



Appropriate Maximum Class Length for Elementary Physical Education

A Position Statement from the National Association for Sport and Physical Education

This NASPE position statement will be integrated into relevant NASPE standards, guidelines, and position statements as they are developed or revised. The *Opportunity to Learn Standards for Elementary Physical Education* (NASPE, 2000), the most relevant document for this new statement, is currently in revision. The new edition will be available in Spring/Summer 2009.

The *Opportunity to Learn Standards for Elementary Physical Education* (NASPE, 2000) established the time allocation for elementary physical education as “a minimum of 150 minutes per week” of instructional physical education across the school year. The length of the daily class period was described as “appropriate to the needs and maturation of the learner” with 30 minutes as the suggested minimum.

The following maximum class length for physical education instruction for elementary grade levels is recommended as appropriate: a maximum of 30 minutes per class in grades K-2 and a maximum of 45 minutes per class in grades 3-5.

Rationale:

Students in grades K-2 have a short attention span and low physical endurance requiring frequent “rest” periods from vigorous activity. Learning is enhanced by shorter and more frequent class periods. Students in grade 3-5 have a higher level of endurance for sustained physical activity. Programs for this age will focus on more complex skills requiring more practice time and instruction that develops lesson content and uses it. The development of fundamental motor skills is a primary goal of the elementary physical education program. All students in the elementary program are better served by the practice of motor skills distributed over more days than the same amount of practice in one day.

Position Statement Task Force

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