

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Schools in Motion

For some students, science, health, and math classes involve sitting in chairs and taking notes or looking at slides. For other children, they mean rock climbing or even learning how to mambo. This new approach to creative teaching allows educators to continue their traditional classroom instruction while also including a component of physical activity in the curriculum.

Today, teachers are providing children with the opportunities to hike and see nature up close for science class or navigate through obstacle courses for health class. Teachers also have added some cool new twists to math by having children measure the distance they can kick a ball or measure the angle at which a basketball has to be shot from certain points on the court to make a basket.

“It’s important that educators help children reinforce the importance of a healthy, physically active lifestyle,” says Dr. Janet Collins, acting director for the Division of Adolescent and School Health of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Chronic Disease Center. **Note: Dr. Collins is not in this position right now, correct?** .“Teachers who add fun physical activities into children’s everyday curriculum set the stage to help children remain just as active in the future.”

Children are having fun with these classroom activities, especially in schools where physical education classes are experiencing financial cutbacks. States are increasing academic requirements for English, math, and science, and school administrators are feeling the pressure to allocate more class time for these subjects. Many teachers, however, aren't giving up just yet. In addition to adding a physical activity component to their lesson plans, teachers are replacing competitive sports-oriented activities with more enjoyable games and activities such as four square and burlap sack races that encourage children to have fun with the physical activities they choose.

Schools also have turned to programs and organizations such as CDC's VERB™ campaign, New P.E., National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity (NCPPEA), and PE Central that encourage educators to help children be physically active whenever and wherever they can.

VERB™ . It's what you do.

The VERB campaign is a national, multicultural campaign that encourages tweens (ages 9 to 13) to get active. CDC designed VERB to reach children in all socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds, and it also uses partnerships to encourage tweens to add physical activity to their daily lives.

VERB has worked with national organizations such as 4-H Club, YMCA, Boys & Girls Clubs of America, and Big Brothers Big Sisters of America to help children become active. VERB also has hosted major events throughout the country to encourage physical activity among children with unique activities, celebrity appearances, and pop teen-idol bands.

Educators who are interested in obtaining information about VERB's in-school programs or a customized VERB brochure offering practical recommendations on how to improve children's habits with regard to physical activities can write to VERB at 111 E. Wacker Drive, 18th floor, Chicago, IL 60601. Information also can be downloaded from the CDC Web site, www.cdc.gov/VERB.

New P.E.

Educators who go beyond their traditional teaching responsibilities by adding fun, healthy, and unconventional physical activities to their classrooms created New P.E. The once-competitive sports-themed physical education classes have been transformed into fun and exciting physical activity classrooms. Some schools participating in New P.E. have partnered with community organizations that have donated heart monitors, treadmills, and other athletic equipment that help students understand the benefits of healthy physical activities.

Students in Tulsa, Oklahoma, schools, for example, can take part in a new outdoor Challenge Course as one of the newest editions inspired by New P.E. Students have access to a rappelling wall and obstacle course, and they also will use new TriFIT™ computerized assessment systems that will help them monitor their heart rates during physical activities. Educators will then teach their students how their physical, mental, and emotional challenges during physical activities affect and apply to their daily lives.

Educators can find more information about classes like these and the New P.E. on the P.E.4Life Web site, www.pe4life.com.

National Coalition for Promoting Physical Activity (NCPA)

As issues of overweight and obesity plague many Americans, the NCPA mission is to unite the strengths of public, private, and industry efforts into collaborative partnerships that inspire and empower all Americans to lead more physically active lifestyles. NCPA is an extraordinary group of national organizations that independently address a host of issues pertaining to physical activity, including health, science, and education. Sample partners of NCPA are the American Heart Association, National Recreation and Park Association, YMCA of the USA, and American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. All of these organizations act as a resource for information and communication to educators, parents, and community leaders about the benefits of physical activity. Teachers can subscribe to NCPA newsletters and find additional information by visiting the organization's Web site, www.ncppa.org.

PE Central

PE Central is another resourceful tool to assist teachers, parents, and others who work with children to help guide them into physically active and healthy lifestyles. Teachers can find instructions for new physical activities, post their physical education lesson plans, and find new ways to assess students' fitness levels on the PE Central Web site, www.pecentral.com. The site also includes information about each state's physical education requirements and allows teachers to sign up to receive the PE Central newsletter via e-mail.

“CDC and its health partners have established resources to help educators and parents teach children about the importance of establishing and maintaining positive and

physically active lives,” says Collins. “We encourage all of these role models to use our resources to create new, fun, and healthy activities for children every day.”

For More Information

The integrated VERB™ campaign uses advertising, marketing, events, and partnership activities to ensure that campaign messages reach children whenever they are looking for something physical to do. Through multicultural media partnerships, the campaign is designed to reach children from all socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds – including specific outreach for African Americans, Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders, Native Americans, and Hispanics/Latinos.

For an overview of the VERB campaign, campaign activities, partners, physical activity resources, and the campaign press room and to look at the latest advertising, log on to www.cdc.gov/VERB.

Check out the tween Web site, www.VERBnow.com, to find cool activities, trendy games, and interesting activity tips. Also featured are fun polls and quizzes and a calendar of events. The activity finder is a great way to find places to get active in your community and discover new ideas of things to try. Tweens can also record their activity every day by using My VERB Recorder.

The VERB Web site, www.VERBparents.com, is a valuable resource for busy parents who want to learn more about the VERB campaign and the importance of physical activity. The site includes an activity finder for parents to learn about new activities and resources to locate those activities in their communities.