

Take Action!

Tips to Building Daily Physical Activity into Your School Community

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DPA IN THE HOME, SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY

“Motivation is what gets you started. Habit is what keeps you going.”

JIM RYAN

The basic concept of DPA (a minimum of 30 minutes a day at school) in Alberta was derived from the Health Canada Guidelines of a minimum of 90 minutes a day for children and youth. This breaks down into a minimum of 30 minutes at school, 30 minutes at home and 30 minutes in the community. According to *Canada’s Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth* (www.activehealthykids.ca) although more kids are meeting the guidelines (up to 13% in 2008 from 9% in 2006) a whopping 87% are still falling short. It is critical that our students are given appropriate opportunities to be active in all three settings and are receiving consistent messages. Daily Physical Activity needs to become habitual – for schools, it needs to be “the way we do business”.

The health benefits of DPA are cumulative. A little activity added here and there adds up to a lot of health improvement

over time. As an example, the average adult takes 3,500 – 4,000 steps a day. An active adult would reach 10,000 (ancient humans averaged 30,000 steps a day!). So how hard is it to increase your number of steps? If your staff would habitually do the following: park 8 spaces further away from the school, go to the bathroom on a different floor (or hallway) and take a short walking break they would add over 120 kilometres of activity in a year – roughly 144,000 steps! Using the same process, if students are able to increase their personal levels of physical activity just a little bit each day at school, home and in the community they will begin to experience the many health benefits of an active lifestyle. The *Report Card* states that Alberta’s children average about 12,500 steps a day – the goal is over 16,000. Lets work together with the home and community to ensure that our students become healthy and active! After all...



“Those who do not find time for exercise will have to find time for illness.”

EARL OF DERBY

EASY WAYS TO INCREASE YOUR STEPS

Parking 8 spaces further away?	7 km
Going to the bathroom on a different floor?	31 km
Walk breaks (3 X 100m)?	78 km
Walk while talking on the phone (50m X 5 calls)?	65 km
Total!!!!!!	181 km/year

DPA in the School

There is a growing body of international research that links physical activity with better memory, concentration, attention span, problem-solving and decision-making skills. Students who are physically active are also showing improved confidence, higher marks, as well as significant improvements in attitudes, discipline, behaviours and creativity. When schools make daily physical activity a priority by building it into their school action plan and teachers list it as one of their professional goals (as part of their Professional Growth Plan), it not only helps students focus, but energizes the classroom and boosts the learning process.

As a starting point for schools to find ways to incorporate daily physical activity, an inventory of the school's facilities can be completed. In addition to the gymnasium, consider all indoor and outdoor spaces that would accommodate activity; e.g., classrooms, stage, foyer, lunchroom, cafeteria, playing fields, tarmacs.

There are numerous times in the school year when physical activities can be organized on a school-wide level or as large groups. These whole school or large group activities can be used to build school spirit and enhance student/staff rapport. In fact, linking these large group physical activities to seasonal topics and events can provide meaningful connections for students and encourage cooperation among students of different skills levels, social groups, cultural backgrounds, grades and/or classrooms. Some examples of topics and events and some possible activities to go with them include:

SEPTEMBER

Terry Fox Run [SEPT. 13], AIDS Walk [SEPT. 20]

OCTOBER

Halloween Stations, Run for the Cure [OCT. 4], International Walk to School Week [OCT. 5-9]

NOVEMBER

World Diabetes Day [NOV. 14] (Physical Activity/Healthy Eating Circuit)

DECEMBER

International Day of Persons with Disabilities [DEC. 3] (Winter Carnival/Festival)

JANUARY

National Non-Smoking Week [JAN. 17-23] (Health and Physical Activity Fair), Chinese New Year (Cultural Festival)

FEBRUARY

Heart Month (Jump Rope for Heart/Hoops for Heart Events), Winter Walk Day [FEB. 10] (Winter Olympics)

MARCH

Paralympics Event, Traffic Safety Awareness Week [MAR. 1-5] (Orienteering Activities), Alberta Active Living Challenge Day [MAY 20]

APRIL

Earth Day [APRIL 22] (Scavenger Hunt/Treasure Hunt)

MAY

Aboriginal Awareness Week [MAY 31-JUNE 6] (Physical Activity Cultural Festival)

JUNE

Alberta Recreation and Parks Month (Positive Playgrounds Event)

and the equipment for the activity, so the box was placed in a location that the helper could easily access. The student helper would occasionally invite an administrator, other staff members and a student from another class to participate in the activity as well. What a great way to increase DPA sustainability in the school!

One of Mrs. Cunningham's student's favorite activities is Fitnessopoly (see Take Action! Issue 1, October 2008, www.everactive.org/physical-activity). She, however, involves her students in the creation of the activities for Fitnessopoly. The students type it out, include a picture, print it, then it is laminated. She agrees that her students are more creative than she is coming up with activities such as, air-guitar moves and military crawl (from a student whose Dad is in the Canadian military).

Mrs. C. notes that this is the best professional goal that she has ever had! It's impact is far reaching and not only has she been compelled to follow through, but her students have been there along the way to remind her...accountability at its best!



Mrs. Cunningham has made daily physical activity a priority with her grades 3 and 4 students at Wild Rose Elementary in St. Albert.

She started the year off by making DPA one of her Professional Growth Plan goals. Her strategies included having DPA at the same time everyday, creating a DPA Box, talking to her students and parents about it and using Ever Active Schools as a resource.

By making physical activity a part of her daily routine, Mrs. C. built in her own accountability. In fact, her students knew that each morning after the daily math problem was introduced, it was activity time. She feels that first thing in the morning is a great time to be active especially right before solving the daily math problem. For the students who struggle in math, it is a way to relax and increase concentration. For other students, it is a positive and energizing way to start the school day.

The DPA Box that Mrs. C. compiled included equipment such as pool noodles, large foam dice, activity cards, clothespins and more. The student helper of the day would choose the activity

DPA in the Community

Establish partnerships with community agencies and clubs and incorporate them in your physical education and DPA programs. Community sports and recreation association specialists can be contacted and brought in to help introduce new activities to your school.

Come up with a list of recreational opportunities in your school's community and provide this information to parents/guardians through the school newsletter, website, school bulletin boards and displays.

Brochures and flyers for community programs can be made available and events and facilities advertised for all to see.

Celebrate DPA by inviting the media to report on successes and to participate in a special event with students. Examples of recreational opportunities include:

- gymnastics
- martial arts
- yoga and other fitness classes
- swimming
- curling
- shinny hockey
- cycling
- running
- cross-country skiing
- snowshoeing
- golfing
- water-skiing
- horseback riding
- tennis

For a complete list of all Alberta Sport Agencies visit: <http://www.sportalberta.ca/links.htm>



Talk to your students about the activities they enjoy and the ones they would be willing to try. If students are given the opportunity to make decisions about the activities they participate in then they are more likely to have higher levels of academic achievement, perceived competence, positive affect, self-esteem, conceptual understanding, flexibility in thinking, active information processing, and creativity.

Reeve, J. (2002). Self-determination theory applied to educational settings. In E. L. Deci R. M. Ryan (Eds.). *Handbook of self-determination research* (pp.183 - 203). Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press.



Time spent getting active in school, on the playground or in a park can improve learning! Free play can be very important for kids who don't play a team sport. What's free play? It's the activity kids get when they're left to their own devices, like shooting hoops, riding bikes, skateboarding, playing tag, jumping rope, playing volleyball in the backyard or dancing.

Parents can encourage free play by purchasing gifts for birthdays that are activity-based such as a hacky sac, tennis racquet, boogie board or skates. Check out your local sports store for more ideas.

Teachers can increase their student's activity by having a "Free Play" bin in their classroom equipped with soccer balls, skipping ropes, tennis balls, sidewalk chalk and more for use at recess and lunch hour.

DPA in the Home

Even though two-thirds of Canadian families are within walking or cycling distance of school, only one-third of kids have ever walked to school and only 20% have cycled.

According to the *Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card*, www.activehealthykids.ca, released in June 2009, only 13% of Canadian children and youth are meeting the recommended 90 minutes of physical activity every day. In fact, 90% of kids exceed the suggested limit of two hours/day of screen time, including television, computer and video games. Many of Canada's children and youth spend up to six hours/day in front of a screen.

To help combat this amount of sedentary activity our children and youth must be active not only at school, but also at home. Some ideas to get our children and youth moving include:

- ➔ Active transportation; e.g., walking or cycling to and from school.
- ➔ Doing active chores such as raking, shoveling, walking the dog.
- ➔ Playing on a community team or playing activities with friends or family; e.g., soccer, bocce, swimming, skating, hiking, yoga, pilates, diving.
- ➔ Active part-time jobs; e.g., delivering newspapers/flyers, refereeing a sport such as hockey or basketball, being a lifeguard at the local pool.
- ➔ Get together with other parents and share supervision duties at the playground, baseball diamond or outdoor skating rink. This allows children to play freely while still being supervised.



DID YOU KNOW?

Team sports can boost kids' self-esteem, coordination, and general fitness, and help them learn how to work with other kids and adults.

But some kids aren't natural athletes and they may tell you – directly or indirectly – that they just don't like sports. Here are some reasons why sports might be a turnoff for kids:

- Still developing basic skills – Kids who haven't had much practice in a specific sport might need time to reliably perform necessary skills such as kicking a soccer ball on the run or hitting a baseball thrown from the pitcher's mound.
- Coach or league is too competitive – A child/youth who's already a reluctant athlete might feel extra-nervous when the coach barks out orders or the league focuses heavily on winning.
- Stage fright – Kids who are a little shy might be uncomfortable with the pressure of being on a team.
- Haven't found the right sport/activity yet
- Afraid of getting injured
- Worried they can't keep up – a child with asthma might feel more comfortable with sports that require short outputs of energy, like baseball, gymnastics, golf, and shorter track and field events.

What can parents do to help? Practice with your child at home, talk with coaches about their philosophy or look into non-competitive leagues. Try to keep your expectations realistic, be open to your child's interests in other sports or activities, give some honest thought to your child's strengths, abilities, and temperament, and find an activity that might be a good match.

For more information on kids, physical activity and health visit: http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/fitness/exercise.html#

Making DPA Connections

Make DPA part of your everyday routine. Use equipment and activities that are readily available. Consider creating a DPA Kit for your classroom and for other teachers to use that includes equipment and other resources. Already made DPA Kits can be purchased through Ever Active Schools @ www.everactive.org. There are three Kits to choose from and each Kit has a collection of equipment, CDs, DVDs, and print resources that compliment each other.

Integrate physical activity by making cross-curricular, technology-based, cultural and social connections to learning. Combining physical activity and technology creates excitement for students and helps keep motivation and interest at its highest level. Creating opportunities for students to be active while learning about another culture helps to improve their understanding of others. Some examples of physical activities that help make connections to learning are:

DPA – CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITY IDEAS

ACTIVITY	
Basic Skills	✓
Application of Basic Skills	



QUICK DRAW

Division I, II, III
Classroom or Small Space
Equipment: none

Students find a partner and stand facing each other. Students place one hand behind their back. At the same time, they both call out, "1, 2, 3, Draw!" On the word, "Draw!", the students bring out their hand from behind their back and hold out as many fingers as they like on their hand. They try to be the first one to add the total number of fingers drawn. Once the correct

number is called out, they try again. When you call out, "Quick Draw!" students must quickly find another partner. Try this activity by having students multiply or subtract the numbers of fingers shown.

Cross-curricular Linking

Math

ODD/EVEN TAG

Division I, II
Classroom, Small Space or Large Space
Equipment: none

Review with students what odd and even numbers are, if necessary. Students find a partner and decide who will be "odd" and who will be "even". When the music starts, students move around the playing area using the locomotor movement of their choice while staying close to their partner. Stop the music indicating that all students freeze and give the students an equation to solve or a number; i.e., 3×3 ,

$3 + 1$, or the number 8. If the number is odd the student who decided to be "odd" will do two jumping jacks then chase their partner and attempt to tag him/her. If tagged, that student now performs two jumping jacks and becomes "it". Continue until the stop signal is given, "Freeze!" Start the music again and have students move around to the music again while staying close to their partner.

Cross-curricular Linking

Math

ON THE HUNT

Division I, II, III
Classroom, Small Space or Large Space
Equipment: small letters, hoops

Divide students into groups of three and provide each group with a hoop and cut up letters (Scrabble tile pieces can be used and each group should have the full alphabet, plus extra vowels). The groups put their hoop down around the outside of the playing area and place their letters face down inside the hoop. When the music starts, one student at a time from each group moves to any other hoop and

retrieves a letter and brings it back to his/her group. The collected letters are placed behind their own hoop to be used later. Groups can only take letters that are inside a hoop. Once a letter is brought back, he/she high 5's the next teammate in line. Students continue until the music stops and then attempt to spell as many words as possible with the letters collected. Before playing, determine if students must spell 3 or 4 letter words.

Cross-curricular Linking

Language
Arts

DPA – TECHNOLOGY ACTIVITY IDEAS

HOORAY! (Activity used with permission from Eric Jensen - www.jensenlearning.com)

Division I, II, III

Classroom or Small Space

Equipment: Interactive Whiteboard, Hooray sheet

out the numbers in order starting with #1 they will do actions corresponding to the letter above that number; i.e., 1 is an H. The actions are as follows: **"H"** – stand up with arms up and call out "Hooray!", then quickly sit down. **"C"** – stand up and clap three times quickly, then sit down. **"S"** – stand up look over at a person close to you and give them your best Hollywood smile! Create another version, but use lowercase and uppercase letters. For the lowercase, students perform the opposite of the uppercase; i.e., **"h"** – sit down with arms up and call out "Hooray!".

Create an interactive whiteboard sheet entitled, "Hooray!" The sheet must have the numbers 1-12 on it spaced apart with a letter above each number. The letters above must either be an "H", "C", or "S". Ask students to sit in their seat or squat down. Explain that when you call

BENEFITS OF HEALTH	
Functional Fitness	✓
Body Image	
Well-Being	



H	C	S	S
1	2	3	4
C	H	S	S
5	6	7	8
C	H	C	S
9	10	11	12

DPA – CULTURAL ACTIVITY IDEAS

SKOOLA (Adapted from the traditional Aboriginal game – Hoop and Pole)

Division I, II, III

Classroom or Small Space

Equipment: hoops, soft balls (nerf, gator-skin, foam Frisbees)

partner and toss/roll balls back and forth attempting to get them through the hoops. This activity can be played to a certain number of points or it can be a timed event. Try playing the King's Court version where you have one court as the one everyone is trying to stay at "King's Court". The pair that has the most number of points stays at that court until another pair beats them. You can also play this activity using a simple rotation so that all pairs get a chance to play together.

Cross-curricular Linking

Art

Traditionally, the 60 cm in diameter hoops were made out of willow. If possible, have students make a willow hoop. The hoop can be a scaled-down version and then made into a Dream-Catcher.

Language Arts

Have students research the importance of the traditional Aboriginal Hoop and Pole Game and who would likely play it.

COOPERATION	
Communication	✓
Fair Play	✓
Leadership	
Teamwork	✓



DPA SUCCESS STORY

Sacred Heart School in Wetaskiwin is dedicated to daily physical activity and it starts with the staff! This K-9 school in rural Alberta has approximately 310 students and an extremely supportive administration. The success of the program though lies within the teachers themselves. Even though classes only have one period of physical education per week, teachers still manage to maintain a high level of activity in their classes through

DPA. A Physical Education Specialist teaches the one P.E. class and the classroom teacher instructs the others. Each class in the school is scheduled in the gymnasium every day for 30 minutes. Many of the teachers at Sacred Heart have a background in physical activity/education and lead a very active lifestyle. The students tell their teachers that they look forward to their physical activity/education time. In fact, it is the highlight of the day for many of them.

DPA – SOCIAL INTERACTION ACTIVITY IDEAS

INQUIRING MINDS

Division I, II

Classroom or Small Space OR Large Space (depends on how big you make the playing area)

Equipment: 2 large pylons, small pylons, poly-spot markers, bracelets, and recipe cards w/ questions

COOPERATION	
Communication	✓
Fair Play	✓
Leadership	
Teamwork	



This is a team building activity that focuses on communication. Start by setting up a house made of small pylons in the form of a rectangle on the outside of the playing area. Place poly-spot markers inside the house and make a door to enter and exit using larger pylons. Students stand inside the house and hold a recipe card in hand with an open-ended question on it. They walk around inside the house, meet up with another student at a poly-spot marker and ask their question to each other. After they have asked their question, they exchange cards so that they have a new question. The partners then leave the house through the door and complete one lap around the outside of the house using the locomotor movement of their choice (walking, skipping, jogging, side stepping). On their way around the house, the students pick up a bracelet and put it on their wrist. The bracelet represents whom they have talked to and what they learned about that person. The students re-enter the house and find a new partner to ask their new question to. Some possible questions are: What is your favorite type of pizza? What is your favorite physical activity? What is your favorite board game? What would you rather do: go for a bike ride or play baseball?

At the end of the activity, students come together as a large group and have a chance to share if they would like, whom they talked to and what they learned.

Cross-curricular Linking

Health

Relationship choices (Interaction)

TARP/TABLE CLOTH CHALLENGES

Division I, II, III

Hallway or Large Space

Equipment: Tarp or vinyl tablecloth for each group of 4-6 students, tennis balls, soft Frisbees

COOPERATION	
Communication	✓
Fair Play	
Leadership	✓
Teamwork	✓



Students get into small groups of four to six students. Each group is given one plastic tarp, 5' x 7' or 6' x 9'. Clear instructions are given orally to students and they are to work with their group to complete them. Students perform the following tarp activities:

- While the entire group is standing in the tarp, fold it in half, but do not touch the floor
- Fold the tarp in half again while still on it. Do not touch the floor
- Flip the tarp over and stand on the other side. Do not touch the floor
- Stand on the tarp, but cover as little of it as possible
- Cover the tarp so that none of it is showing
- Move the tarp ten feet in any direction while not touching the floor
- Enclose the entire group in the tarp
- Scatter tennis balls throughout the gym. Each group tries to collect as many tennis balls, one at a time into their tarp. Run over to a bucket and place the ball inside before collecting another one. Do not touch the tennis balls with your hands.
- Each group catches thrown foam Frisbees in their tarp. One group member throws three foam Frisbees from a designated line approximately 5 metres from the tarp while the rest of the group holds onto the sides of the tarp and attempts to catch the Frisbees. Once three tosses are complete, the next member in the group has a turn. The activity ends when all group members have thrown the three Frisbees.

VARIATION/INCLUSION: Consider creating task cards for the groups to work through together. Use popsicle sticks to group the students and assign a role to each group member; e.g., green-reads the task cards, red-ensures everyone is being safe, yellow-collects the scattered Frisbees, Blue-counts the number of balls/Frisbee collected and caught.

Cross-curricular Linking

Math

Students can also try making shapes out of the tarp such as, triangle, square, circle, and a house shape.

Resource Support

The resources below have been listed under the headings School, Home and Community. Even though they are underneath specific headings, parents, teachers and community partners can use them interchangeably.

SCHOOL

Ever Active Schools (EAS), www.everactive.org – The EAS program facilitates the development of healthy children and youth by fostering social and physical environments that support healthy active school communities. Visit the EAS website to book a DPA, Physical Education and/or Health-related workshop, purchase DPA Kits and other resources related to DPA such as Recipe Card Lesson Plans for K-3, 4-6 and 7-9 (1st edition released in May 2009, 2nd edition released in Sept. 2009), and much more.

Play Sport, <http://playsport.net> – an educational website with all kinds of great activities encouraging fun, free play designed to teach children games by playing games! PlaySport allows you to search for activities based on the equipment you have, the skills you want to teach, the complexity of the game or the space you have available, including classroom and limited space activities.

Moving and Choosing, <http://movingandchoosing.com/> – Moving and Choosing is a community-based coalition in Alberta promoting healthy growth and development and the prevention of child and adolescent obesity. Key objectives target building healthy school environments and improving access to high – quality curriculum education in nutrition and physical activity.

PE Universe Website: A Space for Physical Educators, www.peuniverse.com – This site has hundreds of physical activity ideas, including videos of activities played by students that can be used in the classroom, gymnasium and outdoors.

Wolf Creek Public Schools – Health in Action Project, www.wolfcreek.ab.ca/HIA/ – This site has a collection of many resources and activities that are cross-curricular, including curriculum links to more than one subject area and/or more than one grade level; i.e., math-sketball and DPA Alphabet Search

Heart and Stroke Foundation, www.heartandstroke.ca – This web site contains a variety of resources (in the For Our Kids section) designed to help teachers incorporate physical activity into their daily classroom schedule, engaging students in a variety of activities each day in order to raise heart rates and improve health.

Dene Hand Games, www.denegames.ca – This website offers many exciting opportunities for teachers, students, parents and community. It has many components of Dene Games education. The website also encompasses lesson plans of five Dene Games, with rules, pictures, short videos and projects that can be utilized in the classroom. As well, there are components of stretching and strength training exercises that parallel these Dene Games.

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HOME

Active Healthy Kids Canada, www.activehealthykids.ca – Active Healthy Kids Canada is charitable organization advocating the importance of quality, accessible, and enjoyable physical activity participation experiences for children and youth. Active Healthy Kids Canada provides expertise and direction to decision makers at all levels, from policy-makers to parents, in order to increase the attention given to, investment in, and effective implementation of physical activity opportunities for all Canadian children and youth.

Weight of the World: Facing Obesity through Physical Activity, www.cahperd.ca/weightoftheworld/e/index.ca.cfm and www.films.nfb.ca/weight-of-the-world/ – The *Weight of the World* program builds awareness about childhood obesity through downloadable resources and tools (website, handbook, and video) and supports capacity development among children and youth on making positive lifestyle choices (physical activity and healthy eating) within an ecological framework. This framework broadens the reach of the program to include the school, home and community and was developed in partnership with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and the National Film Board in both English and French.

Sport Canada, www.pch.gc.ca/progs/sc/index_e.cfm – Sport Canada supports the achievement of high performance excellence and the development of the Canadian sport system to strengthen the unique contribution that sport makes to Canadian identity, culture and society.

COMMUNITY

Alberta Centre for Active Living (ACAL), www.centre4activeliving.ca – This website highlights evidence-based information for professionals who promote physical activity in their work.

Sport and Recreation for Indigenous Youth – Alberta Future Leaders Program, <http://tpr.alberta.ca/asrpfw/programs/sports/abfuture/index.asp> – This program uses sport, recreation and leadership development as initiatives to address the needs of Alberta's indigenous youth. Its unique partnerships include several communities, private enterprise, non-profit organizations and government agencies. The goal of this program is to strengthen and encourage the physical, mental, cultural, emotional and spiritual aspects of community and individual life, by creating opportunities for success at every level.

Be Fit for Life Network (BFFL), www.befitforlife.ca – The Be Fit for Life Network (BFFL) distributes healthy lifestyles information and resources to encourage Albertans to be physically active. Nine regional centres focus on providing services, programs and resources to promote the health benefits of active living and physical activity. Schools, communities and workplaces are welcome to access these services.