

# Physical Education Fast Facts

To provide you with the best science and to reduce review time, please find the following science-approved facts for use in your campaigns and materials. After each fact you will also find fast facts based on the science that can be cut and pasted word-for-word without need for additional science review. Please note that any change in wording will result in the need to run your documents through science review before release.

## FACT 1

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, physical education benefits students by:

- ▶ Increasing their level of physical activity.
- ▶ Improving their grades and standardized test scores.
- ▶ Helping them stay on-task in the classroom.

## Fast Facts:

- ▶ Physical education increases students' physical activity.
- ▶ Students are more active when they have physical education.
- ▶ Kids do better in school when they have physical education.
- ▶ Physical education helps students improve their grades and standardized test scores.
- ▶ Physical education helps students stay on-task in the classroom.

## Source:

Physical Education. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2017.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/physical-education.htm>

## FACT 2

According to a study from SHAPE America, nine in 10 high school students report developing beneficial skills that are outside of physical education through their physical education experiences. They include: importance of a physically active lifestyle (58%); how to set fitness goals and maintain fitness levels (57%); skills necessary to play sports or be physically active (54%); competitive strategies or skills necessary for success in sports (48%); and how to respect themselves and others (44%). More than half of students reported enjoying PE and recognizing its importance to their future health, with a wide variety of additional benefits such as: relieves stress (41%); helps them to work well with others (40%); gives them confidence (32%); helps them focus (30%); teaches them problem-solving and how to meet challenges (24%); and helps them to be a better student (23%).

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ According to a study from SHAPE America, nine in 10 high school students report gaining skills through their physical education classes, including how to set fitness goals and how to respect themselves and others.
- ▶ According to a study from SHAPE America, more than half of high school students say they enjoy physical education and recognize that it's important to their future health.
- ▶ According to a study from SHAPE America, high school students say physical education relieves stress, increases confidence, teaches problem-solving skills and helps them work well with others.

### Source:

High School Students Find Value in Health and Physical Education. SHAPE America. 2017.  
<http://www.shapeamerica.org/pressroom/2017/student-perception-survey-2017.cfm>

## FACT 3

The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that children and adolescents should do 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day. According to a report brief from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, estimates show that only about half of youth meet that recommendation.

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ The Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans recommend that kids participate in 60 minutes or more of physical activity each day.
- ▶ According to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, it is recommended that children engage in 60 minutes of physical activity every day.
- ▶ According to a report brief from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, only about half of kids meet the recommended 60 minutes of physical activity each day.
- ▶ According to the Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, it is recommended that children engage in 60 minutes of physical activity every day, yet a report brief from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine finds that only about half of kids meet that recommendation.

### Source:

2008 Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.  
<https://health.gov/paguidelines/guidelines/summary.aspx>

Educating the Student Body: Taking Physical Activity and Physical Education to School (Report Brief). The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine. 2013. [http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/~/media/Files/Report%20Files/2013/Educating-the-Student-Body/EducatingTheStudentBody\\_rb.pdf](http://www.nationalacademies.org/hmd/~/media/Files/Report%20Files/2013/Educating-the-Student-Body/EducatingTheStudentBody_rb.pdf)

## FACT 4

A 2014 study that analyzed data from the National Survey for Children's Health reported that almost one-third (32%) of children with functional limitations did not meet the recommendation for daily vigorous physical activity and had approximately two times higher odds of not meeting the recommendation than children without special health care needs.



### Fast Facts:

- ▶ Nearly one-third of children with disabilities aren't getting the recommended daily vigorous physical activity they need to be healthy even though they are able to. Children with disabilities are approximately two times more likely not to meet the recommendation for daily vigorous physical activity than those without disabilities.
- ▶ One study found that 32% of children with disabilities aren't getting the recommended daily vigorous physical activity they need to be healthy even though they are able to.
- ▶ Children without special health care needs are two times more likely to meet daily vigorous physical activity recommendations than those with disabilities.

### Source:

Kim J and Greaney ML. Prevalence of physical activity, screen time, and obesity among US children by the service type of special health care needs. *Disabil Health J.* 2014; 7:318-324. doi:10.1016/j.dhjo.2014.02.005

## FACT 5

The 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance showed that nationwide, 51.6% of high school students went to physical education classes on one or more days in an average week when they were in school. Only 29.8% of high school students went to physical education classes on all five days in an average week when they were in school.

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ The 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance showed that just over half of high school students have physical education class one or more times during an average school week.
- ▶ The 2015 Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance showed that less than 30% of high school students have physical education class every day at school.

### Source:

Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance—United States, 2015. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention MMWR. 2016. <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/65/ss/ss6506a1.htm>

## FACT 6

The results from the 2014 School Health Policies and Practices Study show 3.6% of elementary schools, 3.4% of middle schools and 4% of high schools require daily physical education or its equivalent for the entire school year. 15.3% of elementary schools, 8.5% of middle schools and 5.9% of high schools require physical education at least 3 days per week for the entire school year.

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ The 2014 School Health Policies and Practices Study showed that less than 4% of elementary and middle schools and 4% of high schools require physical education or a similar activity every day throughout the school year.
- ▶ The 2014 School Health Policies and Practices Study showed that physical education is required at least three days per week throughout the school year in just over 15% of elementary schools, less than 9% of middle schools and 6% of high schools.
- ▶ The 2014 School Health Policies and Practices Study showed that physical education is required at least three days per week throughout the school year in just over 15% of elementary schools.
- ▶ The 2014 School Health Policies and Practices Study showed that physical education is required at least three days per week throughout the school year in less than 9% of middle schools.
- ▶ The 2014 School Health Policies and Practices Study showed that physical education is required at least three days per week throughout the school year in only 6% of high schools.

### Source:

Results from the School Health Policies and Practices Study 2014. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2015. [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/data/shpps/pdf/shpps-508-final\\_101315.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyouth/data/shpps/pdf/shpps-508-final_101315.pdf)

## FACT 7

Less than 25% of children have at least 60 minutes of physical activity a day. Physical activity is 4.5 times lower for children with a disability.

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ Most children don't get the physical activity they need to be healthy; children with disabilities get even less physical activity.
- ▶ Children should get at least 60-minutes of active play each day, yet only 25% of kids without disabilities meet this recommendation and only about 5% of kids with disabilities do.
- ▶ While all kids should get at least 60-minutes of active play, only about 5% of children with disabilities are meeting this recommendations.
- ▶ The majority of children with disabilities live mostly sedentary lives.

### Source:

Active Education: Growing Evidence on Physical Activity and Academic Performance. Active Living Research. 2015. [http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR\\_Brief\\_ActiveEducation\\_Jan2015.pdf](http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR_Brief_ActiveEducation_Jan2015.pdf)

## FACT 8

A 2015 publication from Active Living Research reported that regular participation in physical activity and higher levels of physical fitness have been linked to improved brain functions, such as attention and memory. These brain functions are the foundation for learning.

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ A 2015 publication from Active Living Research reported that regular physical activity can improve kids' attention and memory, which are the foundation for learning.
- ▶ A 2015 publication from Active Living Research reported that kids' attention and memory can be improved through regular physical activity.



Source:

Active Education: Growing Evidence on Physical Activity and Academic Performance. Active Living Research. 2015. [http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR\\_Brief\\_ActiveEducation\\_Jan2015.pdf](http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR_Brief_ActiveEducation_Jan2015.pdf)

**FACT 9**

A report from the American Academy of Pediatrics found that the benefits of physical activity are universal for all children, including those with disabilities. The participation of children with disabilities in sports and recreational activities promotes inclusion, minimizes deconditioning, optimizes physical functioning, and enhances overall well-being. Despite these benefits, children with disabilities are more restricted in their participation, have lower levels of fitness, and have higher levels of obesity than their peers without disabilities.

**Fast Facts:**

- ▶ All children, regardless of ability, benefit from physical activity.
- ▶ Children with disabilities who participate in sports and other recreational activities reap the same benefits – like well-being, inclusion and improved physical health – as their peers without disabilities.
- ▶ Despite the many ways physical activity benefits children with disabilities, this group of young people tend to have a more difficult time participating in active play and lower levels of fitness than their peers without disabilities.
- ▶ Active play is beneficial for all children, including those with disabilities. Yet, children with disabilities are more restricted in their participation than those without.
- ▶ Physical activity is known to enhance overall well-being in all children, including those with disabilities.

Source:

Murphy NA and Carbone PS; American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Children with Disabilities. Promoting the participation of children with disabilities in sports, recreation, and physical activities. *Pediatrics*. 2008 (reaffirmed 2012); 121:057-1061. doi: 10.1542/peds.2008-0566

**FACT 10**

A 2015 publication from Active Living Research reported that over time, as children engage in developmentally appropriate physical activity, their improved physical fitness can have positive effects on academic performance in mathematics, reading and writing.

**Fast Facts:**

- ▶ A 2015 publication from Active Living Research reported that when kids are physically active on a regular basis, they do better in math, reading and writing.
- ▶ A 2015 publication from Active Living Research reported that kids do better in math, reading and writing when they are physically active on a regular basis.

Source:

Active Education: Growing Evidence on Physical Activity and Academic Performance. Active Living Research. 2015. [http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR\\_Brief\\_ActiveEducation\\_Jan2015.pdf](http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR_Brief_ActiveEducation_Jan2015.pdf)

## FACT 11

A 2015 publication from Active Living Research reported that after engaging in physical activity, children are better able to concentrate on classroom tasks, complete learning tasks faster and more accurately, and are more likely to read above their grade level.

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ Active kids learn better.
- ▶ A 2015 publication from Active Living Research reported that children can concentrate better on classroom tasks and complete assignments faster and more accurately after engaging in physical activity.
- ▶ Kids can concentrate better after they are active.
- ▶ Following participation in physical activity, children are more likely to read a book or article above their grade level, according to a 2015 publication from Active Living Research.

### Source:

Active Education: Growing Evidence on Physical Activity and Academic Performance. Active Living Research. 2015. [http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR\\_Brief\\_ActiveEducation\\_Jan2015.pdf](http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR_Brief_ActiveEducation_Jan2015.pdf)

## FACT 12

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, increasing or maintaining time dedicated to physical education may help academic performance. Increased time spent for physical education does not negatively affect students' academic achievement.

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ According to the CDC, maintaining or even increasing time for physical education can help students do better in school.
- ▶ According to the CDC, giving students more time in physical education doesn't negatively affect their academic performance.
- ▶ According to the CDC, in some cases, more time in physical education leads to students getting better grades.
- ▶ According to the CDC, giving students more time in physical education doesn't negatively affect their academic performance and may help improve academic performance.

### Source:

Comprehensive School Physical Activity Programs: A Guide for Schools. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2013. [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/pdf/13\\_242620-A\\_CSPAP\\_SchoolPhysActivityPrograms\\_Final\\_508\\_12192013.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/pdf/13_242620-A_CSPAP_SchoolPhysActivityPrograms_Final_508_12192013.pdf)

Physical Education. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2017. <https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/physical-education.htm>

## FACT 13

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, students who are physically active tend to have better school attendance. A 2015 brief from the National Collaborative on Education and Health reported that student health issues are a leading contributor of chronic absenteeism and ensuring that students are able to attend healthy school environments is a critical strategy for addressing chronic absenteeism. A healthy school environment means students have regular access to school health services, mental health services, healthy school food, physical education and activity, healthy school buildings and a supportive school climate.

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ Physically active children tend to have better school attendance.
- ▶ Kids who are physically active are more likely to miss fewer days of school.
- ▶ Kids who are physically active are more likely to attend school consistently.
- ▶ Kids who are physically active are more likely to have lower rates of absenteeism.
- ▶ A 2015 brief from the National Collaborative on Education and Health reported that providing students with healthy school environments, including regular access to physical education and physical activity, is an important strategy for addressing chronic absenteeism.

### Source:

Health and Academic Achievement. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2014. [https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health\\_and\\_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyyouth/health_and_academics/pdf/health-academic-achievement.pdf)

Brief on Chronic Absenteeism and School Health. National Collaborative on Education and Health. 2015. <http://www.attendanceworks.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/Chronic-Absenteeism-and-School-Health-Brief-1.pdf>

## FACT 14

A 2015 publication from Active Living Research reported that just one session of physical activity can reduce inappropriate behavior among children, such as being unfocused and causing others to become distracted.

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ A 2015 publication from Active Living Research reported that physical activity can reduce inappropriate behavior among children.
- ▶ When children are active, they behave better in the classroom and cause fewer distractions, according to a 2015 publication from Active Living Research.
- ▶ According to a 2015 publication from Active Living Research, when children are active, they behave better in the classroom and cause fewer distractions.
- ▶ Active kids focus better.
- ▶ Active kids have better classroom behavior.

### Source:

Active Education: Growing Evidence on Physical Activity and Academic Performance. Active Living Research. 2015. [http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR\\_Brief\\_ActiveEducation\\_Jan2015.pdf](http://activelivingresearch.org/sites/default/files/ALR_Brief_ActiveEducation_Jan2015.pdf)

## FACT 15

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, regular physical activity can help children and adolescents improve cardiorespiratory fitness, build strong bones and muscles, control weight and reduce the risk of developing health conditions such as obesity, heart disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes.

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ Regular physical activity helps children grow up healthy.
- ▶ Regular physical activity promotes children's health and development.
- ▶ Active kids have healthier hearts.
- ▶ According to the CDC, regular physical activity helps kids build strong bones and muscles.
- ▶ According to the CDC, regular physical activity reduces kids' risk of developing chronic diseases such as heart disease, cancer and type 2 diabetes.

### Source:

Physical Activity Facts. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2017.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/physicalactivity/facts.htm>

## FACT 16

According to a report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, physical activity in youth can improve mental health by decreasing and preventing conditions such as anxiety and depression and enhancing self-esteem and physical self-concept.

### Fast Facts:

- ▶ Physical activity can improve kids' mental health.
- ▶ According to a report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, physical activity can decrease and prevent conditions like anxiety and depression among kids.
- ▶ Physical activity helps kids build positive self-esteem.
- ▶ Kids feel better when they participate in physical activity.