

SUCCESS STORY

John Ware School Shares Successful Fitlog Program

Submitted by Karis Langvand, EAS

John Ware School in Calgary has been an Active School for numerous years and its main priority area is physical activity. For the past 10 years, John Ware has implemented a physical education program that consists of both modules and a program called "Fitlog." Erin Dymond is the adult champion and teacher behind the brilliant and dynamic idea of Fitlog. The program is done twice a week and the class runs for 55 minutes at a time. Each session is composed of either a 20 minute run or a 20 minute circuit routine and then both finish with a low organized game. The circuits change each day to keep the students engaged and include body weight exercises, core strength, TRX, BOSU and free weights. TRX is a type of suspension training bodyweight exercise that helps to develop strength, balance, flexibility and core stability simultaneously. BOSU is an innovative fitness product that is a half dome-half platform and is used for training balance and enhancing flexibility. Fitlog is continually changing in order to keep the students engaged and interested.

The school has multiple kinds of recognition strategies to give the students a sense of pride through some kind of positive indicator. They test the students four times per year; in the fall and spring they do a two kilometre run outside and they also do a series of four other fitness tests, including a plank hold, BEEP test, shuttle run and sit and reach. There is a 'Wall of Fame' at the school that features the top five boys and top five girls for each specific test in each grade at each testing period and the winner gets their photo placed on the wall. The school has another recognition photo wall called 'Team 20,' where a photo of each student who is able to run for 20 consecutive minutes is placed on the wall. These students are also recognized in class and their peers applaud and cheer. The amount of positive reinforcement seen in this program is incredible. Student assessment is also based on showing leadership, effort, attitude and participation (LEAP) where students are recognized if they have positively demonstrated each of the LEAP components.

The teachers believe Fitlog is so successful because the staff implement and completely sell the program and the students buy in and participate fully. Teacher leadership is definitely a key ingredient in keeping the program successful. Having a team that shares the same vision of physical activity is very beneficial to both the program success and the students individually.

The biggest challenge organizers saw was when they first started to implement Fitlog. The students had difficulty seeing the benefits of the program. They needed to adjust the program to not only meet the needs of all the students, but to engage them as well. The program started with all fitness and no games, then switched to more of a focus on games and less fitness. There was either not enough discipline and structure, or too much. They then came to the current model of both fitness and games and found total success.

One teacher at the school says, "We have real life examples of kids who weren't into fitness at all and after a year in our program they get turned on to fitness and make it a part of their lives." Implementing physical activity in younger students can be a challenge as there are multiple barriers and obstacles to overcome but John Ware School has certainly demonstrated a fantastic way how to make exercise fun and enjoyable for each student!

For more information please contact Erin Dymond at EMDymond@cbe.ab.ca.



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