



You don't have to be a gym teacher! Fostering physical fitness in 3-5 year olds

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Physical Fitness in Early Childhood Education

Developmentally appropriate curriculum

- is relevant, engaging, and meaningful to children,
- respects individual, cultural, and linguistic diversity,
- builds on what the children already know and are able to do,
- provides opportunities for rich conceptual development,
- engages children actively in the learning process,
- encourages exploration as well as learning established procedures,
- has intellectual integrity re: the relevant standards of the disciplines,
- addresses the development of knowledge, skills, and attitudes,
- meets age-appropriate goals in all domains of development, and
- is flexible so that it can be adapted to the individual needs of the child.

[See Bredekamp and Rosegrant (1995). Reaching Potentials: Transforming Early Childhood Curriculum and Assessment. NAEYC]

Integrating Physical Education into the Early Childhood Curriculum can be done in accordance with all of these principles to promote fitness!

Gym Class at the Children's School

Children ages 3-6 years

Gymnasium, tennis court or a large room

One teacher and one assistant teacher per 12 children

Weekly instructional time of 30 minutes, but need a full hour for travel to the gym
(*Preschool and Kindergarten*)

Includes: Warm ups, yoga, stretching and cool downs

Plus the structured physical education activity

Supplies

First aid kit with ice packs, Kleenex, Hand wipes, Cell Phone

Gym equipment for that day's activity/skill

Whistle for the teacher to get attention in gym

(*1 blow means stop, look and listen*)

Shoes and socks are available if child does not wear or bring appropriate footwear

Fitness Activities at Other Times

Circle Time Games

Large Motor Activities during Center Time

Rainy Day Activities

Outdoor Classroom

Practice skills introduced during Gym Class

Running, climbing, riding bikes & scooters, pulling wagons

Gardening

Physical Education Tips

1. The most important ingredient for a successful fitness program is a noncompetitive atmosphere. Make the students feel safe and secure with themselves and their own ability levels.
2. Take safety precautions to prevent injuries and accidents.
3. Establish daily routines – warm up exercises / aerobic activity / jogging / jumping jacks.
4. Keep directions simple. Use cues or key words in your verbal descriptions.
5. Provide demonstrations, as many young children are visual learners. Show children what you expect.
6. Allow maximum practice opportunity – provide equipment for everyone. When first learning skills, children do not profit from standing in line.
7. Avoid activities that are too difficult for the less skilled child. If a child feels confident about her abilities, she will be more inclined to participate actively.
8. Balance structured activities with creative movement to music.
9. Give continual positive feedback during every activity.
10. Praise and reward individuals for such things as teamwork, positive attitudes, good sportsmanship and effort, instead of acknowledging winning teams.
11. Limit competitiveness / limit team scorekeeping.
12. Physical education should be a positive experience for teacher and the students. The teacher should be enthusiastic about physical fitness. The teacher who gives students a love for physical activity and fitness will truly give them a gift for a lifetime.

How to Warm Up, Stretch and Cool Down

Warm Ups

- A warm-up is a low-level exercise, which gradually increases the heart rate. Walking, easy jogging and swinging the arms in circles are all examples of warm-ups. A good indicator of an adequate warm-up is light perspiration.
- Several minutes of warm-up activities should always come before stretching or other exercise. A warm-up will increase muscle elasticity and help prevent injury.

Stretches

- Stretching should be done several minutes before and after any physical activity.
- Stretching:
 - Decreases injuries by increasing the range of motion.
 - Lessens muscle soreness.
 - Improves performance.
 - Relieves tension.
- Remind children that stretching is not a contest to see how far they can go! Everyone has a different range of flexibility.
- Be sure to have children observe the following guidelines:
 - Don't bounce** back and forth trying to reach further.
 - Don't hurry!** Stretch very slowly and evenly.
 - Feel the muscles stretch and stop **before** it hurts.
 - Hold each position 30 to 60 seconds.

Cool Downs

After exercising, a 3- to 5- minute cool-down is important. Walking slowly and swinging the arms in circles are both examples of cool-downs. Cool-downs can help decrease muscle soreness and increase joint mobility.

Yoga for Young Children

Strengthens self-esteem and self-discipline.

Teaches you to relax and develop tools for coping with the pressures of school and life.

Improves concentration and focus, necessary for learning.

Builds a strong body, prepared for athletics.

Allows a child's natural creativity and imagination to flourish.

Butterfly Stretch (all ages appropriate)

Sit up straight, with the soles of your feet together. Pull your heels close to your body. Hold your knees and gently move them up and down like butterfly wings.

Tree (all ages appropriate)

Raise your right foot and place it high on your inner thigh, toes pointing down. Raise your arms. Bring your palms together or wave your fingers like the leaves of a tall strong tree. Imagine your roots extending into the earth, holding you steady.

Mountain Pose (all ages appropriate)

Stand with your feet together, arms at your sides. Lift your spine and relax your shoulders. Imagine you are a marionette and someone is pulling the string on top of your head to make you stand tall.

Appropriate Physical Movement Activities for Preschool & Kindergarten

There are many effective physical education activities that can help meet the full spectrum of developmental objectives in an age appropriate manner. Experiment to find what works for your group of children. Don't be afraid to introduce activities that take time to master. There is joy in mastery, especially when it takes practice.

Activity Dots / Fit Spot activities

- Teach all exercises to group until everyone is comfortable.
- Interchange spots for all to have a turn at all ten exercises.

Balloons

- Striking and visual tracking
- Inexpensive and durable
- Intro to develop many skills required for major sports, such as volleyball, basketball, soccer, and baseball

Balloon Volleyball

- Eye-hand coordination game
- Teaches rotation and positions
- Progress to use of beach balls
- Sand box beach ball on playground
- Excellent preparation for volleyball

Balance Beam

- Balancing; control; strength
- Place mats at side and ends of beam
- Take turns at being a performer & spotter

Jump Rope

- Space and body awareness; balancing; listening
- Progress at individual rates while building strength and endurance
- Introduce via "jump hoops"
- Turning and walking, then eventually jumping
- Games –**Jump the River** and **Jumping Jingles**

Games

- Protect the Pin/Block and Bowl
- Steal the Bacon

Obstacle Course

- Provide exciting opportunities for students to participate in an endless array of fitness skill activities
- Arrange in any playing area and easily modify for any grade and skill level
- Equipment varies with each type of course design

Appropriate Physical Education Activities for Preschool & Kindergarten

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Ten Ideas for Bean Bags

- Balance in hand, on back, on elbow, on shoulder, on head etc.
- Walking on balance beam holding bean bag
- Throw
- Catch
- Walk holding bean bag between knees
- Run holding bean bag under arm
- Toss to a partner
- Walk with bean bag on shoe
- Use bean bags with the parachute
- Toss beanbags to target (in a box, at a spot on wall, through a hoop, etc.)

Ten Ideas for Jump Ropes

- High water, low water
- Jump the river
- Snakes
- Waterfall
- Limbo
- Campfire – stop, drop and roll
- Rainbow (running under the rope when it is raised)
- Slowly swinging the jump rope back and forth
- Holding hands and running under a turning rope
- Partner jumps

Ten Ideas for Hula Hoops

- Place it on the floor and jump in and out of it
- Shark attack
- Rolling the hoop like a tire
- Spinning it on its axis
- Twirling it around one's neck
- Holding it above one's head and dropping it down one's body without touching
- Twirling it on one's waist
- Spinning it around one's wrist
- Toss and catch hoops
- Make a tunnel with classmates OOOOOOO and one child passing through

Ten Ideas for Parachutes

- Hold and move the parachute up and down
- Say "Hi"
- Warm up exercises – touch toes and stretch arm up high
- Learn how to control balls on the chute (roller ball and popcorn)
- Make a tent
- Going under the parachute and changing places
- Grab the bean bag
- Wiggle worm
- Celebrate March - Who is Patrick?
- Find your shoes

Ten Ideas for Balls

- Catch
- Mum ball
- Volleyball with a balloon or beach ball
- Snake dodge ball
- Dodge ball
- No contact football
- Tee ball
- Kickball
- Basketball
- Soccer

Use of Physical Movement Activities to Facilitate Developmental Goals

Self Esteem & Independence—encouraging each child's pride in individual characteristics, families, experiences, and accomplishments and each child's responsibility for personal care, actions, and words.

- State basic safety rules in gym
- Work independently using appropriate skills
- Follow basic physical education procedures
- Identify important steps for warm ups, stretches and cool downs
- Develop basics skills for throwing, catching, kicking and running
- Feel a sense of accomplishment/pride (re: square dancing and floor hockey)

Interaction & Cooperation—promoting children's social skills for diverse adult and peer relations, including listening, turn-taking, following directions, rules and routines, group participation, care for shared materials and conflict resolution.

- Follow directions (re: obstacle course)
- Follow gym routines for warm ups, stretches, etc.
- Learn how to lead, take direction, listen and encourage one another
- Share equipment and take turns when working with peers
- Help peers when the need arises
- Use manners and polite talk
- Use words to resolve conflicts
- Respect differences in others when jumping, running, skipping and dancing
- Respond to correction respectfully
- Learn qualities behind a winning performance
- Experience teamwork, a strong sense of camaraderie, and team spirit
- Experience friendly competition and good sportsmanship

Communication—facilitating comprehension and expression skills beginning with oral and progressing to written language

- Learn vocabulary for exercising, games and sports
- Ask questions
- Answer questions
- Retell steps in a gym activity
- Feel confident in communicating during a game or sports activity
- Develop eye-hand coordination that will facilitate pre-reading and writing skills

Discovery & Exploration—fostering a positive attitude toward learning through questioning, observing and experimentation with various materials related to diverse themes.

- Take a positive approach to new situations
- View mistakes as a part of learning
- Review and record the steps in a new game or skill
- Initiate varied methods, ideas, etc.
- Practice counting and timing, etc. when playing a game, stretching, tagging
- Solve problems creatively to improve a game, find more effective ways to use the equipment, etc.

Physical Capabilities—giving children opportunities to use their growing bodies to develop small and large motor skills and coordination.

- Improve total fitness via exercise
- Learn motor skills (running, jumping, hopping, skipping, dancing, galloping, walking, etc.)
- Recognize appropriate way to hold balls, bats, paddles, beanbags, etc.
- Appreciate that practice will help improve skills
- Develop coordination, agility, speed and body control
- Improve dexterity
- Build endurance
- Promote rhythmic movement control

Artistic Expression and Appreciation—cultivating each child's ability to express ideas and emotions through art, music, movement and drama.

- Learn and participate in songs to help remember facts
- Associate colors, shapes and equipment to certain games (e.g. four corners, square dancing, crazy cones, etc.)
- Associate movements and rhythms to particular activities and skills
- Appreciate the creative movement efforts of others
- Value diverse ways of expressing ourselves through music and creative movement

Suggested Books for Early Childhood Physical Fitness Ideas

A YOGA Parade of Animals by Pauline Mainland

Games, Games, Games: Creating Hundreds of Group Games and Sports by David Whitaker

Outdoor Play: Sports and Games for Kids of all Ages by Ellen Moshein

Ready-to-Use P.E. Activities for Grades K-2 by Joanne & Maxwell Landy

YOGA (CD by Wai Lana) www.wailana.com

Complete Handbook of Indoor and Outdoor Games and Activities for Young Children by Jean R. Feldman

Sound Play by Leon H. Burton and Takeo Kudo

Parachute Play by Liz and Dick Wilmes

CMU Children's School
Gym Progression for School Year 2008-09
Beth McMichael

All classes will work on the same basic lessons, with the older and more skilled children progressing further in the sequence. Younger children typically need more scaffolding, easier materials, more practice, etc., but older children still need reinforcement of the basic skills before progressing and integrating them with others for independent practice and group activities. Practice and give positive suggestions always. How far any given group progresses in the sequence listed below will depend on the skill levels within the group, so the listed months are only a general estimate.

Progression of Warm-Ups

Stretching

Flexibility

Strength Building Exercises

Yoga Exercises

Conditioning Running

September

Balance beam (Balance is central to all other movements.)

- Walking forward, sideward, backward
- Balancing holding a ball, hoop, beanbag, and bowling pin
- Catching and tossing a ball while on the beam moving
- Turning and lifting legs to the side, then exiting the beam properly onto the floor with grace

Scooter Play (Balance practice in multiple positions)

- Teaching safety guidelines; manipulation; control
- Introducing scooters
- Partner scooter using connectors
- Scooter relays
- Scooter games, e.g. Alligator crawl

Balloon Play (Introduction to ball skills)

- Striking; visual tracking
- Tapping with either hand
- Catch with two hands
- Use feet, head, finger, back to balance balloon
- With your partner between your heads without using your hands
- With your partner, invent another balloon trick

Ball Skills

- Focus on accuracy in rolling
- Underhand and overhand throwing
- Kicking
- Visual tracking
- Cooperate working with a partner
- Two- handed toss and catch
- Two- handed target tossing
- One- hand underhand target throwing
- One-hand overhand throw
- Overhand target throwing and catching
- Bouncing and catching
- Introduce hoop basketball.

October

Kickball

- Kicking technique
- Accurate kicking
- Kicking to a partner
- Base running
- Pitching
- Playing infield positions

Hula Hoops

- Body awareness; balancing
- Balance on five body parts
- Hoop stunts, hoop spinning, rolling,
- Hoop games

- Hoop relays

November

Jump Rope (teaches space and body awareness; listening)

- Jump the river
- Straight rope patterns
- High water-low water
- Rainbow
- Ocean waves
- Snake jump
- Introduce the jump hoops
- Introduce jump ropes and measure and adjust for size.
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Parachute (focus is teaching safety guidelines, arm strength; cooperation)

- Proper grips
- Merry-go round activities
- Stretch
- Mr. Chute
- Popcorn
- Number chase
- Number exchange, hide-a-way
- Introduce rhythmical movement
- Sequence building using music
- Introduce other types and sizes of parachutes

December

Relays (focus on basic locomotor movements, teamwork, agility, and speed)

- Running
- Zigzag running
- Sack races
- Animal relays (leap frog)

- Obstacle relay
- Rescue relay
- Around the world relay

January

Soccer (focus is on kicking, running skills and team rules)

- Dribbling skills
- Inside of foot
- Outside of foot
- Use cones to dribble around
- Over head throw for out of bounds
- Kicking
- Blocking and stopping using their body
- Passing
- Passing to a partner
- Culminate with Island Soccer

February

Square Dancing (promotes listening and thinking skills, group cooperation and teamwork)

- Teach basic movements and calls
- Circle left (or right)
- All into the center
- Swing
- Promenade
- Forward and back
- Allemande
- Dances
- Oh Belinda
- Do-sa-do
- Turkey in the Straw
- Newer dances for older children
- Honor your partner (or corner)

Sound Play (lessons continue to stimulate interest in moving to musical sound)

- Scarf dancing
- Ribbon dancing
- Musical hoops
- Other new games involved with rhythm
- School Family Festival Hoe Down as culminating activity

March

Floor Hockey (focuses on control and manipulation, alertness defense, passing; visual tracking)

- Holding the stick
- Ready position
- Carrying the stick
- Dribbling
- Stick handling the puck
- Goal- scoring
- Goaltending
- Games
- Hockey Pirates
- Hockey relay
- Pass-the-Puck
- Sideline hockey

April

Tee- Ball Play (focus: stance, grip, swing, running, cooperation, and teamwork)

- Teach stance
- Gripping bat
- Swinging practice
- Introduce batting
- Fielding,
- Base running
- Two bases tee-ball
- Culminating activity combine classes for a tee-ball game

May

- Track and Field Days
- Obstacle Course
- Review all skills taught this year

Other activities that may be included, depending on children's interests, skill levels, weather, and time:

Bowling

Golf

Cooperative Games (games to do all year long)

Crazy Cones

Shark Attack

Flags

Four Corners

Mouse Trap

Block N Bowl

Jump the River

Steal the Bacon

More Dance, especially creative expression

Swimming??

- Getting in and out of the pool
- Treading water, floating, kicking
- Strokes, breathing