

A publication of Fitness for Youth

Physical Education vs. Physical Activity

Should marching band replace physical education? Yes!—if physical activity alone is the heart of your program.

If letting kids burn off some energy is your primary goal, anything that gets kids moving will work...marching band, sports, or cheerleading. However, this is like drama replacing English or riding in a car replacing driver's education. Simply going through the motions doesn't teach fundamentals necessary for achieving lifetime skills.

Physical education taught as recreational classes (with a smattering of activities and very little education) will and should be pushed out of an overcrowded school curriculum. True physical education, however, is invaluable to a child's proper growth and development and must be protected.

Physical education is gaining support from public health officials who see the benefits of physical

activity. They view physical education as the opportune place to get more children active. However, unless these new supporters also promote education, they circle us back to the marching band argument.

Effectively training students for an active, healthier life includes four main content areas—motor skills, fitness levels, activity-related personal/social attitudes and knowledge. Properly educated, students will become fit in their youth (experiencing the joy and benefits at an early age) and will know how to stay fit and active for life.

Kids who acquire a diversity of skills and have positive attitudes about physical activity are much more active as adults, say experts. This should be our goal as physical educators and advocates of physical activity. If it is, the field will remain strong and will march forward (without the band).

SOMETHING TO PONDER

The Stairway to Being Physically Educated



Life-long Learning & Experience

Establish Personal Exercise/Activity Habits (outside of physical education)

Teaching 4 Main Areas of PE: physical fitness, motor skills, social/personal attitudes and knowledge

Physical Activity

Inspired by: Corbin, C.B. "First Things First, But Don't Stop There." JOPERD, 52:36-38, 1981.