

# Classroom Health Education

Classroom health education, which includes instruction on physical activity topics, complements the instruction students receive in physical education. CDC's *Guidelines for School and Community Programs to Promote Lifelong Physical Activity Among Young People*<sup>1</sup> recommends that schools

- Provide planned and sequential health education curricula from kindergarten through grade 12 that promote health literacy including lifelong participation in physical activity.
- Use curricula consistent with the national standards for health education.
- Promote collaboration among physical education, health education, and classroom teachers.
- Use active learning strategies to emphasize enjoyable participation in physical activity in the school, community, and home.
- Develop students' mastery of and confidence in the self-management skills (e.g., self-assessment, self-monitoring, goal setting) needed to adopt and maintain a physically active lifestyle.
- Have credentialed or certified health educators teach health education courses.

Classroom health education also should give students the knowledge and skills they need to avoid a sedentary lifestyle that includes excessive use of electronic media. Preliminary research findings indicate that classroom education designed to encourage students to reduce the amount of time they spend watching television is a promising approach to reducing obesity among children and adolescents.<sup>2,3</sup> *Healthy People 2010*<sup>4</sup> includes a national health objective to increase the proportion of schools that provide comprehensive health education to prevent a number of health problems, including inadequate physical activity.

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1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidelines for school and community programs to promote lifelong physical activity among young people. *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report* 1997;46(RR-6):1-36.
  2. Gortmaker SL, Peterson K, Wiecha J, Sobol AM, Dixit S, Fox MK, Laird N. Reducing obesity via a school-based interdisciplinary intervention among youth: Planet Health. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine* 1999;153(4):409-18.
  3. Robinson TN. Reducing children's television viewing to prevent obesity: a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of the American Medical Association* 1999;282(16):1561-7.
  4. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. *Healthy people 2010: understanding and improving health*. Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Government Printing Office, 2000.