

Physical inactivity is part of the problem of overweight youth. Physical activity is part of the solution. Physical education is a critical component to increasing physical activity.¹

Washington's school reform efforts focus on setting clear and high expectations for what students should know and be able to do. Part of this is a timely response to the statistics above and works toward ensuring all students become educated for a lifetime of health and fitness. Teaching students sound health and safety principles can lead to a lifetime of healthy practices resulting in more productive, active and successful lives.

Washington State Law

- (RCW28A.230.040) requires every student in grades one through eight of public schools *receive instruction in physical education* as prescribed by OSPI.
- (RCW28A.230.095) requires school districts have *health and fitness assessments in place* to assure students have an opportunity to learn Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) in health and fitness. The EALRs in health and fitness establish the concepts and skills necessary for safe and healthy living, and in turn for successful learning.

Physical activity is a behavior and physical education is a curriculum that helps create and support physical activity.²

Quality health and fitness education is defined as a planned, sequential program of curricula and instruction that helps students develop the knowledge, attitudes, motor skills, self-management skills, and confidence needed to adopt and maintain physically active and healthy lifestyles.³

^{1 2 3} - Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction – Health & Fitness Standards: EALRs and GLEs K-12, January 2009

Statistics

- Heart disease is the No. 1 killer of Americans, taking more lives than the next five causes of death combined. One person in this country dies of heart disease every 33 seconds. Men, women, and children are all vulnerable.
- Physical inactivity contributes to overweight and obesity, both of which are risk factors for many chronic diseases, and they are prolific among today's American youth.
- According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the number of overweight children has tripled to an estimated 15% - or about 8 million – over the past three decades, and nearly doubled among children 6 to 11 years of age.