

Active Students, Active Learners

The **Active Students, Active Learners** website (<http://www.tn.gov/education/section/active-academics>) contains evidence-based materials on the impact of physical activity on reading and math scores, as well as the importance of community engagement, physical education and physical activity before, during and after school. The information is presented in an easy to understand format and includes best practices, tools and resources and research evidence. The website features a welcome video by Tennessee Health Commissioner John Dreyzehner, MD, MPH and Tennessee Education Commissioner Candice McQueen, PhD.

“We know health and education are intrinsically linked, and there is evidence to suggest kids that get regular physical activity go further in school and later have more economic success than those who don’t,” said Dreyzehner. “Active students tend to do better with attention, concentration, behavior and enjoy better overall physical and mental health than students who get little or no physical activity.”

“We all want our students to continue to grow and learn, and we know that a strong part of their academic performance is their physical and mental health,” said McQueen. “With student wellness and success in mind, we are committed to providing resources to our districts and schools to further the well-being of all Tennessee children.”



During school physical activity includes classroom-based activity, physical activity breaks, or recess time. Multiple studies have shown a positive relationship between physical activity during school hours and academic performance, memory and cognition, and there have been mixed evidence on the impact in behavior.

Schools can facilitate increased physical activity during the school day by encouraging students to be active; providing students with space, facilities, equipment and supplies that make participating in activity appealing; and providing organized times and structured physical activities for interested students.

Several studies have recognized that physical activity improves cognitive functioning and increases the brain

neurotransmitters and brain-derived neurotrophins responsible for learning and memory. Reading proficiency is impacted by cognition and comprehension of reading materials requires increased memory. Integrating physical activity into school and community can aid in improving reading proficiency for school-aged children.

Physical Education is an academic subject providing the opportunity for students to learn knowledge and skills needed to establish and maintain physically active lifestyles throughout childhood and adolescence and into adulthood. As defined by SHAPE America, a quality physical education program includes the opportunity to learn, meaningful content, appropriate instruction, and student program assessment.

Before and after school activity, also called out-of-school time physical activity includes group, team, or individual physical activity outside of regular school hours and during school breaks. Out-of-School time programs can provide essential learning opportunities that reinforce what is learned in school and can play a vital role in helping children fulfill the 60+ minutes of daily recommended activity.

Community involvement is important to buy-in among parents, students, and stakeholders. Opportunities to engage the community in physical activity plans centered on students include the development community gardens,