the wave (the new move) reaches them – then they begin to jog. Continue in the same way with the leader introducing moves such as jumping, shoulder rolls, lunges, leg kicks and a variety of stretches.

Getting Active (15–16 minutes)

Demonstrate each command and accompanying action to begin. Instruct the students to scatter within the room.

As each command is called the students do the corresponding action (for 15 to 20 seconds) and change the action each time a new command is called.

Command examples may include:

- Blast Off...jump up as high as possible using both legs
- Space Travel...jog around the space
- Man on the Moon...walk very slowly (zero gravity)
- Meteor Shower...hop on alternating legs
- Space Shuttle Passing...run on the spot
- Lunar Landing...run three steps and stop, run three steps and stop
- Comets Coming...run in a zigzag path
- Asteroid Alert...skip around the space
- The Rings of Saturn...groups of 3 – 6 form a circle and travel together
- Recreation Time...walk around the space
- Shooting Stars...star jumps
- Martians Moon Walking...walk in a creative way
- Red Alert...run to the nearest corner and do jumping jacks

Cool Down (2–3 minutes)

Students move around the activity area in groups of 2–4, playing follow the leader. One student leads the way in each group, taking their group through a variety of movements and directions, at a slower pace. Finish by leading, or having a student lead a stretching routine.

Notes for Teachers:

Space Mission is a fun activity for students and also a great opportunity for educators teaching the topic of space in the science/technology curriculum to activate student learning. Commands can be adapted to accommodate different facilities and varying abilities of students. Teachers may want to consider starting with only a few commands and then, as the students become more familiar with the routine, adding additional commands. You may need to adapt the above examples to accommodate the varying skills and abilities of the students. For sample stretches see the Ministry of Education’s *Daily Physical Activity in Schools: Teacher Resource Guide, Appendix C*.

Adapted from Ophea, H&PE Curriculum Support Documents, 2000.

Keep it Clean

Division: Primary

Space: Large space

Time: 20 minutes or two 10-minute segments

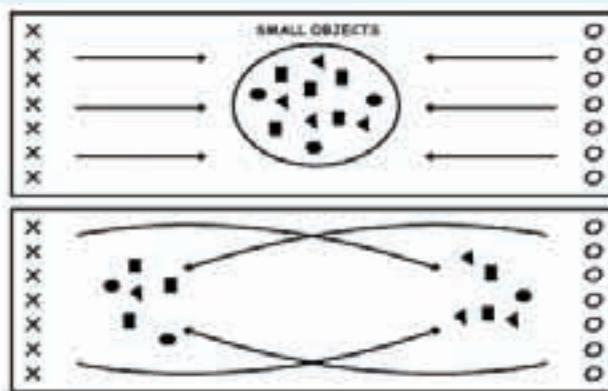
Physical Activity Level: Moderate/Vigorous

Equipment: Small balls or objects (math manipulatives or crunched up pieces of recycled paper)

Activity Description: *Keep it Clean* is a great activity to incorporate 20 minutes of daily physical activity during instructional time. This activity can also be a great way to introduce, reinforce and/or practice counting, grouping and/or sorting concepts for grades 1–3.

Overview: Teachers should ensure a safe pathway from wall to wall. Remind students to move safely and to avoid colliding with others in the corners. Allow for a warm-up (beginning with less vigorous movement and stretches) and cool down (ending with less vigorous movement and stretches):

- Divide the class into two groups.
- Place objects in the centre of the room.
- One group stands at the back of the room; the other at the front.



- On a signal, students walk quickly to the centre, pick up ONE object and return it to their end of the room.
- When all objects are gone from the centre, students can walk to the other side and take an object from the other side.
- Students work as quickly as they can to get as many objects on their side of the room.
- During the group assessment of their safe participation ask one of the teams to lead a stretching routine to cool down.

Variation: The teacher may challenge the class to move in different ways or to carry the objects in unique or creative ways. The teacher may also instruct the students to sort the materials they have collected on their side by colour, size and/or shape.



Adapted from Opeha, *H&PE Curriculum Support Documents*, 2000.