“Starting Off on the Right Foot” A Guide for Elementary Physical Education Teachers to Assist Them in Successfully Beginning the School Year

Carrie Boers
Central Washington University

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"STARTING OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT"
A GUIDE FOR ELEMENTARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS TO
ASSIST THEM IN
SUCCESSFULLY BEGINNING THE SCHOOL YEAR

A Project Report
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education
Master Teacher

by
Carrie Boers
February 2008
ABSTRACT

“STARTING OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT”
A GUIDE FOR ELEMENTARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS TO
ASSIST THEM IN
SUCCESSFULLY BEGINNING THE SCHOOL YEAR
by
Carrie Boers
February 2008

This guide was created to assist new elementary physical education teachers in successfully beginning the school year. The Federal Way School District currently has no guide or established procedure readily available to assist with the transition of teachers into elementary physical education programs. This project examines the necessary components of a successfully managed elementary physical education program. The author chose to create this guide after the difficulties she encountered transitioning from the junior high school physical education (P.E.) program to an elementary level P.E. program. Physical education teachers are often placed in environments that are unfamiliar to them; therefore, this will serve as a guide for new physical education teachers to use as they establish their new role in the elementary school physical education program.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I INTRODUCTION ...............................................................1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of the Problem ..............................................4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of the Project ...............................................4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limitations of the Project .........................................5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definitions of Terms ..................................................5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ......................................7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Preparation ...................................................7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment ..............................................................10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Expectations ................................................14</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discipline .................................................................17</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III PROCEDURES/METHODS ..................................................19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedures for the Project ...........................................19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planned Implementation of the Project ..........................19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV PROJECT GUIDE ..........................................................21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS ..................32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES .................................................................34</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

To start the school year off effectively, physical education teachers need to implement a classroom management system focused on creating an environment which has safety as the number one priority in the gymnasium. "If [a teacher does] a good job of managing [his/her] lesson, [himself/herself], and [his/her] equipment, it's remarkable how little time [he/she] will have to spend managing students" (Ashy and Humphries, 2000, p10). While creating an effective class management system, a physical education teacher should make sure there are well thought out components that encourage student learning and a positive learning environment. Teachers should monitor the components of a management system closely throughout the year and make adjustments as problems arise.

Colville-Hall (2000) defines classroom management as a broad set of teaching behaviors through which the teacher shapes and maintains learning conditions that facilitate effective and efficient instruction resulting in a learning community. Effective classroom management is an ongoing, maintenance-oriented process. It involves motivating students to learn, providing appropriate instruction and feedback, and managing student work. Efforts of the effective classroom teacher are proactive, responsive, and supportive. "Children need structure; an orderly classroom is an achieving classroom, and so forth. We have the responsibility of keeping the peace in our classrooms. The problem for
most new teachers when they attempt to create the structure is usually not in the setting of the regulations, but rather their promotion and enforcement" (McIntyre, 2004, p. 1). Creating a positive climate for learning is one of the most challenging tasks facing physical education teachers. The task is difficult largely due to the nature of the environment and the busy hands-on curriculum.

Physical education teachers are not confined to a small classroom where students sit in their assigned desks. The majority of physical educators have a full size gymnasium, cafeteria, and playground to work with, and the size alone poses a safety challenge when monitoring students in large spaces. Bringing students outside also poses safety risks including environmental factors and students’ vulnerability to outsiders passing by as well as the rare incident when a student wanders off-grounds. Safety is crucial while developing a climate where students and teachers feel respected, effort is applauded and accomplishments are recognized, and where there is a sense of belonging and community. Developing such a climate requires many different skills and can be approached in many different ways (P.E. Central, 2007, para. 1).

The ideal physical education classroom looks safe, organized and welcoming to students of all abilities. Students should have a strong understanding of personal space, knowledge of when to move and not to move and eagerness to learn about their health and fitness. Someone walking into a gymnasium should see students fully participating in activities, keeping their hands and bodies a safe distance from other students and walls and hear
positive sportsmanship, teamwork and cooperation. Student behavior must embody these elements for students to have a successful learning experience in the gym.

Horner, Sugai and Horner (2000) stated that schools need to define as well as teach expected student behaviors, and teachers should not assume that students will already have learned appropriate social skills. This is true in the gymnasium as well. Ashy and Humphries (2000) state in order for P.E. teachers to move toward a more effective class management strategy teachers should make sure four components are managed closely: lesson, self, equipment, and student. The lesson must be relevant to the curriculum, the teacher must be prepared, equipment must be checked for any safety hazards and the student expectations must be well thought out, defined and enforced. When developing a management program in the gymnasium, Wuest (1999) suggests developing a program that is based on students' values and behaviors to promote responsibility which will result in increased feelings of self worth for students and positive student/teacher rapport. Student behavioral problems impact classroom climate a great deal and can affect class management, student safety and student learning. If a student is not following classroom expectations there is a risk for injury to him or her or others, and valuable learning time is wasted when a teacher needs to stop class to address problems, especially given the amount of time physical educators are given for instruction. In most scenarios this ranges from 30-40 minutes, 1-3 days per week. Behavior expectations must be
addressed clearly at the beginning of each school year to encourage a safe and positive learning environment.

Statement of the Problem

The Federal Way School District does not have defined procedures or a handbook to assist teachers in teaching physical education at the elementary level. Many teachers are placed in a position without a clear guide to the best practices for starting the year without difficulties. Without clear, well thought out guidelines, it is difficult to begin the school year effectively. This project addresses these concerns while attempting to provide a guide for elementary physical education teachers that can be used to:

- Improve classroom management and allow teachers to use allotted time more effectively.
- Increase student success.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to analyze the importance of classroom management and then to develop a teacher's guide to assist new physical educators in the Federal Way School District as they begin their educational career. The plan was designed to address the components necessary to successfully begin a new school year. Teacher preparation, learning environment, student expectations, and discipline concerns were all addressed within the scope of this project.
Following the suggested procedures in this guide should improve student behavior, participation and safety in the gymnasium and within a P.E. program.

This project will provide educators with the necessary tools to:

- Prepare the gymnasium for instruction (safety checklist)
- Develop clearly thought out and consistent procedures for entering/leaving the gym (Seating Chart/Line up procedures)
- Minimize behavior problems in the classroom (student expectations chart)
- Develop an effective discipline plan (discipline chart)

Limitations of the Project

This guide was developed to create a smooth transition into the beginning of the school year for Federal Way School District physical education teachers at the elementary level. Current demographics, community involvement and school improvement plans for the author’s current position at Panther Lake Elementary were all considerations in developing the teacher’s guide; therefore, the teacher’s guide may not be appropriate for teachers in other schools.

Definition of terms

Classroom management system: the practices and procedures that allow teachers to teach and students to learn. (Starr, 2005)

Physical Education (P.E.): instruction in the development and care of the body ranging from simple callisthenic exercises to a course of study providing training
in hygiene, gymnastics, and the performance and management of athletic games (Mish, 2004).

Gymnasium (Gym): a large room used for various indoor sports (as basketball or boxing) and usually equipped with gymnastic apparatus. A building (as on a college campus) containing space and equipment for various indoor sports activities and usually including spectator accommodations, locker and shower rooms, offices, classrooms, and a swimming pool (Mish, 2004).

Great Body Shop (GBS): a health curriculum currently administered in Federal Way public schools’ elementary reading program; however, some P.E. teachers in the district use it in their P.E. program.

American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD): an alliance of five national associations, six district associations, and a research consortium which support healthy lifestyles through high quality programs. The American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance (AAHPERD) is the largest organization of professionals supporting and assisting those involved in physical education, leisure, fitness, dance, health promotion, and education and all specialties related to achieving a healthy lifestyle (American Alliance, 2008).

Personal Space: the distance from other people or things that a person needs in order to remain comfortable and safe (Mish, 2004).
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

When starting a new school year, a teacher's priority should be to create and implement a classroom management system which incorporates strong instructional practices, focuses on student behavior, and creates a classroom environment which has safety as the number one priority. Research supports the creation of a classroom management system that focuses on key instructional practices that already meet the needs of the students. As evidenced by Marzano and Marzano (2003), who state of all "variables affecting student achievement...classroom management had the largest effect" (p.2). It is important to recognize that the information obtained during research can easily be categorized in many ways; however, the author has chosen to organize this section into the four vital categories of classroom management: teacher preparation, environment, student expectations and discipline.

TEACHER PREPARATION

Based on the yearly Educational Gallup Poll, the inability to manage and motivate student behavior is often the number one reason given by beginning teachers for leaving the teaching profession (Rose & Gallup, 2004). In reality, an unmanageable class is not teachable, thus emphasizing the importance of teachers preparing themselves with a student behavior management plan (Lavay, Smith, Greer & Coffield, 2007).
According to Perron and Downey (1997), it is important to be “preactive” rather than reactive in establishing effective management strategies in class. By “preactive” they mean teachers should be focusing on preparing themselves for possible mistakes rather than reacting as they occur. Additionally, Barbetta, Norona and Bicard (2005) explain that there are many common classroom management mistakes that teachers make which need to be addressed during teacher preparation and planning. These mistakes include but are not limited to defining misbehavior by how it looks, asking “why did you do that?” and trying harder when an approach is not working. Solutions to the above mistakes suggested by Barbetta, Norona and Bicard (2005) are to define misbehavior by its function and discover why the misbehavior occurred rather than focusing on the incomplete picture, which is the behavior itself and recognizing when it is time to try something new. This awareness will help ensure that teachers are prepared for misbehaviors in class.

Boyce and Walker (1991) explain that a prepared teacher has established structure in the gymnasium. They suggest the key is planning and practicing of rules, behaviors, and procedures with active monitoring and early teacher intervention. Some keys to improvement are prevention and intervention, thus emphasizing the need for teachers to prepare a plan and be willing to make the necessary changes to improve it (Hardman & Smith, 2003). A physical educator must understand that change is sometimes necessary. Students in first grade will not always benefit from the same expectations as fifth graders, and one fifth
grade class might have an entirely different rapport than the next fifth grade class thus emphasizing an important step of teacher preparation: getting to know one's students. Teachers should find out as much as possible about each child including medical concerns, motor skills, learning patterns and behavioral characteristics.

Another aspect of teacher preparation is getting to know oneself. Health and fitness instructors should be able to critique their own management skills and teaching styles and have the ability to make changes after assessing situations (Block & Horton, 1996). If something does not feel right, change it. The perfect plan on paper is not always the perfect plan in the gym; the ability to recognize when it's time to try a new strategy is crucial. However, this does not take away from the importance of preparing a plan for the beginning of the school year. The effective teacher establishes good control of the class in the very first week of school. Everything must be ready and under control when school begins. Success during the school year will be determined by what a teacher does on the first days of school (Wong & Wong, 1998).

The health and fitness instructor should not only become familiar with the student and his or her self but also the environment. Extra care should be spent examining the environment as well as the equipment that will be used. Before the school year begins, physical educators should walk into their gyms and examine the physical environments for any possible safety hazards including cracks, holes in the floor, hard edges on walls or other objects placed in the gym,
and anything else that might pose a risk within the vicinity. It is also important to check equipment for holes, tears and sharp objects that could injure students during activity. The same safety check should be used each day before instruction time begins and consistently monitored throughout the day.

Transitions between tasks or between sections of class are often problematic for the inexperienced teacher. Moving students into space, preparing them for the lesson, and shifting from task to task requires planning, practices, and patience. Clark (2007) suggests that by developing classroom rules, transition procedures, and policies with student involvement during the first days of school, students will feel a sense of ownership.

ENVIRONMENT

Classroom environment is a vital aspect that teachers need to consider while developing an effective classroom management plan. "Management in the classroom and gymnasium share many of the same qualities. The teacher has the power to shape the learning environment regardless of the class setting" (Culp, 2006 p. 3). Culp states that management practices in the gymnasium share many of the same qualities outlined by Steele (1973) as the six necessary functions within the classroom setting: security and shelter, social contact, symbolic identification, pleasure, task instrumentality and growth. Although taking different forms, management in the classroom and gymnasium is quite similar because the essential component of both relates to the design of the physical environment. Creating a clean, comfortable, safe, and attractive setting
allows effective teaching to positively impact learning. Culp (2006) suggests that in the gym, teachers must eliminate the threat of injury to ensure security and shelter. Social contact can be accomplished by allowing students the opportunity to work in groups to complete activities. Providing materials that reflect cultural background or personal athletic preferences of the students provides symbolic identification. Pleasure refers to putting emphasis on students’ ability to enjoy what they are doing in the learning environment. Task instrumentality in the gym focuses on consistent routines and procedures, and growth is accomplished by providing students ways to explore and improve. Culp (2006) suggests that perhaps one of the most important things that physical educators can do is to make sure that lessons are creative and stimulating to students; however, each of these functions has potential significance for managing an effective physical education program and is crucial in developing a management plan.

Management plans in the physical education setting cannot be effective unless the instructor has taken the necessary precautions to ensure a safe learning environment. Arguably, safety is the number one concern in the gymnasium. In physical education, as in every other aspect of life, it is not possible to eliminate all potential risks. The focus in physical education should be on ensuring that the benefits to students of a particular activity are greater than the potential for injury (Bashutski, Hopson, Horsman, Lipp, Martin, Matheson, Oman & Vinish, 1998). According to Block and Horton (1996), there are many factors that need to be examined to ensure a safe environment for all...
students. These factors include space, accessibility and supervision. Teaching space should be in an area that allows for movements that are free from restrictions. The area should be accessible to all students including those using walkers, crutches and wheelchairs, especially in the event of an emergency. The instructor should have a strong presence and at no time leave the physical education class unattended and all safety rules and expectations should be posted and clearly visible in the gym.

Safety is the number one concern in the gym. In order to maintain a safe gym, Block and Horton (1996) suggest that teachers need to not only put extra care into examining the environment and the equipment that will be used in the classroom, but they must also be able to frequently critique their own management skills and teaching style. Adams (1999) also puts emphasis on keeping everyone (students, administrators, and parents) in the loop and continuously reviewing well thought out plans. To do so, instructors must attend all school wide meetings, and become familiar with IEP plans of students in the P.E. setting. Involving oneself on the school wide safety committee is a good idea, especially since most gymnasiums are used for multiple purposes. Parents are too often kept out of the loop when it comes to physical education. A parent letter at the beginning of the year is a great way to inform parents of what activities their children will take part in as well as inviting their parent involvement in volunteering during class time activities. District and site administrators assist by ensuring that school facilities, equipment, supplies, and resources are safe to
use and of sufficient quantity. Additionally, they provide an adequately staffed physical education department and ensure that staff members receive health information on every student (California State Department of Education, 2008).

In order to provide a reasonably safe environment, Dougherty and Seidler (2007) recommend most sport and recreational activities require a certain amount of space between the activity area and any obstructions such as walls, benches, and equipment. This space is commonly referred to as a buffer zone or safety zone. For basketball courts, AAHP.E.RD recommends that 10 feet of clear space be left open beyond the end lines (Seidler, 2005). If this is not possible, a minimum of six feet is needed and anything less than 10 feet should be fully padded. Additionally, Dougherty and Seidler (2007) suggest that serious and even catastrophic injuries related to inadequate buffer zones are a relatively common problem, and this problem is largely preventable given an understanding of the importance of buffer zones and a desire to make adjustments in the name of safety.

Providing a safe environment according to Moore (2001) should not be a frightening, expensive or cumbersome process. Working together with administrators, teachers, and families to implement guidelines, the entire community can create a gymnasium and play space that is safe, fun and accessible for all children.

Furthermore, once a safe environment is established an educator can move forward with his/her management plan focusing on student behaviors and
expectations. Desiderio and Mullennix (2005) suggest that after designing any management plan, it is necessary for teachers to create a lesson to teach the plan to students. When teachers take these steps, students will know what is expected of them and be able to adapt to the management and discipline style of the teacher.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

The classroom climate not only needs to be welcoming and comfortable for students, it should also recognize students as full participants in decisions that affect their learning and their future. Horner, Sugai and Horner (2000) stated that schools need to define as well as teach expected student behaviors, and to not assume that students will already have learned appropriate social skills. Student behavioral problems impact classroom climate a great deal and can affect class management, student safety and student learning. Therefore, behavior expectations must be addressed clearly at the beginning of each school year.

While Barbetta, Norona and Bicard (2005) focus on modifying teachers’ behaviors, Wuest (1999) suggests an alternative approach to improving classroom management. Wuest (1999) suggests teaching personal and social responsibility to students, which offers teachers a teaching framework that puts an emphasis on student behavior guidelines. For example, assigning class jobs provides students ownership as they fulfill their responsibilities in the gymnasium.
It also prepares them for the world outside the school environment by allowing them to take part in duties that aid in a positive learning environment. Doucette (2005) found that student performance improves with a curriculum that has relevance to the real world and is meaningful to students. Wuest (1999) believes that by promoting respect and responsibility, classroom management problems will be minimized. Wuest (1999) suggests developing a program that is based on a student's values and behaviors to promote responsibility, which will result in increased feelings of self worth for students and a positive student/teacher rapport.

Barbeta, Norona and Bicard (2005), stated that expectations are clear when they are identifiable and consistent. Reviewing expectations and rehearsing rules help build routines and minimize the potential for problems. Adam's (1999) approach to this concern is to be proactive in classroom management by setting clear discipline policies and by responding clearly and swiftly to students who do not meet safety expectations. Additionally, Barbeta, Norona and Bicard (2005) suggest that expectations are pointless if they are not backed up with reinforcement for compliance and reasonable negative consequences for noncompliance.

Gallup poll results displayed the concern that is on the minds of many Americans today, which is behavior management (Rose & Gallup, 2004). In a survey sponsored by Phi Delta Kappa, respondents indicated that lack of discipline is one of the top two problems faced by public schools in their
communities (Rose & Gallup 2001; 2002; 2003). Charles (2002) stated, “In the overwhelming majority of the polls conducted so far, discipline has been listed as a top problem” (p.4). Discipline is already one of the most universal and troubling problems facing elementary teachers (Bender & Mathes, 1995; Langdon, 1997; Reed, 1989; Veenman, 1984). More specifically, disruption, defiance, and inattention seem to represent the most frequent forms of misbehavior (Menacker, Weldon, & Hurwitz, 1989).

Desiderio and Mullennix outlined a plan for teachers that identified the following components as necessary for behavior management: rules, discipline plan, reward system, class-wide reward system, and class procedures.

Research indicates that reinforcement strategies are more effective than punishing strategies for increasing and shaping positive behaviors in any learning environment, and such strategies tend to positively affect task performance and intrinsic motivation (Campbell & Pierce, 1996; Jones, 1992; Lund, 1992). Downing, Keating and Bennett (2005), present a behavior management plan designed to decrease misbehaviors in elementary physical education classes, while, conversely, increasing available instructional time. Focusing on reinforcement strategies, Downing, Keating and Bennett (2005) suggest that the ability to shape appropriate behavior while extinguishing misbehavior is critical to teaching and learning in physical education.
DISCIPLINE

Teachers wishing to implement discipline successfully must adopt the position that they care enough about teaching and learning in their classroom that they will not allow anyone to interfere with this process, not even the students (Canter & Canter 2001). Based on the assumption that everyone wants an effective discipline management system in the classroom, a study by Desiderio and Mullenix (2005), affirmed the researchers' beliefs that this is possible. Teachers, however, must be willing and able to prepare, implement, and consistently enforce a discipline plan.

Hardman and Smith (2003) assert that by devoting a small amount of collegiate and professional training to this important topic, scholars may be sending the education community the wrong message about the importance of classroom discipline, which is an inadequate response to teachers’ existing and future needs. Maintaining classroom discipline is a daily concern, one that can be rewarding and at the same time a source of frustration.

As stated by the California Department of Education (2007), important considerations for classroom discipline policies include:

- Discipline is appropriate to the infraction and consistent with classroom behavior expectations for other programs and subject areas.
- Discipline practices are fair and consistent and encourage students' responsibility for their own behavior.
- Physical education is not withheld as a punishment or earned as a reward.
- Physical exercise is not used as punishment.

Summary of Literature Review

One of our primary responsibilities as teachers according to Barbetta, Norona and Bicard (2005) is to help our students learn. It is difficult for learning to take place in chaotic environments. Therefore, we are challenged daily to create and maintain a positive, productive atmosphere conducive to learning, which on any given day can be quite a challenge. Research shows that there are a variety of classroom management theories that all result in a positive environment conducive to learning in physical education programs. Although there are many different approaches, the anticipated outcome is the same, which is an environment that is safe where students participate in lifelong learning about their health and fitness.
CHAPTER III
PROCEDURES/METHODOLOGY

After teaching physical education at the junior high school level for three years and subsequently switching to the elementary level, the author experienced frustration in the lack of support she had in this transition. This frustration led the author to gain interest in what techniques work best for teachers beginning their elementary physical education endeavors. Recent research on this subject and best practices as well as input from colleagues were combined to create an educational guide to assist future elementary physical educators as they begin the school year. This project will help provide techniques and strategies to elementary physical education teachers to enable them to start the year on the right foot. This project will also help physical education teachers prepare their gymnasiums for safe instruction, maximize learning time, minimize problems and develop procedures and routines that cause a class to run smoothly.

PLANNED IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT

The Federal Way School District currently has no guide or established procedure readily available to assist with the transition of teachers into elementary physical education programs. The author decided to create this guide to aid future elementary physical educators within the district. The guide will be presented to the health and fitness curriculum specialist for Federal Way public schools and reproduced for future elementary physical educators. In
addition to providing the guide for new teachers, it will be presented to current physical education teachers at a monthly workshop. The author will update information with feedback from colleagues within the district as necessary. The ultimate goal is that the guide will be used for years to come and new physical educators will not experience the frustration and feelings of being unprepared the author once did.
CHAPTER IV

PROJECT GUIDE

Introduction

This guide was created to assist new elementary physical education teachers in successfully beginning the school year. The information is intended to be a tool for teachers to establish their new role in the elementary school gymnasium.

"If you do a good job of managing your lesson, yourself, and your equipment, it's remarkable how little time you will have to spend managing students" (Ashy and Humphries, 2000).

Without clear well thought out guidelines, it is difficult to effectively begin the school year. Following the suggested procedures in this guide will improve student behavior, participation and safety in the gymnasium and within a P.E. program. This guide will provided teachers with the necessary tools to:

- Prepare the gymnasium for instruction
- Develop clearly thought out and consistent procedures for entering/leaving the gym and routines that cause a class to run smoothly
- Minimize behavior problems in the classroom
- Develop an effective discipline plan
Classroom Management Techniques

Daily Procedures

When starting a new school year, a teacher's priority should be to create and implement a classroom management system that incorporates strong instructional practices which focus on student behavior and also creates a classroom environment that has safety as the number one priority.

A well structured daily routine will improve student behavior and productivity. Below is a sample of daily procedures for elementary physical education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPROXIMATE MINUTES FOR ACTIVITY</th>
<th>PROCEDURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students enter gym and quietly sit down in their squads, If pre-instruction time is needed, teacher begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Warm up activity starts on teachers command after attendance has been taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Activity Time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Closure: Hand out line up cards, Students quietly go stand on their number in line ready to exit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher (non motor-activity) instruction time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students exit gym</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Student Expectations**

Setting clear social and behavioral expectations is a crucial component for teachers in any learning environment. Below is a sample of student expectations for elementary physical education.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Education Class Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• We <strong>Respect</strong> ourselves and each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) Treat others how you want to be treated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) <strong>NO PUT-DOWNS!</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) No talking out. Follow directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We don't bring <strong>gum, candy, food or drink</strong> into the gym.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We demonstrate good <strong>sportsmanship, cooperation</strong> and <strong>teamwork</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We wear <strong>appropriate clothing</strong> (e.g., running shoes, gym shorts, sweats, comfortable pants).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We always do our <strong>best</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• We <strong>HAVE FUN!</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Discipline**

A classroom discipline chart is an excellent motivational tool for promoting student expectations.

Below is a sample of a wall chart that displays the five classroom goals which correspond with the five points available to each class on a daily basis. Once a class earns 20 points, students are rewarded with a free choice day in their next physical education class. The wall chart has a pocket that holds both yellow (warning) and red (one point deduction) discipline cards. Teachers are encouraged to develop a similar program and display it prominently in the gymnasium.

Students enter the gymnasium with five points which they are encouraged not to lose throughout the class. If student behavior does not meet the guidelines shown on the wall chart, the educator displays a warning card (yellow). If student behavior does not improve, the educator then displays a one point deduction card (red).

---

**Health and Fitness Points**

*The class earns 5 points when all expectations are met:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>ENTER GYM READY TO LEARN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Students enter gym <em>quietly</em> and <em>safely</em> and move to their assigned seats in squads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>RESPECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students <em>respect</em> self and others, follow <em>school rules</em>, and <em>raise hands</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>COME TO GYM PREPARED TO MOVE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students do not bring gum, food or drink (except water) into the gym and wear appropriate clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>RULES OF THE GAME</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students always demonstrate Good <strong>Sportsmanship, Cooperation</strong> and <strong>Teamwork</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>EXIT GYM READY FOR THE HALLWAY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students exit gym following rules on line up card: Hands to yourself, Eyes Forward, No Talking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Entering/Leaving the Gym**

Transition time can be a huge area of concern if students do not have behavior routines and expectations. Without a plan, there is an increase in undesirable behaviors, which can result in injuries, conflicts, and loss of instructional time.

Examples of line up procedures are lineup cards, poems and songs. Below are samples of procedures that can be taught to ensure a smooth transition into and out of the gym.

- **Line up card:** Teacher hands out "line up cards" when it is time to leave the gym. Each card displays the line up expectations (i.e., hands to yourself, eyes forward, no talking) and a number. The pictures remind students how to behave and the numbers correspond with a number on the floor of the gym. Students form a line at the door based on the number on the card.
End of class poems: Teacher starts reading the poem which signals students to head over to the door, form a line, and join in the reading of the poem. Poems are an excellent tool for primary students and help encourage positive line behavior.

Option one:

Our arms are right beside us
Our backs are straight and tall
Our eyes are looking forward
We are ready for the hall

Option two:

Eyes look straight ahead
With a smile upon my face
We use our manners in the hall
So put your paws in place
Seating Chart/Attendance and Student Responsibility Management System

The gymnasium is a large teaching space. Teachers should establish a teaching spot that is ideal for non-activity learning and discuss student job responsibilities. The teaching spot also provides a consistent place to take classroom attendance. Below is a sample P.E. Seating Chart which incorporates a system to manage student responsibilities and attendance.

### P.E. Seating Chart

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TEACHER</th>
<th>GRADE</th>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>DAY</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**LESSON NOTES**

- Week Beginning _____  Week Beginning _____  Week Beginning _____
  - 1st Class  1st Class  1st Class
  - 2nd Class  2nd Class  2nd Class

- Note: Each student in the class is assigned a seat which aligns them with four other students to form a squad. Each squad is identified by a separate color and each seat is responsible for a separate class job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>RED</th>
<th>ORANGE</th>
<th>YELLOW</th>
<th>BLUE</th>
<th>JOB RESPONSIBILITIES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reporter</td>
<td>Reporter</td>
<td>Reporter</td>
<td>Reporter</td>
<td><strong>Reporter:</strong> Give a review of how the group did for the day and report any</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referee</td>
<td>Referee</td>
<td>Referee</td>
<td>Referee</td>
<td>Referee: Remind students of rules during activity. Disputes go to referee, if cannot be resolved on to teacher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supply Mgr</td>
<td>Supply Mgr</td>
<td>Supply Mgr</td>
<td>Supply Mgr</td>
<td>Supply Mgr: Retrieving any writing supplies or papers for non-movement activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment Manager</td>
<td>Equipment Manager</td>
<td>Equipment Manager</td>
<td>Equipment Manager</td>
<td>Equipment Manager: Retrieving any equipment needed for movement activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Squad Leader</td>
<td>Squad Leader</td>
<td>Squad Leader</td>
<td>Squad Leader</td>
<td>Squad Leader: Makes sure all squad members are sitting quietly, facing forward in straight rows. Informs teacher of absent students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Techniques for the First Day of Class

The first day of school for a beginning teacher is an exciting, yet overwhelming experience. It is very important to have a plan detailing what you hope to accomplish as well as set the tone early for classroom expectations. Be prepared for unexpected disruptions and deviations to your routine during the first several days of school. Below is a sample checklist that a teacher can use during the first day of class.

- Greet students at door
- Introduce yourself
- Take attendance while placing students in their P.E. squads
• Practice entering gym and quietly squading up (until we do this correctly)
• Explain the daily procedures
• Explain the monthly Great Body Shop theme (September- Safety) if your school uses the Great Body Shop curriculum.
• Explain that muscles/bones we know chart (Each week we will learn a new muscle or bone)
• Introduce class expectations (Bulletin on wall is a soccer field labeled “class goals” each soccer ball has a class expectation on it)
• Introduce line up cards (practice until we get it correct)
• Get to know you activity

Suggested Handouts: Health / Fitness rubric, P.E. expectations, Playground expectations

Syllabus/Parent Letter

Why is a syllabus or parent letter a good idea? Specialists are often overlooked as an educational part of a child’s school day; therefore, it is important to sell the benefits of your program! In your parent letter, you should let parents know why health and fitness is important to their child, welcome them to take part in your program and inform them of your academic expectations and outcomes for the year. Below is a sample letter for a physical education specialist position.

Physical Education Specialist
I would like to welcome your child to our Physical Education (P.E.) program. I have high expectations for our students. I expect every child to participate in P.E. with their best attitude and effort. Your child will participate in P.E. two times a week for 30 minutes each session.

The main emphasis of the P.E. program consists of physical fitness and skill development to enhance each child's quality of health and lifetime learning.

The physical education program is designed to allow students to acquire the basic skills needed to participate in a variety of individual and team activities. The program consists of indoor/outdoor activities that include playground games, team games and lifetime activities as well as individual movement and rhythmic skills. Below is an outline of the expected activities we will cover each month:

**September**  Playground expectations, Recess games, 4 square, tetherball, wall ball, kickball, cooperative games, traveling patterns, fundamental movements

**October**  Soccer, hand hockey, Danish rounders, team foosball

**November**  Basketball, volleyball, circus arts

**December**  Rhythmic activities, aerobics, fitness activities

**January**  Tumbling, gymnastics, table tennis

**February**  Jump rope jumping activities

**March**  Team games, bowling, golf, foosball, scooter town
April  Pickle ball, tennis, overcoming obstacles
May  Baseball, softball, track and field events
June  Bocce ball, field day activities

This is a tentative schedule and activities may be added or deleted depending on time and weather.

Along with the physical activity that will take place in this class, your child will also be participating in the Great Body Shop, which will focus on what children need to know to live healthy and safe lives.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have about your child participating in this P.E. program.

Sincerely,

Teacher’s Name
To start the school year off on the right foot takes a great deal of time, effort and well thought out planning. Without clear, well thought out guidelines, it is difficult to effectively begin the school year. There is a need to implement a classroom management system which incorporates strong instructional practices and is the groundwork for academic success. The focus on promoting positive student behavior while creating a classroom environment which has safety as a number one priority is necessary to foster a nurturing environment where students feel welcome and able to learn.

Culp (2006) states that management practices in the gymnasium share many of the same qualities necessary to function within the classroom setting. Although similar to the classroom, one major difference is the necessary concern of safety. Physical educators need to prepare their gymnasiums for safe and successful student learning. As soon as the physical environment is addressed, there is a strong need to develop procedures and routines that cause a class to run smoothly. Physical education teachers should strive to maximize academic learning time while minimizing problems and situations that may be unsafe.

Research has shown that there are many management strategies and techniques that ultimately result in the same outcome, which is a positive and welcoming learning environment, free from safety concerns and focused on maximizing student success. No matter what strategies or techniques a teacher
chooses to enforce, the most important thing is to be prepared, organized and have a plan. It is equally important to reevaluate the plan over time and be willing to make changes if need be. A prepared teacher is an effective teacher who enhances student learning.
REFERENCES


"STARTING OFF ON THE RIGHT FOOT"
A GUIDE FOR ELEMENTARY PHYSICAL EDUCATION TEACHERS TO ASSIST THEM IN SUCCESSFULLY BEGINNING THE SCHOOL YEAR

Project Report
Presented to
The Graduate Faculty
Central Washington University

by
Carrie Boers
February 2008
INTRODUCTION

This guide was created to assist new elementary physical education teachers to successfully begin the school year. The information is intended to be a tool for new PE teachers to establish their role in the elementary school gymnasium.

"If you do a good job of managing your lesson, yourself, and your equipment, it's remarkable how little time you will have to spend managing students" (Ashy and Humphries, 2000).

Without clear well thought out guidelines, it is difficult to effectively begin the school year. Following the suggested procedures in this guide will improve student behavior, participation and safety in the gymnasium and within a PE program. This guide will provide physical educators with the necessary tools to:

- Prepare the gymnasium for instruction
- Develop clearly thought out and consistent procedures for entering/leaving the gym and routines that cause a class to run smoothly
- Minimize behavior problems in the classroom
- Develop an effective discipline plan
**Daily Procedures**

A well structured daily routine will improve student behavior and productivity.

Below is a **sample** of daily procedures for a 30 minute elementary physical education session.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APPROXIMATE MINUTES FOR ACTIVITY</th>
<th>PROCEDURE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Students enter gym and quietly sit down in their squads; if pre-instruction time is needed, teacher begins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Warm up activity starts on teacher's command after attendance has been taken</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Activity Time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 3                               | Closure: Hand out line up cards,  
  • Students quietly go stand on their numbers in line ready to exit  
  • Teacher (non motor-activity) instruction time  
  • Students exit gym |
## Safety Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INSPECT FOR:</th>
<th>MEETS SAFE GUIDELINES</th>
<th>COMMENTS/FOLLOW UP</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>GYMNASIUM SPACE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Free of &quot;stored&quot; items along perimeter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>FLOORS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clean and dry</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clear of objects which may cause tripping/slipping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Floor sockets covered and flush with floor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENTRANCES/EXITS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Free of obstructions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CEILINGS/WALLS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tiles and meshing on light secure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• All outlets, switches, etc. must be padded or flush with wall</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Free of protruding hooks, nails, etc.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BASKETBALL HOOPS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cables to wall secure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Rims secure/straight</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wall padding behind backboard</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BENCHES</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Free from cracks/splinters</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Away from student activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EQUIPMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Free from holes, ears, scratches and broken pieces</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Free from exposed strings/wires</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Wheels and pieces secure</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>EMERGENCY EQUIPMENT</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• 1st aid kit fully stocked and accessible</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Access to phone/P.A. System</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Exit lights working</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Student Expectations

Setting clear social and behavioral expectations is a crucial component for teachers in any learning environment. Teaching student expectations at the beginning of the school year is a necessary component of classroom management. Below is a sample of student expectations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical Education Class Expectations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We <strong>Respect</strong> ourselves and each other.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treat others how you want to be treated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NO PUT-DOWNS!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No talking out. Follow directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We don’t bring <strong>gum, candy, food or drink</strong> into the gym.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We demonstrate good <strong>sportsmanship, cooperation and teamwork</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We wear <strong>appropriate clothing</strong> (e.g., running shoes, gym shorts, sweats, comfortable pants).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We always do our <strong>best</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>We HAVE FUN!</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A classroom discipline chart is an excellent motivational tool for promoting student expectations. Five points are available to each class on a daily basis. Once a class earns 20 points, students are rewarded with a free day in their next physical education class.

Students enter the gymnasium with five points which they are encouraged not to lose throughout the class. If student behavior does not meet the guidelines shown on the discipline chart, the educator displays a warning card (yellow). If student behavior does not improve, the educator then displays a one point deduction card (red).

Below is a sample of a wall chart that displays the five classroom goals. Teachers are encouraged to develop a similar program and display it prominently in the gymnasium. The wall chart has a pocket that holds both yellow (warning) and red (one point deduction) discipline cards.

### Health and Fitness Points

**The class earns 5 points when all expectations are met:**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>ENTER GYM READY TO LEARN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students enter gym <strong>quietly</strong> and <strong>safely</strong> and move to their assigned seats in squads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>RESPECT</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students <strong>respect</strong> self and others, follow <strong>school rules</strong>, and <strong>raise hands</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>COME TO GYM PREPARED TO MOVE</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students do not bring gum, food or drink (except water) into the gym and wear appropriate clothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>RULES OF THE GAME</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students always demonstrate Good <strong>Sportsmanship, Cooperation and Teamwork</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>EXIT GYM READY FOR THE HALLWAY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students exit gym following rules on line up card:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hands to yourself, Eyes Forward, No Talking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Entering/Leaving the Gym**

Transition time can be a huge area of concern if students do not have behavior routines and expectations. Without a plan, there is an increase in undesirable behaviors, which can result in injuries, conflicts, and loss of instructional time.

Examples of line up procedures are lineup cards, poems and songs. Below are samples of procedures that can be taught to ensure a smooth transition into and out of the gym.

- **Line up card:** Teacher hands out "line up cards" when it is time to leave the gym. Each card displays the line up expectations (i.e., hands to yourself, eyes forward, no talking) and a number. The pictures remind students how to behave and the numbers correspond with a number on the floor of the gym. Students form a line at the door based on the number on the card.

- **End of class poems:** Teacher starts reading the poem which signals students to head over to the door, form a line, and join in the reading of the poem. Poems are an excellent tool for primary students and help encourage positive line behavior.

  **Option one:**
  
  Our arms are right beside us  
  Our backs are straight and tall  
  Our eyes are looking forward  
  We are ready for the hall

  **Option two:**
  
  Eyes look straight ahead  
  With a smile upon my face  
  We use our manners in the hall  
  So put your paws in place
**REPORTER**

Give a review of how the group did for the day and report any problems to the teacher.

**REFEREE**

Remind students of rules during activity. Disputes go to referee and if they cannot be resolved they are sent to the teacher.

**SUPPLY MANAGER**

Responsible for retrieving any writing supplies or papers for non-movement activities.

**EQUIPMENT MANAGER**

Responsible for retrieving any equipment needed for movement activities.

**SQUAD LEADER**

Makes sure all squad members are sitting quietly, facing forward, and in straight rows. Informs teacher of absent students.
A management system for Seating/Attendance/Student Job Responsibilities in P.E.

Teachers should establish a teaching spot that is ideal for non-activity learning. The teaching spot provides a consistent place to take classroom attendance and gather for instruction. Below is a sample chart to manage seating, attendance and student job responsibilities in the gymnasium.

TEACHER:
GRADE:
TIME:
DAY:

Special Considerations:

*Note: Each student in the class is assigned a seat which aligns them with four other students to form a squad. Each squad is identified by a separate color and each seat is responsible for a separate class job. For example: The student sitting in front of each row is given the responsibility of squad leader. The student sitting in back is the reporter.
Techniques for the First Day of Class

The first day of school for a beginning teacher is an exciting, yet overwhelming experience. It is very important to have a plan detailing what you hope to accomplish as well as set the tone early for classroom expectations. Be prepared for unexpected disruptions and deviations to your routine during the first several days of school. Below is a sample checklist that a teacher can use during the first day of class.

- Greet students at door
- Introduce yourself
- Take attendance while placing students in their PE squads
- Practice entering gym and quietly squading up (until we do this correctly)
- Explain the daily procedures
- Explain the monthly GBS theme (September- Safety) and Vocabulary Word Wall
- Explain the "muscles/bones we know" chart (Each week we will learn a new muscle or bone)
- Introduce class expectations (Bulletin on wall is a soccer field labeled "class goals" each soccer ball has a Class Expectation on it)
- Introduce line up cards (practice until we get it correct)
- Get to know you activity

Suggested Handouts: Health / Fitness rubric, PE expectations, Playground expectations
Syllabus/Parent Letter

Why is a syllabus or parent letter a good idea? Specialists are often overlooked as an educational part of a child's school day; therefore, it is important to sell the benefits of your program! In your parent letter, you should let parents know why health and fitness is important to their child, welcome them to take part in your program and inform them of your academic expectations and outcomes for the year. Below is a sample letter for a physical education specialist position.

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The physical education program is designed to allow students to acquire the basic skills needed to participate in a variety of individual and team activities. The program consists of indoor/outdoor activities that include playground games, team games, and lifetime activities as well as individual movement and rhythmic skills. Below is an tentative outline of the expected activities we will cover each month.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>September</th>
<th>Playground expectations, recess games, cooperative games, traveling patterns, fundamental movements</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>Soccer, hand hockey, Danish rounders, team foosball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>Basketball, volleyball, circus arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>Rhythmic activities, aerobics, fitness activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>Tumbling, gymnastics, table tennis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>Jump rope, jumping activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>Team games, bowling, golf, foosball, scooter town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>Pickle ball, tennis, overcoming obstacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Baseball, softball, track and field events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Bocce ball, field day activities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Along with the physical activity that will take place in this class, your child will also be participating in the Great Body Shop, which will focus on what children need to know to live a healthy and safe life.

Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns you may have about your child participating in this P.E. program.

Sincerely,

Teacher's Name
Additional Internet Resources

Below are some additional resources to assist the beginning teacher in successfully beginning the school year.

- www.PEcentral.com
- www.aahperd.org
- www.pelinks4u.org
- www.pedigest.com
- www.education-world.com
- www.americanheart.org
- www.mrgym.com
- www.k12.wa.us.CurriculumInstruct/healthfitness

Notes

Conclusions

To start the school year off on the right foot takes a great deal of time, effort and well thought out planning. This guide was intended to provide you with some proven classroom management strategies that incorporate strong instructional practices.

Carrie Boers
Panther Lake Elementary Physical Education Specialist,
Federal Way Public Schools December 2000- present
chentsch@fwps.org
February 2008